



**City of Blue Mountains**

# Public Art Policy

Blue Mountains City Council  
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## Summary

### The Role of Public Art

The Blue Mountains City Council has two designations with related roles: responsibility for managing a City within a World Heritage National Park and enhancing its designation as the inaugural NSW City of Arts.

In balancing these roles, Council plays a pivotal part in enabling the development of economic, environmental, social and leisure interests of residents, businesses and visitors. Achieving equilibrium in these three areas is reflected in the health of the natural and built environment. In this context, public art becomes the 'public face' of achievement for residents and visitors, reflecting the area's vitality, balance and aspirations.

### The Aim of the Public Art Policy

The aim of the Public Art Policy is to enhance the natural and built assets of the Blue Mountains and to reflect its unique character, history and future aspirations.

### The Approach to Public Art Provision

Council is committed to developing inclusiveness and partnerships with the community. In recognition of this, Council has developed a three tiered approach to public art provision.

Tier One: Integrating elements of art and design into routine capital works program.

Tier Two: Initiating and responding to opportunities for community initiated public art projects on Council managed or owned properties.

Tier Three: Commissioning significant public art works for design, production and installation in identified areas of the city.

### Consultation

Appropriate consultation will be undertaken for each Tier of public art provision.

Initial consultation for Tier One will comprise utilising the consultation processes involved in developing Masterplans and through Area planning consultation processes. Designs developed will be the subject of further consultation with specific villages and towns.

Tier Two consultation will depend on the specific project and the extent of participation desired by the community with whom the projects are developed.

Tier Three will necessitate extensive consultation for the nature and location of site specific major public art work.

### Maintenance and Conservation

Council is committed to maintaining and conserving public art work. It is also committed to ensuring the integrity of public art work is maintained and that the moral rights of the artists are upheld as well as meeting its legal obligations to the work, including copyright and licences. Not all work will be permanent and this would be determined at the outset of the project.

### Education and Interpretation

In keeping with partnerships and on-going dialogue with the community, Council will ensure that appropriate interpretation of work produced accompanies the work on site or on the Council Website or at convenient locations, such as libraries, community centres and Tourist Information Centres.

### Resources

Tier One public art provision will be integrated into the capital program of Council.

Tier Two will be subject to arts funding availability outside Council and, where appropriate, matching funding provided by Council. Appropriate timeframes will be developed in stages within a three year planning and budget cycle.

Tier Three will be the subject of partnership funding with federal and state public arts funding programs.

### Monitoring

The effectiveness of the public art policy will be subject to review and measurement over five years. Performance indicators will include number of designs in place for routine Council work, number and type of community art projects, number of significant public art works in place, number of local artists/designers contracted by Council, balance of content and form reflecting diversity and history of the Blue Mountains.

## Definitions

### Public Art

Art that is originally designed and produced for public space. This type of art can include two-dimensional and three-dimensional work, as well as lighting, holography, time based media art, and performance art. It may be permanently or temporarily installed or enacted.

### Public Art Policy

A guiding, decision-making framework.

This Policy relates to Council's Four Year Cultural Strategy and incorporates guidance on commissioning public art works on Council owned or managed properties or in circumstances where Council is a financial contributor to a project involving the commissioning of public art.

### Community

The residents in a local government area who have particular elements in common. For example: geography, gender, age, ethnicity, Aboriginality, ability/disability, businesses and other interests, for example, tourism.

### Audiences

Both the community and visitors (state, national and international) to the Blue Mountains.

### Consultation

Actively seeking out the opinions and views of residents, special interest groups, community groups and other stakeholders (funding bodies, government bodies) as well as giving information on developments within the community.

### Participation

Engaging the community to work collaboratively and responsibly with others to produce work for the public realm.

*Acknowledgments: This policy was developed in partnership with University of Technology, Sydney. A number of people within and outside Council were consulted in its formulation. Their approaches and ideas helped to inform this document and Council is grateful for their generosity and assistance.*

## 1. BACKGROUND TO THE POLICY

### 1.1 Introduction

The Blue Mountains City Council is committed to developing a policy for the continuing development of public art provision within the Blue Mountains.

This commitment is in accordance with the Council's adopted Four-Year Cultural Strategy 1999-2003.

The policy has been developed with input from professional staff within Council and across disciplines as well as members of the arts community.

### 1.2 The City of Arts within a World Heritage National Park

The Blue Mountains City Council has twin designations as a City within a World Heritage National Park and the Inaugural City of the Arts. This means that the Council is mindful of:

- Balancing the responsibilities of managing a City within a World Heritage National Park
- Enhancing its reputation as a City of the Arts

These two areas are mutually reinforcing for both residents and visitors. A world class natural environment needs to be supported by a sensitively responsive built environment, one that adds value and vibrancy to our major natural asset.

### 1.3 Public Art Policy and Cultural Strategy

The Public Art Policy is directly related to the Council's adopted Four-Year Cultural Strategy 1999-2003. Specifically it relates to:

- Goal 3 – Reinforcing local identity and promoting excellence in urban design for our towns and villages.

It also has implications for:

- Goal 1 – Integrating cultural considerations into Council's decision-making and planning processes
- Goal 2 – Engaging community input into cultural policy, planning and decision making
- Goal 4 – Protecting cultural heritage and assets
- Goal 6 – Contributing to sustainable economic growth

### 1.4 The Principles of the Public Art Policy

The principles that inform this policy are:

- Integration of decisions on the development of cultural infrastructure across Council teams;

- Recognising that public art provision can occur on three levels:
  - developing identity through implementing appropriate design and beautification of local areas
  - participation of the community in initiating, responding to and providing public art for their own enjoyment or purpose
  - developing significant pieces of public art that proclaim the Blue Mountains as a site where cultural excellence flourishes
- Ensuring that residents, businesses and community interests are recognised in relation to any proposed public art development;
- Encouraging the engagement of artists with the community in developing a sense of place in the public domain;
- Enhancing local identity through the development of signs and symbols which capture the essence of place;
- Striving for excellence in design and fabrication of public art works;
- Honouring diversity within the Blue Mountains in relation to Aboriginal people and those from a range of cultural backgrounds;
- Allowing for expression of this diversity through public art projects;
- Ensuring access to education and interpretation of public art produced within the Blue Mountains; and
- Engaging artists of national/international repute and ensuring their vision is realised, maintained and conserved.

## 1.5 The Benefits of Public Art

The use of space in the built and natural environment is never neutral. It can have economic, ecological, social or leisure dimensions that are sometimes in tension or even in competition, with each other. The design of public space and public buildings is often used to manage flow and to include and exclude sections of a community. Public art seeks to develop an environment of inclusiveness and interaction within and between communities.

The health of the built environment is 'read' by residents and visitors as positive or negative just as they 'read' the health of the natural environment. The development of well considered, well maintained public art appropriate to the context of place is a powerful sign of the health of a community. In tandem with economic, environmental and urban development, it sends a clear and confident message of a strong future.

Council is committed to developing inclusiveness and partnerships with the community and to utilising the valuable skills of professional artists to enhance the public domain. In recognition of this, Council has developed a three tiered approach to public art provision.

This three tiered approach entails processes of consultation and mutual responsibilities.

Projects, which are an initiative of either the community or the Council, will endeavour to recognise the bond between people and the land, acknowledging sensibilities of Aboriginal people, reflecting the different cultures that now reside in the Blue Mountains and producing works which are mindful of different physical and intellectual abilities and age. While designs will not reflect all these aspirations in every case and in every tier, Council seeks to ensure there is a balance of work within the total collection in the long term.

## 2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PUBLIC ART POLICY

The overall aim of the Public Art Policy is to enhance the natural and built assets of the Blue Mountains and to reflect its unique character, history and future aspirations.

Aims	Objectives
1. To integrate public art principles into relevant areas of Council programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Through a three-tiered system to ensure public art designs and work are installed throughout the Blue Mountains through routine work, special projects and commissioned work.</li> </ul>
2. To provide opportunities for artists and designers in the Blue Mountains to contribute to design and development of public art in collaboration with urban planners, architects, technical and maintenance personnel on Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ To call for expressions of interest for design development for Tier One where appropriate.</li> <li>○ To ensure artists and designers in the Blue Mountains are aware of commissioning opportunities for Tier Three.</li> </ul>
3. To develop an on-going and sustainable public art program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ To ensure budget allocation for Tier One on-going integration of designs.</li> <li>○ To seek resources from arts funding authorities for Tiers Two and Three.</li> </ul>
4. To consult the community on public art proposals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ To exhibit designs for Tier One to appropriate communities in relevant townships and villages.</li> <li>○ To consult with appropriate communities on community art proposals for Tier Two.</li> <li>○ To seek out opinions on sites and type of public art for commissioned work and to exhibit at the maquette/development stage for Tier Three.</li> </ul>
5. To recognise the diverse nature of public art expression.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ To ensure a range of public art is produced that reflects the aspirations and difference of the communities within which it is placed.</li> </ul>
6. To increase understanding of public art through interpretation and education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ To produce material and documentation of the City's public art which is accessible to residents and visitors.</li> </ul>

### 3. THE PUBLIC ART POLICY – A THREE TIERED APPROACH

The nature of public art ranges from town beautification projects through to major works that incorporate aesthetic and social considerations.

#### 3.1 Tier One: Integrating elements of art and design into town and village streetscapes

Tier One is primarily aimed at town beautification and town identification. From master plans developed in Katoomba and Springwood and other towns and in line with consultation undertaken by Area Managers, designs reflecting village characteristics will be developed as templates to be incorporated into routine capital works for town and village streetscapes. The templates will be developed by 2-3 artists/designers. These template designs can be incorporated into the following structures:

- Roundabouts
- Fencing and balustrading used in public domain areas
- Roadways
- Public squares
- Pedestrian refuges
- Seating
- Rubbish bins
- Footpaths
- Lettering and signage design

Each itemised design will include specifications on colour, materials, fabrication, costings and maintenance requirements. The designs will act as a leitmotif reflecting the specific nature of the area and provide a sense of continuity and identity for each of the villages in the Blue Mountains. These leitmotifs will be reviewed in a five-year cycle to allow for design variations or re-design, as appropriate.

The designs will be collated and be available for use by Blue Mountains City Services.

Commissioning the artists/designers, contracts, licence to use and copyright will be the responsibility of Blue Mountains City Services in consultation with Strategy Group.

Co-ordinating manufacture of the objects will be the responsibility of specific officers as required.

#### 3.2 Tier Two: Initiating and responding to opportunities for community initiated public art projects on Council managed or owned properties

Opportunities for public art provision involving community participation will be identified through area planning processes and through approaches made by the community.

Projects will normally take the form of:

- Communities identifying the need for specific public art provision and who wish to be consulted on the process and product of such provision. This form of provision emphasises community consultation.
- Communities who wish to work collaboratively with an artist to enhance specific public space. This form of provision emphasises community participation.

The projects will be dependent on accessing adequate matching funding from Council and non-Council sources and subject to Council budgeting phases.

### 3.3 Tier Three: Commissioning significant public art works for design, production and installation in identified areas of the City

The co-ordination of the commissioning of significant works of public art will be the responsibility of Strategic Planning and will be reliant on acquiring appropriate levels of funding.

Works commissioned through this process will be required to meet agreed criteria for excellence and relevance to the site specific context, consistency with planning, environmental and heritage policies and strategies. Such public art works may include sculptures and three-dimensional works, lighting and holography, two-dimensional works, mixed and multi media, ephemeral and performance work that may include documentation. The process will involve:

- Calling for expressions of interest through invitation and advertising
- Commissioning 2-3 shortlisted artists to develop a response/maquette
- Choosing the most appropriate design for further development through to installation

The decision-making process will involve a sunset committee, which will:

- Be co-ordinated by the Cultural Development Co-ordinator
- Consist of appropriate Ward Councillors, Urban Designer, eminent invited artist, Area Manager and other Council professionals as appropriate
- Seek advice from appropriate professionals and technical staff on Council
- Consult with the community

## 4. CONSULTATION

### 4.1 Tier One: Integrating Elements of Art and Design into Town and Village Streetscapes

The commissioned artists/designers will be informed by previous consultation associated with adopted Masterplans and strategic area planning processes to derive concepts for designs. Preliminary designs developed from these concepts will be made available for public comment in towns and villages for which the designs are intended. The artists will also consult with appropriate professionals on Council to ascertain:

- The type of design required and its context
- The suitability of materials and colours proposed
- Installation specifications
- Maintenance and conservation requirements
- Lifespan of the works

### 4.2 Tier Two: Initiating and Responding to Opportunities for Community Projects resulting in Public Art Provision on Council Managed or Owned Properties

The type and extent of consultation will be dependent on the specific project. It is recognised that the process of this form of public art creation can involve a range of consultation process:

- Consultation with the community to identify the type of project which is most meaningful to that community – this is done at the area planning level;
- Engagement of an artist or team of artists to develop and implement a project which will involve consultation with specific communities most affected in conjunction with the Area Manager; and
- Participatory and collaborative process between an artist and specific communities in conjunction with the Area Manager.

### 4.3 Consultation Tier Three: Commissioning Significant Public Art Works for Design, Production and Installation in Identified Areas of the City

Identifying the sites for major public art works will require considerable public consultation with the community in villages, sites and/or events for which the work is intended.

The type and scale of public art works will also be subject to consultation and will be appropriate to context and intended meaning. The works will be of exceptional standard and consultation with recognised artists will form a significant segment of the consultation process.

The maquettes/designs will be exhibited for public comment prior to final decision on the work. This comment and consultation may also take the form of panel discussions with the Selection Committee so that the public can fully understand intentions of the works and so that the Selection Committee can take comments.

## 5. MAINTENANCE AND CONSERVATION

Council is committed to maintaining and conserving public art work. It is also committed to ensuring the integrity of public art work is maintained and that the moral rights of the artists are upheld as well as meeting its legal obligations to the work, including copyright and licences. Not all work will be permanent and it is recognised in Tier 2 that a community may wish to re-visit works after a period of time in order to project a different image of the community. These works will be subject to revision in consultation with the community.

Responsibility for maintaining Tier One works will be through routine maintenance of Council property.

Council will maintain a database on public art work at Tier Two and Tier Three levels which records:

- Artists name and contact
- Name of the work and description (photograph)
- Date of commission, completion and installation
- Materials used
- Site
- Documentation made during and after completion
- Approximate lifespan of the work
- Type of Maintenance required
  - Routine
  - Specialist
- Responsibility for Maintenance
  - Council-Division
  - Other
- Conservation required
  - Specialist
- De-Installation, Removal or Re-siting Requirements

## 6. EDUCATION AND INTERPRETATION

Work produced at Tier Three level will have accompanying interpretation about the work. This interpretation may be in the form of a panel or publication (including Internet) whichever medium is appropriate to the work and the site. Access to interpretation of work that does not physically sit with the work will be made available through libraries, Tourism Offices and the Council Web site.

Interpretation will include (but not be restricted to):

- Artist's name
- Name of the work
- Date of installation
- Artist's statement about the work

Optimum interpretation will also include notes on why the work was produced, who the work is intended for, why the particular form and material was chosen and who was involved in choosing the work. As the collection grows Council will undertake further interpretation and education workshops/seminars around the works. These workshops/seminars will include schools, community groups and visitors to the Blue Mountains.

## 7. RESOURCES

Tier One – Commissioning of artists to develop designs for use will be funded through the Council's annual budget process. Licence to Use Agreements will be incorporated into the Commissioning Document.

Manufacture of the designs and routine maintenance will form part of the capital expenditure of Council as part of the annual capital works program.

Tier Two – These projects will require outside and matching funding. Other funding opportunities for small scale community projects may be sought from sponsorship or Council donations and additional donations from clubs, commercial organisations and other civic organisations. Matching funding from Council is subject to budget planning on a three year cycle and maintenance considerations.

Tier Three – Funding for major public art commissions will be sought from, but not be limited to, Federal and State arts and cultural funding authorities in partnership with Blue Mountains City Council. Council's contribution would include special allocation to meet costs associated with selection and consultation, subject to three year funding cycle and maintenance considerations.

## 8. MONITORING

The effectiveness of the Public Art Policy will be measured over a 5-year period. It will be assessed in terms of:

- Number of designs in place and used as part of routine capital works program;
- Number and type of public art works and spread throughout the City;
- Number and types of people participating in community public art projects funded or partnered by Council;
- Number of significant public art works commissioned and installed;
- Number of local artists/designers contracted by Council ;
- Degree of acceptance by the public of works in Tiers One and Three ; and
- Balance of content and form of work reflecting diversity and history of the Blue Mountains and its residents.