



Wollongong City Council

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# Animating Wollongong - Public Art Strategy 2022-2032





*Image: Lorraine Brown & Narelle Thomas,  
Place of Healing and Wellbeing. Hooka Point Park*

## **Acknowledgement of Country**

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which our city is built, Dharawal Country. We recognise and appreciate their deep connection to this land, waters and the greater community. We pay respect to Elders past, present and those emerging and extend our respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who call this city home. We recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the first people to live in the area. We respect their living cultures and recognise the positive contribution their voices, traditions and histories make to the city.



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## Lord Mayor's Message

Public Art plays an important role in our city - it can stir debate, create a sense of space, and celebrate cultural diversity and expression. By encouraging discussion and debate, public art evokes subjective responses, views, and diverse opinions. It's all part of public art's place in any engaged and democratic community.

Across our city we have a wide variety of public art that, we're proud to say, is accessible to everyone. These works in our public spaces provide equal opportunity to enjoy direct and ongoing encounters with art. The availability of art can be a key factor in establishing a unique and culturally active place, not only creating civic icons, but also transforming our playgrounds, train stations, community centres, parks, business districts, and suburbs into more vibrant expressions of human imagination.

Places with integrated public art create a unique focus, and give communities a stronger sense of place, identity and ownership. Art activates our imagination and encourages a sense of community identity, connectedness, and wellbeing.

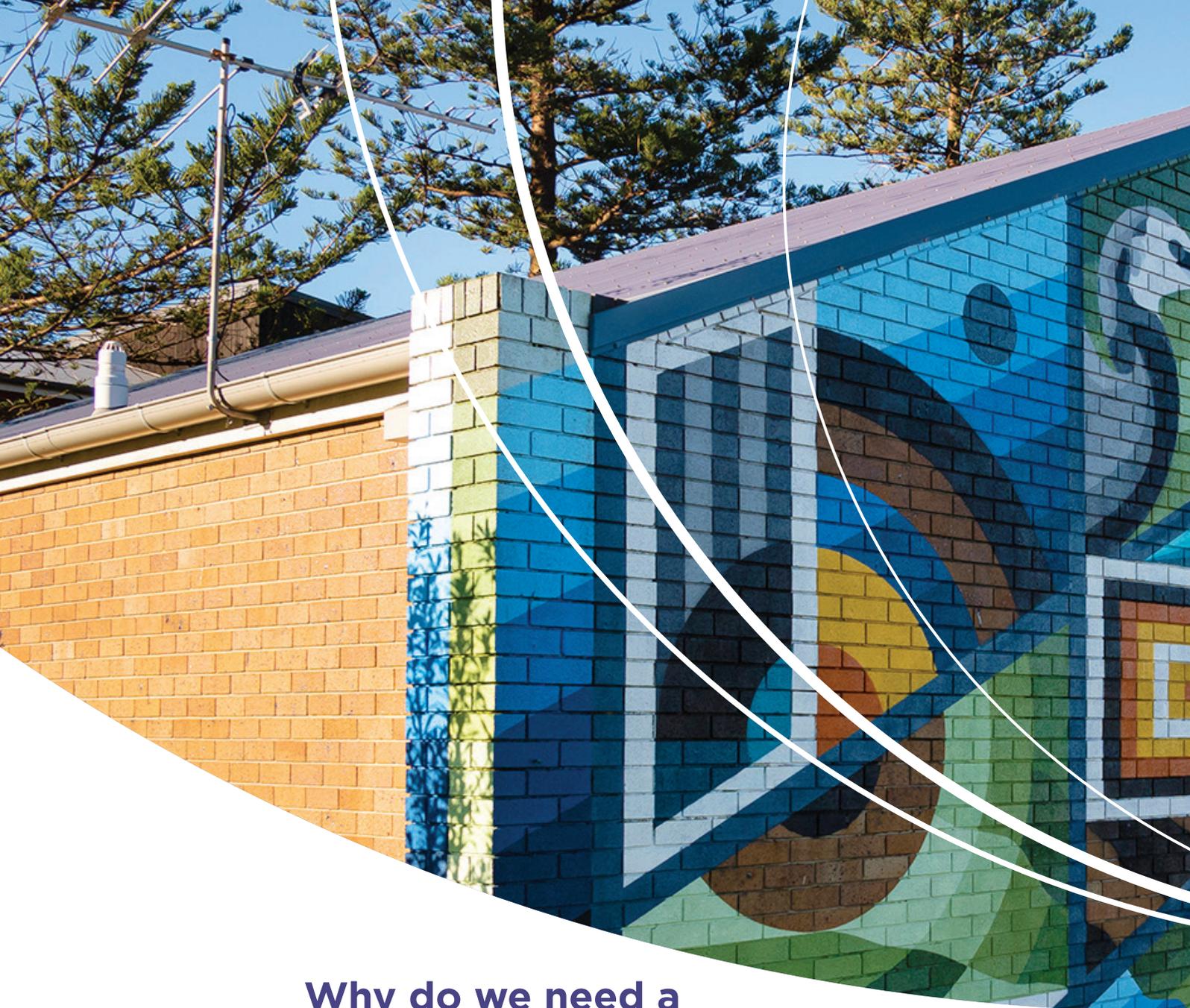
The opportunity to develop new public art supports artists and creatives within our community, and beyond. It showcases their important contribution to the city fabric and supports cultural tourism, attracting new and visiting populations, with direct economic benefit to the region.

However, public art doesn't just happen - it needs direction and a purpose. This strategy will provide a foundation and blueprint to guide Council's ongoing improvements and refining of strategies, processes, and practices that deliver valuable and meaningful public art projects for our city.

Wollongong City Lord Mayor  
Councillor Gordon Bradbery AM



*Image: Nerine Martini, The Migration Project. George Dodd Reserve*



## Why do we need a Public Art Strategy?

This strategy has been developed to articulate why and how Council is involved in public art, what Council seeks to achieve by supporting and investing in public art, the principles that guide Council's actions, the various roles Council plays and the context within which decision making for public art takes place.

Council recognises the value of incorporating arts and culture across the early planning, construction, and management of urban centres. Evolving community demographics, and new residential areas being developed specifically in West Dapto,

make it essential that a new Public Art Strategy, reflecting current social changes and community needs, technological advancements, and future planning, be developed.

To ensure best practice outcomes for Public Art, Council is committed to incorporating it into masterplanning for town and city centres and open spaces. Sustainability and environmental factors will be considered, and collaborative and partnership models to develop new public art works will be explored.



*Image: Brad Eastman, Mural.  
Coledale Community Centre*

This strategy provides a roadmap to delivering against actions, and facilitates early planning, and the embedding of artistic practice into places and spaces.

This strategy also considers conservation, care and maintenance of art works that become part of the public domain, reinforcing the need to manage and maintain these important community assets.



*Image: Col Henry, Sea Chanty. Holborn Park Berkely*



# How has this strategy been developed?

*Image: Laura Nolan, Evolve. Wollongong Botanic Garden*

### Stage 1

Development of the Strategy’s Guiding Principles in consultation with the Public Art Advisory Panel

### Stage 2

Draft Principles placed on public exhibition for community feedback

### Stage 3

Strategy integration with Council’s existing Community, Cultural and Economic Development Plans, incorporating internal specialist knowledge and expertise and community feedback on Guiding Principles

### Stage 4

The Draft Strategy placed on public exhibition to receive community feedback

### Stage 5

Final revision of the strategy including community feedback

### Stage 6

Endorsement by Council  
  
The endorsed strategy will inform Council’s performance planning processes and practice on Public Art for the next 10 years.



## What our community told us

During the development of both this strategy and a range of Council strategic plans and documents including Creative Wollongong and the Community Strategic Plan, our community have shared their thoughts and ideas about public art in Wollongong.

They have told us that they care about living in a creative and vibrant city and understand how the arts are important to community life. Our community enjoys the way public art brings culture and introduces new ideas into everyday lives. Many supported a cohesive and coordinated approach, and a strong creative vision that celebrates local stories, people and heritage.

Through the feedback on the Public Art Principles and the Strategy itself, we heard the importance of putting Wollongong at the heart of our approach, art that reflects our place and our community. Providing opportunities for our community to explore, learn about and enjoy public art is important, as is continuing to provide opportunities for local artists and creatives.

We've heard people love our street art and want to see more permanent and temporary artworks in all forms, across the suburbs as well as the city. There is community support to create art trails in different locations across the Wollongong area, including along the Blue Mile and our coastlines, and other public places. People also want to see public art in Wollongong continue to



be innovative and responsive to the changing nature of the art world.

Our community would like to see public art included as an integral part of design and planning for new developments, with people mentioning that public art can have a positive impact in an increasingly urbanised environment. Some people would like to see more art as an expression or commentary that can create education, awareness, or connection for the community.

The importance of broad promotion and marketing of the existing Public Art collection and communication around opportunities for public art was highlighted, to better inform and engage our community about public art in Wollongong.

*Image: Amanda Parer,  
Intrude, Nights on Crown*

# What is Public Art?

At its most basic, public art is any art produced for, and presented in, a public space.

What distinguishes public art, is the unique association of how it is made, where it is placed, and what it means. Public art can express community values, enhance our environment, transform a landscape, or question our assumptions. Placed in public sites, this art is unrestricted and there for everyone to experience.

Public art is not an art “form”. It can be permanent, temporary, or ephemeral. It can be huge or small. It can tower into the sky or call attention to the paving beneath our feet. Its shape can be abstract or realistic (or both), and it may be cast, carved, built, assembled,

or painted. It can be site-specific or stand in contrast to its surroundings. Public art can be video, light, or sound based. It can be digital, virtual, or online. It can be decorative and/or performative. Public art can stand alone or be many things at once.

Art by its nature is subjective and in a diverse community, cannot appeal to all people, nor should it be expected to do so. This is equally true for public art. As our community and modes of expression evolve, so will our definitions of what public art is and can be. Over time, materials and methods change to reflect our contemporary culture and can, at times, cause controversy. A variety of opinions is inevitable, and a strong sign of a healthy, open, and engaged community.



*Image: Karla Hayes. Mural, Fairy Meadow*



*Image: Alison Page & Tina Lee with Lorraine Brown, Ali Day, Bonny Foley-Brennan, Debbie Hamstead-Callaghan, Val Law, Lila Lawrence, Jodie Stewart, Phyllis Stewart & Narelle Thomas, Six Daughters of the West Wind, Mt. Keira*



*Image: Mandy Schoene - Salthers,  
Mural. Corrimal Community Centre*

## Public Art in Wollongong

There is far more to Wollongong than its beautiful beaches, lush green bushland, and rich and diverse community. Wander around and talk to the residents and you may be surprised to learn of the amazing murals, coastline sculptures, creative cultural hubs and intriguing public art works purposefully embedded throughout the region, engendering a sense of ownership and pride in the community.

Currently Wollongong has over 170 permanent pieces of public art on display across the Local Government Area. Created by local, national, and international artists, artworks are scattered in and about our suburbs and towns, open spaces, streets, and buildings. Adding to this, are the many temporary and ephemeral public art pieces that have been created for events and celebrations.



Image: Mike Hewson, Illawarra Placed Landscape, 2019, Crown Street Mall

## Guiding Principles

The following five guiding principles were developed by the Public Art Advisory Panel and are the foundation of this strategy. We will use them to guide the delivery of, and underpin the objectives and actions, outlined in this document.

### **Belonging**

Connect our public art to our unique Wollongong identity, and use it to celebrate and value all our diverse communities

### **Opportunity**

Sparkling and nurturing our creative community through investment, entrepreneurship, and advocacy

### **Place**

Create meaning through site specific works that identify and interpret our unique environments and rich histories to enhance our public places

### **Value**

Amplify our public art through brave and inspirational themes to capture the spirit of Wollongong and its people

### **Elevate**

Lead the way, through challenging and inspiring public art that embraces contemporary media and is influenced by local, national, and international ideas



*Image: Braham Stevens, Eye on the Horizon. Hill 60 Reserve*

# Our Way Forward

Key opportunities and challenges for Public Art in Wollongong have emerged through the development of this strategy. The many overlapping themes have been divided into 4 key focus areas which will underpin key actions, identified for delivery over the next 10 years.

## Engagement and experience

- Ensure opportunities for the community and visitors to enjoy and connect to our public art collection.
- Continue to include community perspectives through the external Public Art Advisory Panel.
- Ensure transparent processes for the selection and development of public art across the Wollongong City area.
- Support and provide opportunities for artists and creatives through the creation and renewal of public artworks, and through mentoring programs for young and emerging artists.

## Place

Building on the opportunity for public art to create meaning, identity, and a sense of place:

- Continue to develop a program reflecting the region's cultural diversity, including First Nations history and story.

- Strengthen the links between our public art program and Wollongong's spectacular environment.
- Reflect the unique character of our suburbs through the delivery of new permanent and temporary public art.
- Enhance place through public art by providing creative and engaging experiences.

## Artform and materiality

Acknowledge traditional artforms, while also promoting new and emerging technologies and contemporary art practice in the creation of exciting, permanent, temporary, and ephemeral public art works in unexpected places.

## Infrastructure and Planning

Continue to work across the LGA to embed public art into the development process in private and public developments.

- Improve coordination and implementation processes for public art.
- Streamline approval processes for public art.



Image: Smug One, Mural. Wonderwalls 2017, Full set Festival. Globe Lane Wollongong



Image: Pierre Guendol 'Gamo',  
Mural. Guest Park

## Public Art Process

Every year Wollongong City Council makes decisions as to what type of public art to deliver and where it should be placed. Planning for public art that is appropriate, relevant, and meaningful for our city and diverse community involves a complex decision-making, curatorial process.

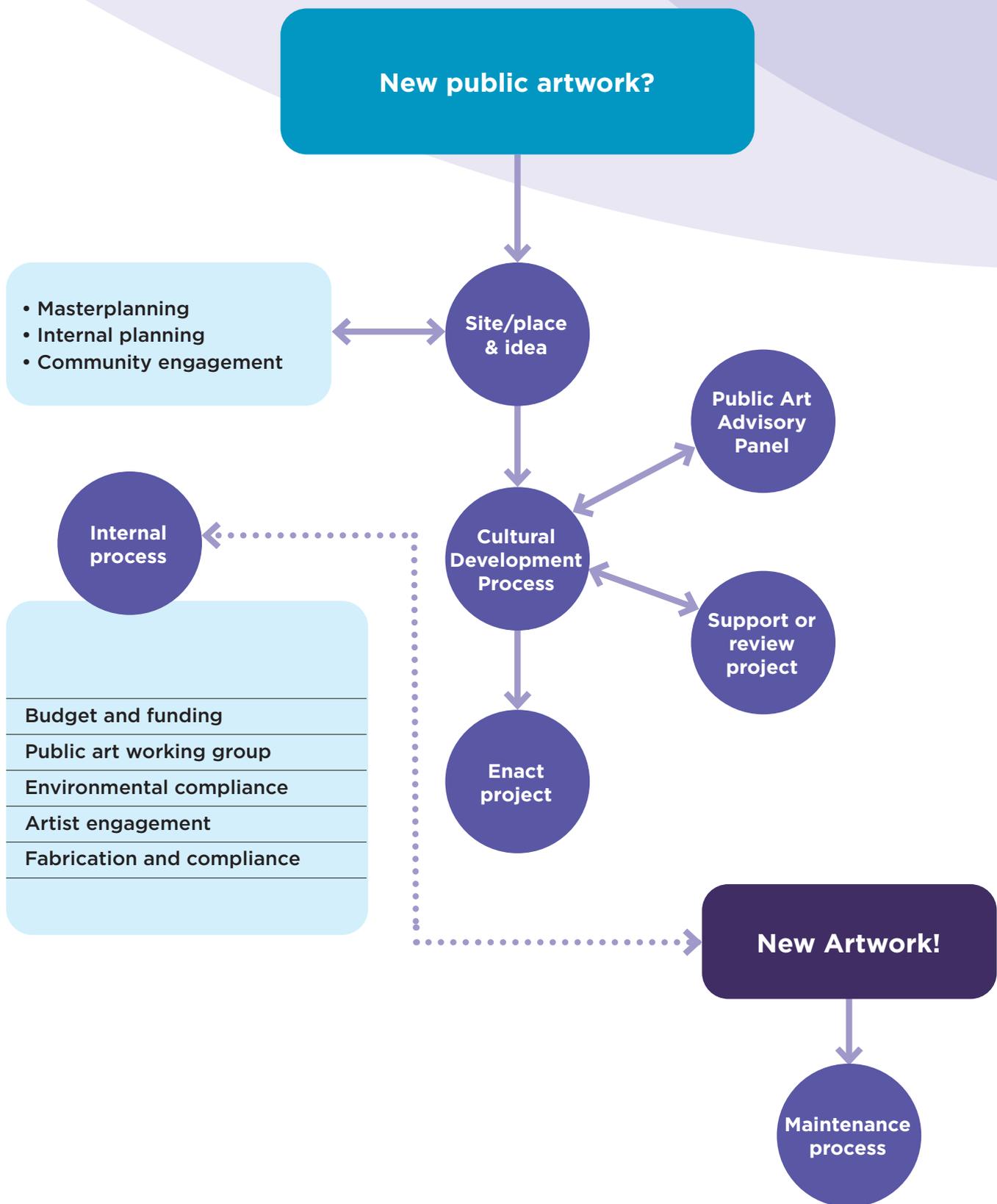
This work is carried out by Wollongong City Council staff, aided by the Public Art Advisory Panel.

The Public Art Advisory Panel (PAAP) is recruited through an open expression of interest, bringing together a diverse mix of industry experts and community members to provide independent advice and recommendations on

the implementation of the public art strategy, policies, projects and programs.

Carefully considered practical decisions such as selecting the right artist for the right location, the cost of the artwork, its ongoing maintenance after installation and its permanence or time in the public domain are also important considerations in the curatorial process.

Wollongong City Council is committed to facilitating public art that is not only aesthetically dynamic, but can also inspire, resonate within its surroundings, stimulate discussion, and invite engagement. It requires examination of need, of materiality and accessibility.





### **Public art in Wollongong isn't always permanent.**

Temporary artworks have been activated as part of festivals, exhibitions and events. These works can be used as a form of celebration, placemaking and to engage communities. Ghost Trees by Greer Taylor was a site-specific work that invited visitors to Sculpture in the Garden in 2021 to embroider a 'memory ribbon' and plant a 'ghost tree' in response to the then recent bushfires. Over 300 people of all ages contributed to the ephemeral artwork which grew over a 5 week period.

*Image: Greer Taylor, Ghost Trees.  
Wollongong Botanic Garden*

### **Sculpture in the Garden.**

A biannual public art project which was established in 2013, presents a temporary exhibition of site-specific sculpture created by a variety of local, national, and international artists. In 2021 the Wollongong Botanic Garden saw over 30,000 people visit the exhibition and engage in the associated programs.



*Image: Fatih Semiz, Curious Dream of an Architect. Wollongong Botanic Garden*

# Key actions and measurements

## Animating Wollongong - Public Art Strategy Actions 2022-2032

### 1. Engagement and Experience

Public art provides relevant and exciting experiences that are available for all to enjoy

Action		Implementation Plan Action	Responsibility	Short	Medium	Long	Ongoing
1.1 Improve information and communications about the public art collection	1.1.1	Develop a digital image bank of the Public Art Collection and other major artworks within Wollongong's public domain for promotional and activation use	Events + Visual Strategy City Culture + Activation				
	1.1.2	Reflect Council's involvement with public art through communications and messaging	City Culture + Activation Communications + Marketing				
	1.1.3	Improve opportunities for, acknowledge and promote the work of local creatives and organisations delivering public art outcomes	City Culture + Activation Communications + Marketing				
	1.1.4	Deliver improved marketing and promotion of public art	City Culture + Activation Communications + Marketing				

Action		Implementation Plan Action	Responsibility	Short	Medium	Long	Ongoing
1.2 Ensure Council's public art projects and programs are inclusive and that our diverse communities are represented, supported, and engaged	1.2.1	Ensure the Public Art Advisory Panel (PAAP) has a diverse membership base and is supported to provide Council with independent curatorial and industry advice	City Culture + Activation				
	1.2.2	Deliver art works that celebrate and interpret the local Aboriginal community's deep knowledge and ongoing connection to Country. Explore opportunities to work and learn from Elders and custodians	City Culture + Activation Community Development + Engagement				
	1.2.3	Provide community cultural engagement in the development of public art projects including through public art plans, placemaking opportunities, events, and temporary activations	City Culture + Activation Community Development + Engagement Events + Visual Strategy				
	1.2.4	Deliver public art works that showcase Wollongong's rich and culturally diverse communities	City Culture + Activation Community Development + Engagement				

Action		Implementation Plan Action	Responsibility	Short	Medium	Long	Ongoing
	1.2.5	Develop public art professional practice opportunities, ensuring accessibility and inclusion for diverse communities	City Culture + Activation Community Development + Engagement				
	1.2.6	Require public art innovation, development controls and public art opportunities for private developers	City Culture + Activation City Strategy				
1.3 Investigate funding opportunities for public art	1.3.1	Seek out external partnerships, collaborations, and sponsorship opportunities to support public art across the Wollongong LGA	City Culture + Activation				
	1.3.2	Identify and develop grant and external funding opportunities that can deliver new public art opportunities across the Wollongong LGA	City Culture + Activation				
1.4 Ensure opportunities for public art are diverse and engaging	1.4.1	Deliver Sculpture in the Garden	City Culture + Activation Open Space + Environmental Service				
	1.4.2	Review Sculpture in the Garden	City Culture + Activation Open Space + Environmental Service				
	1.4.3	Explore opportunities for nature based Public Art in Council's open spaces, parks and reserves	City Culture + Activation Open Space + Environmental Service				

Action	Implementation Plan Action	Responsibility	Short	Medium	Long	Ongoing
1.4.4	Investigate additional social media channels to broaden audience and artist reach	City Culture + Activation Communications + Marketing				
1.4.5	Develop and market a new public art trail via an accessible platform or format	City Culture + Activation Events + Visual Strategy Communications + Marketing				

## 2. Place

Public Art is embedded in citywide placemaking

Action	Implementation Plan Action	Responsibility	Short	Medium	Long	Ongoing
2.1 Explore opportunities for public art to be delivered across the Local Government Area	2.1.1	Ensure opportunities for public art to be delivered as part of West Dapto Urban Release Area				
	2.1.2	Develop a West Dapto Public Art Plan				
	2.1.3	Ensure opportunities for public art to be delivered as part of the development of the Grand Pacific Walk Heritage Interpretation Strategy	City Culture + Activation			
	2.1.4	Develop a process for public art curation, ensuring that new and renewed works are distributed based on need, merit, and community engagement	City Culture + Activation			

Action	Implementation Plan Action	Responsibility	Short	Medium	Long	Ongoing
	2.1.5	Ensure embedded and temporary infrastructure for public art is included in new community facility developments, including Warrawong and Helensburgh library and community facilities				
	2.1.6	Continue to develop and deliver on the Hill 60 Masterplan. With public art additions to the Ngaraba-aan Art Trail				

### 3. Artform and Materiality

Ephemeral, temporary and/ or permanent Public Art is embraced

Action	Implementation Plan Action	Responsibility	Short	Medium	Long	Ongoing
3.1 Continue to develop and deliver new and exciting diverse public art across the City and suburbs	3.1.1	Continue to explore new spaces and places for temporary art activations, including events, billboards, town centre infrastructure and suburban placemaking				
	3.1.2	Establish and promote a creative hoardings program as a quick and low-cost option to enhance public spaces and support local and emerging artists				

Action	Implementation Plan Action	Responsibility	Short	Medium	Long	Ongoing
	3.1.3	Continue to explore new ways for public art to enhance place across a range of artforms, materials and activities				
	3.1.4	Manage and maintain the city's collection of public artworks to ensure their long-term vibrancy and safety				
	3.1.5	Review and update the process and policy for repair, replacement and deaccession of public art works				

#### 4. Infrastructure and Planning

Public art is embedded and coordinated across new developments and projects

Action	Implementation Plan Action	Responsibility	Short	Medium	Long	Ongoing
4.1 Ensure the ongoing management and future planning for public art is sustainable, equitable and meets industry best practice	4.1.1	Review and update the Public Art Management Policy				
	4.1.2	Create and promote a Public Art Toolkit to ensure all new public art projects align with the Public Art Management Policy and Public Art Strategy				

Action	Implementation Plan Action	Responsibility	Short	Medium	Long	Ongoing
	4.1.3	Audit and review the Public Art Collection and other major Council-led public art projects including murals, to enable future and ongoing maintenance and data collation				
	4.1.4	Communicate across Council to ensure all public art projects are planned, processed and delivered consistently				
4.2 Integrate Public Art into Strategic and Statutory Planning controls and processes	4.2.1	Explore ways to reduce public art's environmental footprint and support its equitable distribution				
	4.2.2	Progress draft LEP design excellence clauses with the inclusion of public art as a matter for consideration within City Centre and key site development				
	4.2.3	Investigate opportunities to include requirements for Public Art Plans and public art in precinct scale development across the LGA				

Action	Implementation Plan Action	Responsibility	Short	Medium	Long	Ongoing
	4.2.4	Integrate public art opportunities when undertaking Town Centre Plans in line with the Public Art Toolkit				
	4.2.5	A provision or clause be included in the draft Wollongong City Centre DCP chapter addressing requirements for Public Art to be incorporated into larger developments				
4.3 Set the standard for integrating public art into Council design and implementation processes, including infrastructure delivery and whole of life asset management principles	4.3.1	Identify opportunities for public art in masterplans and ensure rationale and budget is included from the business proposal stage				
	4.3.2	Integrate public art as an element of major Council infrastructure projects in line with the Public Art Management Policy				
	4.3.3	Create opportunities for input, expertise and leadership from the creative community into Council design and implementation processes for public art				



## **How will Wollongong City Council communicate on the progress of Animating Wollongong - Public Art Strategy 2022-2032?**

Council will monitor progress against the strategic actions through quarterly and annual reporting processes.  
For further information contact:  
[culturaldevelopment@wollongong.nsw.gov.au](mailto:culturaldevelopment@wollongong.nsw.gov.au)



*Image: Ken Unsworth, Nike. MacCabe Park*



Image: Sion Gruffydd & Trait, Mural. Fairy Meadow

## Our Wollongong Our Future

From the mountains to the sea, we value and protect our natural environment and will be leaders in building an educated, creative, sustainable and connected community.

We value and protect our environment  
We have an innovative and sustainable economy

**Wollongong is a creative, vibrant city**

We are a connected and engaged community  
We have a healthy community in a liveable city  
We have affordable and accessible transport



**Wollongong City Council**  
wollongong.nsw.gov.au  
Phone (02) 4227 7111

