

MACKAY REGIONAL COUNCIL PUBLIC ART STRATEGY



2018 - 2023
COMMUNITY SUMMARY



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF **COUNTRY**

Mackay Regional Council acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands and waters that make up the Mackay region, on which we work and live. We acknowledge the important protocols of the Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Australian South Sea Islander communities across the Mackay region.

Cover image: **Brian ROBINSON** *Urban Bloom I* 2015.

Photography by Lee Brake.

MAYOR'S MESSAGE



Art was once the domain of the very rich. Today though, we are lucky to be living in an era where we are witnessing the true democratisation of art. Public Art may be commissioned as a placemaking or space-defining exercise, but its true value is the social inclusion it generates. The way Public Art encourages human interaction, tells stories, challenges, engages and prompts discussion, makes us different from the exclusive societies of the past. Whether you like it or loathe it, works of public art humanise our built environment. Public Art can provide a link with our past, tell a story of our “place”, and invigorate public spaces to become a tourist attraction.

It is easy to criticise the use of public money on works of art within the public environment. But Public Art matters. Cities today are competing on a “liveability” scale. There are now numerous studies indicating that cities with a dynamic cultural and art scene are more attractive to individuals and businesses. Public Art is a key factor in that data. This Council Strategy represents a collective expression of our region's culture, history and environment.

We have consulted with residents, cultural groups, artists, businesses owners and traditional custodians. The result is this living document that will help guide our public art projects: to support local artists; to celebrate our indigenous past; to bring vibrancy to our public spaces; and to increase the “liveability” of this wonderful place we call home.

Mayor Greg Williamson
Mackay Regional Council

INTRODUCTION

The Public Art Strategy 2018 – 2023 provides Mackay Regional Council with principles, goals and objectives to guide the future development, implementation and maintenance of public art in Mackay. Council recognises the key value of public art in creating quality public places, telling local stories and expressing civic pride.

Public art has a further role in developing cohesive communities and enhancing cultural identity. The role of art in urban design, placemaking and spatial activation is also widely recognised for community benefits which include increased public safety, an improved sense of community connection, ownership of and care for the civic environment and community confidence.

Public art and artists make a valuable contribution to the built and natural environment by celebrating, marking and revealing aspects of a community, its history, its character and its aspirations. A strong sense of place, identity and community makes a region attractive to live in, work in and visit.

Council has a significant role to play in fostering artistic practice in the region. Public art acts as a platform for exploring aesthetics, ideas and memories. This exploration often involves experimentation and innovation, providing a stimulus for audiences to think, act or reflect and supports the growth of artists.

WHAT IS **PUBLIC ART**?

Public art is not an art “form.” Its size can be huge or small. It can tower fifty feet high or call attention to the paving beneath your 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 permanent sculptural works, temporary, ephemeral, performance based, installations, projections, murals and socially engaged art.

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

is for everyone, a form of collective community expression. Public art reflects how we see the world – the artist’s response to our time and place combined with our own sense of who we are.

Public art is a part of our public history, our evolving culture and our collective memory. In a diverse society, all art cannot appeal to all people, nor should it be expected to do so. Art attracts attention; that is what it is supposed to do. Public art can cause controversy. Varied popular opinion is inevitable, as we live in a society with a multiplicity of voices and backgrounds, and it is a healthy sign that the public environment is acknowledged rather than ignored.

Image 1: **Fiona FOLEY** *Fishbones* 2009.

Photography by Alicia Stevenson.



VISION AND **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

The Public Art Strategy is a living document, which aims to engage and inspire artists and diverse audiences in innovative and enchanting creative endeavours and to encourage meaningful and lively celebration of the region's culture and environments.

The strategy will be driven by Artspace Mackay, who will oversee the implementation of key objectives and actions across Council. Whilst honouring its cultural heritage, the Public Art Strategy will help to define perceptions of the region's identity now and into the future. The vision and five guiding principles are driven by the outcomes of the engagement exercises conducted internally and across community.

VISION: We are enriched by our cultural diversity, history and creativity through vibrant art in public spaces.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Quality public art builds stronger, healthier, resilient and more connected communities
- Recognise and celebrate Aboriginal, Torres Strait and Australian South Sea Islander history and stories
- Support local artists and activate town and country spaces
- Give voice to youth through creative participation
- Manage and maintain Council's collection of permanent public artworks

Image 2: **DBCT Illuminate 2018.**

Photography by Liz Andrews Photography.



GOALS AND **KEY OBJECTIVES**

GOALS

1 ACTIVATION OF PUBLIC SPACES

2 GIVING VOICE TO OUR DIVERSE COMMUNITIES' CULTURE AND HISTORY

3 YOUTH MATTERS

4 PUBLIC ART DEVELOPMENT AND ADVOCACY

5 PLANNING, RESOURCING AND MAINTAINING PUBLIC ART

KEY OBJECTIVES

GOAL 1: ACTIVATION OF PUBLIC SPACES

KEY OBJECTIVES:

- 1.1. Provide diverse artforms and practice
- 1.2. Create landmarks in urban, natural and park environments that will become natural gathering spaces
- 1.3. Provide a focus for local pride, history and story-telling
- 1.4. Reflect the highest standard of excellence in contemporary arts practice

GOAL 2: GIVING VOICE TO OUR DIVERSE COMMUNITIES' CULTURE AND HISTORY

KEY OBJECTIVES:

- 2.1. Acknowledge and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and history
- 2.2. Acknowledge and promote the story of the Australian South Sea Islander community
- 2.3. Ensure opportunities for Aboriginal, Torres Strait and Australian South Sea Islander artists to engage with public art
- 2.4. Reflect on the richness of the region's diverse migrant communities

GOAL 3: YOUTH MATTERS

KEY OBJECTIVES:

- 3.1. Give youth a voice and platform to express their identity through public art projects
- 3.2. Provide professional development opportunities for youth to gain artistic skills

GOAL 4: PUBLIC ART DEVELOPMENT AND ADVOCACY

KEY OBJECTIVES:

- 4.1. Provide opportunities for local and emerging artists
- 4.2. Promote public art across the region
- 4.3. Develop partnership opportunities to market and promote public art

GOAL 5: PLANNING, RESOURCING AND MAINTAINING PUBLIC ART

KEY OBJECTIVES:

- 5.1. Develop clear and transparent processes that enable the highest standard of excellence for public art
- 5.2. Advocate for adequate resourcing of public art
- 5.3. Ensure that to-standard maintenance processes and practices are adhered to

Image 3: **Donna MARCUS** *True North* 2012. Image courtesy of the artist and Dianne Tanzer Gallery.
Photography by Grant Perigo.



GLOSSARY

ARTIST: An artist can be a person:

- Who has specialist training within their field - not necessarily in academic institutions - and is involved in the creation of art as their profession
- With high-level interpretive, conceptualising and creative skills that result in the creation of artwork
- Who has demonstrated professional standing through exhibitions and commissions, and is considered an artist by his or her peers

COMMUNITY

- A group of people who share a common interest and for a whole variety of reasons have a sense of unity
- Those things which bond a group of people such as a shared belief, a political commitment, a common cultural background or a concern for the environment
- A community may live in the same area, work together or participate in the same sporting or cultural group
- A community may be comprised of a diverse group of people or one that shares similar characteristics
- In essence, a sense of community grows out of recognition of a common unity and the acceptance of difference

COMMUNITY ART

- Community art is a process through which artists and communities work together to express and/or articulate a collective vision in a creative and imaginative way
- Community art can be defined as work resulting from a high degree of community consultation and/or participation
- Community art may be created by a professional artist in consultation with members of the community
- Community art may be the result of practical art making by members of the community under the supervision of a professional artist
- Community development is the primary aim of a community art process
- Care and attention is paid to collective decision-making processes
- Issues of ownership and control over the development and outcomes of a community art project are important, as is the encouragement of a broad range of people
- Community art projects utilise the art form that is best suited to the desired outcome. Oral history, writing, visual arts, theatre, circus skills, dance, music and mask making are just some of the many art forms available to the community

CONTEMPORARY ART

Any artwork created today which is innovative for its time, comments on, or otherwise engages with issues relevant to its time. The use of materials and processes that are at the forefront of arts practice within their particular field at the time can be classed as contemporary art

DESIGN ADVISORS

A group of practitioners working collaboratively often including artists, architects, landscape, industrial and/or other designers

EVENTS

- This category may include one off or scheduled events in parks or other public spaces, such as outdoor exhibitions
- The events may be part of a festival or an artist residency program

INTEGRATED ART

- Integrated artwork can be defined as artwork created by an artist that has been conceived especially for a site or building and forms part of the built environment
- Integrated artwork can be commissioned as part of Council's capital works programs, such as streetscapes, parks or building projects
- Integrated artwork is most likely permanent and non-transferable and may include functional streetscape or park elements
- The artist usually develops integrated artwork concepts in collaboration with the project architect, landscape architect or urban designer

PARTICIPATORY ART

Participatory art is a term that describes a form of art that directly engages the audience in the creative process so that they become participants in the event

PERMANENT PUBLIC ARTWORKS: Artwork in this category might include:

- Signature works, landmarks or art in public places
- These terms relate to the fact that such works tend to be commissioned as set pieces of art in their own right
- These artworks are often major commissions with significant budgets and therefore require a transparent and accountable commissioning process to ensure the best artists are considered and that due process occurs
- The anticipated lifespan of a permanent artwork is identified in the development stages of the work

PUBLIC ART

Public art is any permanent or temporary art object, installation or activity in the public realm excluding galleries, museums and public collecting institutions. In general public art is sited on public land and has been purchased or is owned by a public authority.

This can include a wide range of art forms, such as:

- Permanent 2D or 3D visual art, craft or design element
- New media works, such as projection and digital artwork
- Temporary works, such as installation
- Ephemeral artworks, such as environmental artwork

PUBLIC REALM

The public realm can be defined as including - but not limited to - streets, squares, parks and spaces that are within buildings that are accessible to the general public and in the ownership of - or under the control of - public authorities. Spaces accessible to the public but in private ownership, such as shopping centres, corporate office buildings and residential development, can be considered as part of the public realm.

SOCIALLY ENGAGED ART/PRACTICE

Socially engaged practice, also referred to as social practice or socially engaged art, can include any artform which involves people and communities in debate, collaboration or social interaction.

STREET ART

- Street art is created legally and with the permission of building owners/occupiers if that site is privately owned and through the permission of Council if the site is council owned
- There is as yet no simple definition of street art, whereas traditional graffiti artists have primarily used free-hand aerosol paints to produce their works with tagging and text-based subject, street art encompasses many other media, techniques and subject matter
- Street artists will often work in studios, hold gallery exhibitions or work in other creative areas: they are not anti-art—they simply enjoy the freedom of working in public

TEMPORARY/EPHEMERAL

- Temporary artworks are specifically designed to last for days, weeks or months
- The term ephemeral artwork might be used to describe projects such as projection or lighting works where there is no physical object created. It might also be applied to physical works in non-permanent materials

Image 4: **NICHE ART** (Glen MANNING and Kathy DALY) *Canefire* 2015.

Photography by Just One Moment Photography.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Mackay Regional Council engaged Georgia Rouette, Arts, Museums and Heritage consultant to develop this five-year Public Art Strategy.

The Public Art Strategy has been developed following extensive consultation across Council departments, the arts and private sectors as well as the general public in order to provide a structure for future planning of permanent and temporary public place art commissions and to support the ongoing management of the existing collection. Through the process of consultation as well as investigation of national and international best practice, the strategy is designed as a living document, which guides the procurement and management of an engaging, inspiring public artwork collection for local, national and international audiences.

The outcomes of all of the methods of consultation - workshops, online survey, meetings and informal door-to-door conversations have informed this strategy. The key outcomes indicate that community, as well as internal stakeholders enjoy public art and see the value of increasing a public art presence across Mackay and the outlying regions.

Image 5: **Craig WALSH** *Entwined* 2002. Photography by Dean Whitting.

Back cover image: **DBCT Illuminate** 2018.

Photography by Liz Andrews Photography.





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