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We acknowledge that we are on the traditional lands of the Kulin Nation.  
We offer our respects to the Elders of these traditional lands, and through  
them to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples past and present.



# Executive Summary

Public art is an important and necessary ingredient in the life of a modern city. Art has the power to provoke, inspire and transform. It plays a strong role in shaping place, enhancing the environment and supporting the reputation of a town or city. Art forms a focus for storytelling, navigation and community engagement, connecting places and people. Art can stimulate the local economy, provide opportunities for artists and creative people, and contribute to a shared sense of identity.

The purpose of this Strategy is to focus our relationship with public art, and advocate the value of having a good quality collection and program of both permanent and temporary (including event-based) public art. The story of Maribyrnong is very much a story of national significance – from ancient environmental and Indigenous cultural heritage, through intensive eras of industry and urbanisation, successive waves of migration and settlement, and emerging contemporary creative, knowledge-based and service economies. These layers are all still active and evident in the city’s fabric and public art is increasingly called upon as the expressive tool of choice for collective reflection and identification.

Forming a part of Maribyrnong’s new Arts and Culture Strategy, this Strategy reflects a wide range of considerations including quality, impact, local engagement, siting and maintenance. This Strategy establishes a framework for commissioning and funding future artworks, and how Maribyrnong will continue to care for its public art. Looking forward, collaboration in place-based practice and sharing of resources between all of Maribyrnong’s stakeholders will be needed to ensure we have good quality public art, whether it is temporary, permanent, new or existing.

## Purpose

The purpose of this strategy is to:

- set out a clear vision and advocate for public art in the Maribyrnong economy and community
- profile public art as critical community infrastructure
- ensure public art projects are included in new developments where appropriate
- encourage partnerships with private and public stakeholders to diversify and strengthen sustainable funding for public art in Maribyrnong
- ensure the management and maintenance of our public art is appropriate and undertaken in line with industry standards
- engage artists, residents and other partners through public art programs
- encourage collaborative, place-based creative practice for temporary and permanent art
- provide guidance in regards to public art development in Maribyrnong

# Strategy Vision and Objectives

## Vision

The City of Maribyrnong invests in public art, temporal and permanent, to enliven and enrich public places, foster creative communities, and stage inclusive and progressive public conversations. Public art should be enjoyed by residents and visitors alike, bringing people together to celebrate our heritage and be part of our future.

## Strategy objectives

The vision will be achieved through the following five objectives, each with an action plan, detailed from page 14 onwards.

- 1. Commissioning practices for public art**  
to improve the practice of commissioning and developing public art in Maribyrnong.
- 2. Funding new public art**  
to improve the funding base for commissioning public art in Maribyrnong.
- 3. Supporting artists and administering public art**  
to facilitate the administration, management and governance of public art in Maribyrnong and provide information, advice and support to local artists, designers and arts workers.
- 4. Maintaining & promoting public art**  
to extend awareness and education of public art and facilitate management of the public art collection in Maribyrnong.

# Part One: Context

## Planning Context

The Council Plan 2017–2021 guides the planning, development, resourcing and provision of services to the community. Two of the Plan's key objectives relating to public art are:

### Objective 2 - Healthy and inclusive communities

*Summary of the community's key priorities*

- spaces for participation in arts and culture
- support for emerging and established arts and culture practitioners

*Yearly activity supporting the objective*

- increases perceptions of safety, improves the visual presentation of the city through public art and the street-art program

### Objective 3 - Quality places and spaces

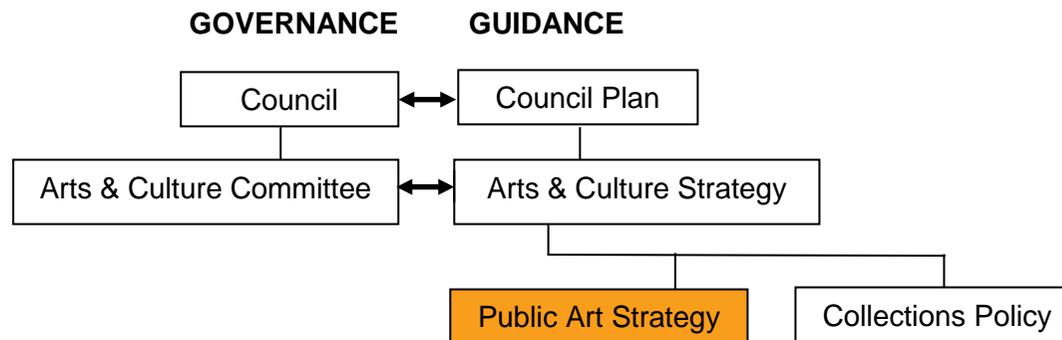
*Strategy for achieving the objective:*

- 3.5 Enhance public space and connection to place through visual and public arts

*Strategic Indicators measuring success:*

- Improved visual amenity, design of public buildings and open space and reflects community diversity and character

The Public Art Strategy links to the broader Arts and Culture Strategy which sits under the Council Plan. A Collections Policy also links to and supports the Public Art and Arts and Culture Strategies.



## What is public art?

Public art is a place-based creative practice: the act of producing permanent or temporary (including participatory and event-based) art in the public realm. The outcomes of artists' creative practice can become a part of the infrastructure of the built environment, or it can form a part of community engagement processes and cultural programs. It could be a permanent work, temporary site-responsive work, or could form part of a festival, series of events or interventions.

## Public Art in Maribyrnong

The City of Maribyrnong has a permanent collection of over sixty permanent public artworks (including murals, sculpture, street furniture and heritage monuments) dating from the late 1900s to the present. All works have been assessed, valued, and asset registered.

Since 2014 Council has produced a StreetWORKS program, commissioning over 30 murals in painting or applied treatments. The program has been successful as a graffiti deterrent and attracted funding partnerships with VicRoads, the Department of Justice, and local property owners and businesses. Local community reception of this program has been very positive. The Footscray Art Prize, established in 2016 as a collaboration between Maribyrnong City Council, Footscray Community Arts Centre, The Rotary Club of Footscray and Victoria University, now includes a Street Art Category.

The City has a lively contemporary arts scene and is home to: arts organisations that focus on community engagement including Footscray Community Arts Centre and Cohealth Art Generator; specialist art fabricators BiGfiSh, Waterside Metal Art Studio, and Footscray Maker Lab; Artist-Run Initiatives Five Walls and Trocadero; performing arts and creative literature organisations Snuff Puppets, Women's Circus, and 100 Story Building; and a unique centre of oral history that is Melbourne's Living Museum of the West. All of these organisations participate in and/or produce temporal art programs either as commissions, events, community engagement projects, or as part of festival programs. While they service the wider region, primarily of Melbourne's west, they hold a focal regard for their home base of Maribyrnong.

## City of Maribyrnong: The Place

Maribyrnong's history is rich and complex. Nature shaped the landscape, natural vegetation and the animal communities over many millennia. Today, a few important remnants survive, especially along the River's edge and other waterways. Protecting and extending these areas of surviving vegetation and habitat is very important. Aboriginal people have lived in the Maribyrnong River valley for at least 40,000 years, probably far longer. When European settlers first arrived, the City of Maribyrnong was part of the traditional lands of the Kulin Nation. This area's long Aboriginal history, linked to local places, is very precious and worthy of the greatest effort to ensure preservation and interpretation. This also includes post-settlement Aboriginal histories, where many Aboriginal people came to work in the large industries of Maribyrnong – the munitions factories, Kinnears Ropes, Angliss and Pridhams, the railways and at local schools. Aboriginal activism in Victoria, led by William Cooper a Footscray resident, began in the 1930s.

The City of Maribyrnong was one of the first areas settled by Europeans. Village reserves were set aside in Footscray and Braybrook in 1840, only four years after Melbourne was officially “settled”. In Footscray, and along the river, buildings were constructed quite quickly. Since then, there have been many periods of rebuilding and new development, but throughout the City and especially in Footscray, the evidence of very early dwellings and hotels survives. There are many layers to this history and the City of Maribyrnong is fortunate that so many places survive, giving the City a rich and distinctive character.

## City of Maribyrnong: The People

The City of Maribyrnong is undergoing significant change. Population growth, redevelopment, gentrification, and a transitioning economy are leading to an influx of new residents and businesses. The city has a high level of cultural diversity with 43% of residents born overseas as well as many new arrivals, asylum seekers, and people who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders. Many new residents are from India, Vietnam, Burma and China. Community acceptance of diverse cultures is high in Maribyrnong; 60% believe that multiculturalism makes life better in the area compared to 54% in the region. The city has a relatively young population with many infants and young adults, including a significant tertiary student population. The population is expected to grow considerably. From an estimate of 87,000 in 2016, to 119,000 by 2026, and 156,000 by 2041.

Overall, residents are highly educated and levels of education have risen. The socio-economic status and skill base is changing; the largest increases are in the occupations of Professionals and Managers. Many new high income households have moved to the more gentrified suburbs of Yarraville, Seddon and Kingsville. The City has some very disadvantaged pockets that correlate strongly with public housing locations in the suburbs of Braybrook, Maidstone and Footscray. Disparities in income are increasing. Mortgage and rental stress have increased especially amongst residents living in Braybrook, Maidstone, Footscray and West-Footscray and residents aged over 65. The City has twice as many homeless persons compared to the metropolitan area. The proportion of young residents 20-24 receiving youth allowances (36%) is well above the metropolitan average (21%) in 2016.



# Part Two: Strategy Directions

## Consultation

This strategy has been informed by an extensive consultation process involving: a public forum; online survey; interviews with external stakeholders from Council-supported and independent arts organisations, Indigenous organisations, and Traders Associations; and interviews with internal stakeholders across a range of council areas including City Design, Strategic Asset Management, Community Development, Urban Planning, and City Strategy, documented in a separate background report that supports this Strategy.

## Summary of consultation findings

### Why Public Art?

- To assist in creating community cohesion through active participation in local place shaping.
- To express significant social conversations – intercultural, intergenerational, Indigenous.
- To employ inclusive processes – engaging the community across the social spectrum, leveraging the wealth of expertise in the local arts organisations that focus in community-led processes.

### What Public Art?

- Temporal public artworks can be delivered within the festival framework, or can provide a complementary offering of installations and curated platforms.
- Ongoing support for Council's StreetWORKS program of murals and paste-ups.
- The next ten years should provide opportunities for more public art of all kinds, permanent and temporal.

### Where Public Art?

- Older industrial and heritage areas undergoing renewal, referencing site histories and important local stories.
- Landmark iconic artworks sited in gateway locations.
- The Maribyrnong River's edge is an important place for the whole community and wider region.
- The Bunbury Street Art walk is an important initiative to connect Footscray with the River and Cultural Precinct.

### How Public Art?

- Integrated within Council's capital works programs.
- Delivered by developers as part of planning requirements.
- Initiatives led by Arts and Culture Unit of Council, including a strategic acquisition and management program.
- Wider Council initiatives through place making projects, festivals and events.
- Community-led initiatives from arts and community organisations and groups.

## Public Art Strategy Outcomes

This strategy supports the development of public art projects and initiatives that can contribute to the following outcomes:

### 1. **Helping to strengthen Maribyrnong’s communities, place-shaping and city-making**

Public art is a relational practice, creatively linking people and place. Artists working within design teams and employing community engagement processes can create good quality and relevant public art, engendering civic pride, ownership and a sense of belonging. Such artworks can contribute to place-shaping, the sense of safety, cohesive and sustainable communities. There is significant opportunity within new development and capital works projects to express diverse stories of place, including lesser known, hidden and marginal stories; and to express diverse cultural, intercultural and intergenerational perspectives.

### 2. **Enabling Maribyrnong residents to experience creativity, and have opportunities to participate in the field of public art and the cultural field more generally.**

Located in the public domain and free of cost to the spectator, public art is open to all. It is important to ensure public art in Maribyrnong is as inclusive and accessible as possible, and that the right resources and partnerships are in place with a range of sectors, including arts organisations, University and schools, community groups and government authorities, to support artists and creative people to foster public art practice and the public art sector. Broad cultural participation will enhance community health and wellbeing (as recent research supports) and foster future public art advocates and leaders. Public art as a medium can also advance public dialogue and interpretations of issues of environmental, social and cultural significance.

### 3. **Improving Maribyrnong’s reputation as a desirable location where people and businesses want to be.**

Public art can unlock and rejuvenate underused spaces. It can express local character and place distinction, assisting localities to take on precinct identities. There is opportunity for artists to play a greater role in enlivening these local hubs and in the major activity centres of Footscray, Braybrook and Highpoint. Footscray’s intense urban footprint lends itself to the discovery experience of temporal public art interventions. Through the University Town initiative, it is also well placed to showcase the creative industries and digital innovation sector. Large-scale, iconic artwork commissions in key gateway locations, can become landmark features, expressing an identity for the municipality as a whole.

#### **4. Enhancing Maribyrnong's cultural offer for residents and visitors**

Artists need to be supported to develop public art proposals that are engaging and inventive, bold and inspiring, eccentric and surprising, intimate and reflective. For that Maribyrnong needs planners and urban designers, developers and managers, curators and consultants that can identify public art opportunities, facilitate artistic processes, develop and manage public art programs, invest and engage in creative exchange, bringing artists into the heart of the place conversation. The resulting artworks will create key events and experiences for Maribyrnong's residents and visitors.

Commissioning public art as part of Council facilities is a means of expressing the cultural significance of these amenities, enhancing the built form, engendering community ownership. Art integrated within infrastructure and private developments generates an evolving civic conversation that humanises urban environments.

#### **5. Enhancing the quality of the public realm, including parks, streets and public open spaces**

The edge of the Maribyrnong River which forms the City's major boundary is a highly valued natural asset and green corridor, featuring a series of premier parks and open spaces, many of which are subject to masterplanning and future improvement works. Public art, temporal and permanent, can enhance the river's edge journey and destination experience for day and evening enjoyment. There is opportunity for public art trails reflecting on the histories and heritage of this important environment.

Stony Creek forms another important local greenway which provides vital natural amenity to local communities. As population increases, and people live in higher density apartments without private gardens, the importance of public spaces, particularly recreational parks and open spaces, also increases. Public art can provide destinations and landmarks, enhance the attractiveness, safety, interest and enjoyment of these spaces.

A detailed review of the City's planning context in relation to public art provisions is the subject of a separate background report that supports this Strategy.



# Part Three: Strategy Implementation

## Strategic Objectives and Actions

The following five objectives underpin the Strategy's vision. Each objective has an action plan.

### Objective 1: Commissioning practices for public art

to improve the practice of commissioning and developing public art in Maribyrnong.

In order to foster and support the diverse practice of contemporary public art, it is important to undertake a range of commission processes. There is no one size fits all approach. Temporal art programs are often ideal for the uptake of emerging artists and experimental outcomes. Permanent commissions for private developments offer great opportunity for artist skill development and professional team work. Commissions for community infrastructure offer great opportunity for creative community engagement processes. Skill development to ensure quality public art outcomes is needed at all levels from artists and arts organisations to developers and businesses to Council's own staff across multiple areas. It is important to ensure that commission processes and programs are as accessible as possible. The City collection of public art should reflect the vibrant diversity of its community.

O1	Actions	Years	Years
		1 – 5	6 –10
1	Develop a Commissioning New Public Art Guidelines/Toolkit	✓	
2	Integrate public art processes and outcomes within Council's creative community engagement and place making projects		✓ ongoing
3	Develop and deliver a temporal art program involving installations, pop-ups events and other temporal interventions	✓ ongoing	
4	Develop guidelines for the commissioning and decommissioning of street art and develop a Street Art Permit process for Council	✓	
5	Develop assessment criteria for the inclusion of public art within Open Space projects	✓	
6	Ensure public art is employed as a primary means for Heritage, Environmental and Cultural Interpretations and artists are involved in future Memorial design processes, including Aboriginal heritage and Aboriginal artists		✓ ongoing
7	Explore public art outcomes within the Footscray University Town Initiative and partnership with Victoria University, including temporal art platforms for curated programming	✓ ongoing	
8	Install and curate an ongoing feature temporal art platform (e.g. billboard, banners, plinth, projection) in the cultural precinct		✓ ongoing
9	Ensure ongoing support and programming opportunities for new and emerging creative content including digital artists (e.g. film, projection, photography)	✓ ongoing	
10	In partnership with the Reconciliation Committee and Traditional Owner Organisations, investigate the potential for public artwork to be commissioned in recognition of local Aboriginal cultures, communities, histories and identities, such as a stolen generations memorial		✓ ongoing

## Objective 2: Funding new public art

to improve the funding base for commissioning public art in Maribyrnong.

Maribyrnong is experiencing rapid change and transformation, through increasing population, changing demography and industry, and ongoing development. Major projects and key developments have been identified across the City in the next ten and more years, many of which involve partnerships with other development businesses and authorities. There is a need to strategically ensure the inclusion of public art in pre-planning application processes, to partner with the private and public sector in the provision of funding and ongoing maintenance for public art and to bring our artists and arts organisations early to the planning table.

O2	Actions	Years	Years
		1 – 5	6 – 10
1	Include public art options in discussions with developers at early stages when appropriate. This could include temporary works in the lead up to new developments		✓ ongoing
2	Investigate Public Art as part of an overall Council Developer Contribution Plan		✓
3	Instate a Percent for Public Art contribution scheme for Council's new building infrastructure developments in excess of \$5M to the value of 1%. In the case of cultural facilities the levy may be as high as 2%. To be incorporated into project costs	✓	
4	Ensure public art opportunities are considered within masterplanning processes, major open space projects, and major precinct developments	✓ ongoing	
5	Identify future artwork commissions in key locations already endorsed through master planning such as civic gateways and iconic landmarks for the City, such as <i>Pipedreams</i> by Matthew Harding	✓ ongoing	
6	Continue to fund the StreetWORKS program, seeking matching support from local businesses and organisations and government departments	✓ ongoing	
7	Investigate the development of a temporal public art festival along the banks of the Maribyrnong River		✓ ongoing
8	When appropriate opportunities arise and in keeping with Council endorsed masterplans and strategies, deliver integrated art opportunities within streetscaping projects, particularly with Neighbourhood Activity Centres and Major Activity Centres		✓ ongoing

### Objective 3: Supporting artists and administering public art

to facilitate the administration, management and governance of public art in Maribyrnong; and provide information, advice and support to local artists, designers and arts workers.

In addition to resourcing public art through providing qualified staff, administrative support and management within the City's Arts and Culture Unit, the City of Maribyrnong will also support public art through drawing on a broad knowledge base that extends beyond the resources available within the organisation. A Public Art Advisory Panel will be convened by the City to bring together a diverse mix of experts in the industry to provide independent advice and to make recommendations on the implementation of the Public Art Strategy, policies, projects and programs. The actions identified also look to support artists working with public art commissioners (including developers), or in developing public art proposals. Increasing training and development of public artists will also support new and emerging talent, and both diversify and increase the number of artists working in public realm, in terms of artistic background as well as (but not exclusively) ethnicity, age, gender, disability, faith and sexuality.

O3	Actions	Years	Years
		1 – 5	6 – 10
1	Establish a Public Art Working Group, comprising internal members from Arts & Culture, Urban Planning, City Design, Strategic Asset Management, Community Development, City Strategy, City Business, Project Office and Risk. To be convened as needed	✓	
2	Ensure the Arts and Culture Unit is adequately staffed (in the order of 1 EFT dedicated to public art – an increase of .45 EFT) to meet the requirements of administering the public art collection, programs and this Strategy	✓ ongoing	
3	Register Street Artworks as assets on Council's asset management system alongside Public Art and monuments	✓ ongoing	
4	Work with partners to investigate a Maribyrnong Public Art Network as a professional forum for artists, commissioners, designers, fabricators and those who support the process e.g. planners, architects, curators.		✓
5	Investigate the establishment of a bi-annual public art residency to be hosted by the Living Museum of the West, drawing upon the museum's archive and reflecting the histories of Maribyrnong and Melbourne's west		✓
6	Offer annual artist grants for artist-led projects involving temporal art and community engagement processes	✓	
7	Work with City Business to grow the opportunities for temporal public art within the festival scene.	✓ ongoing	

## Objective 4: Maintaining and promoting public art

to improve the management of the existing public art collection and awareness of and education about public art in Maribyrnong.

It is important to establish clear roles and guidelines around the responsibilities and resourcing of the public art collection's ongoing maintenance and care. There are many ways that Maribyrnong's public art collection can be utilised to benefit local and wider communities, from promoting the city as an attractive destination, expressing a city-wide identity, and celebrating distinctive places and neighbourhoods. Furthermore public art can be an important educational resource for local schools, while playing an increasingly active role in social media.

<b>O4 Actions</b>		Years <b>1 – 5</b>	Years <b>6 – 10</b>
<b>1</b>	Ensure adequate dedicated funding for existing public art maintenance and for all new artwork commissions, ensuring ongoing maintenance provisions are calculated as part of the commission value	✓	
<b>2</b>	Review all monuments for cultural and historical appropriateness and gender equity	✓	
<b>3</b>	Develop and make available online a series of self-guided public art tours and education kits for schools. Explore the potential for linking with heritage trails and information, including Aboriginal heritage sites and stories		✓ ongoing
<b>4</b>	Continue to investigate the establishment of an experimental studio space for digital artists (eg film, projection, photography) and place-based creative practice with the city, including potentially within the Footscray Library redevelopment	✓ ongoing	
<b>5</b>	Uphold the appropriate remuneration of artists at all stages of the public art commission process, as at least meeting the minimum rates of pay advised by the National Association of the Visual Arts.	✓ ongoing	

## Resource allocations

The table below compares current levels of resourcing for public art capability and programs at the City of Maribyrnong with what is envisaged as required to implement and fulfil this Strategy.

Public Art Resourcing	Current level	Required level
<b>Staffing</b>	1 x 0.55 EFT Band 6: Visual & Public Arts Officer 1 x 0.6 EFT Band 5: Temp Collection Assistant (ends June 2019)	No additional staffing 1 x 1.0 EFT Band 6: Visual & Public Art Curator
<b>Operational</b>	\$30,000 – currently covers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>StreetWORKS program</li> </ul>	\$30,000 for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>StreetWORKS program</li> </ul>
<b>Capital / Renewal</b>	\$100,000 – currently covers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>all public art programs</li> <li>0.6 EFT Band 5 collection position</li> <li>Maintenance and restorations</li> </ul>	\$120,000 – to cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Temporal art programs</li> <li>Temporal art platforms</li> <li>Residencies</li> <li>Consultancies and/or community engagement processes</li> </ul>
<b>Maintenance</b>	Included in Capital / Renewal allocation (above)	\$30,000 separate dedicated budget
<b>Major Public Art</b> - allocation for permanent works (minor & major works)	Nil	As required (through annual budget process)
<b>Percent for Art allocations</b>	Nil	1% of Council Building Infrastructure projects in excess of \$5M 0.5% of Private Developments in excess of \$5M In addition to public art commission programs, funds may cover additional staff / consultants for curation and/or project management.
<b>Support</b>	Management: Arts & Culture Coordinator	Public Art Working Group Management: Arts & Culture Coordinator Marketing & Promotion Asset Management





Community consultation and strategy development by Artfully

Maribyrnong City Council would like to thank the community for their contribution to this Strategy

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**Image credits**

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|-------|---|
| Cover | <i>Pipedreams</i> (detail), Pipemakers Park<br>Artist: Matthew Harding. Image by Nico Photography |
| P3    | <i>People</i> , Skinner Reserve, Braybrook<br>Artists: Jonathan Leahy and David Burrows, TRÜC     |
| P9    | <i>Untitled</i> (detail), Barkley St, West Footscray<br>Artist: Júlia Both                        |
| P13   | <i>Meniscus</i> , Sculpture Park, Edgewater Estate<br>Artist: Cliff Burt                          |
| P19   | <i>Arch for Reconciliation</i> , Footscray Community Arts Centre<br>Artist: Brian Paulusz         |