



September 2016

Plaques and Memorials Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of the Plaques and Memorials Policy is to establish criteria for the City of Melbourne to assess applications from individuals and groups wishing to formally recognise significant local people, groups, places and events in the form of commemorative plaques and memorials within the municipality of Melbourne.

Given the gravitas of plaques and memorials and their need to pass the test of time, the City of Melbourne believe a robust decision making process is vital. Applications are assessed strictly applying the criteria set out in this policy and the procedure in the process document attached to it. For plaques the process of decision making will take more than three months and for memorials it may take several years.

2. Context

The use of plaques and memorials dates back many hundreds of years. Plaques and memorials have the ability to create a connection between the person viewing them and the place in which they are located. Increasingly cities use them in innovative ways to enrich the experience of visitors. Plaques and memorials tell stories about people, groups, places or events and they do so with a sense of gravitas. This is associated with the material from which they are made, their semi-permanence in the landscape and the authority of those who install them.

In the case of plaques, they acknowledge place: something important happened here! Sometimes plaques can be clustered in a particular location or around a theme, also creating a sense of place. For example, Sydney's Kings Cross features a cluster of plaques that reference individuals who lived in the area (see image).



One of a series of plaques celebrating people who have lived in and around Kings Cross, Sydney

In the case of memorials, they can help create a sense of place: a location where people come to remember, reflect, meet.

Melbourne has finite public space and a rapidly growing population. It needs to accommodate the diverse open space needs of new residents, visitors and events. Our streets and footpaths need to balance the needs of cars, bikes, pedestrians, street life and hundreds of thousands of visitors every day.

Space for new memorials, in particular, is limited, and experience has shown that most applications for memorials seek a similar site: a relatively quiet location, the ability to sit and contemplate and sufficient space to hold a public gathering if required.

Plaques and memorials are also costly when one factors in community and Council engagement, assessment, design, construction, maintenance and potential removal.

Meanwhile, the digital environment increasingly is providing affordable alternatives for those seeking a method of commemoration. In the digital world, there is infinite space and opportunities to add sound, vision, context and interactivity to any story.

This policy outlines the City of Melbourne's approach to managing the array of opportunities and constraints related to plaques and memorials and their alternatives.

3. Scope

In scope

This policy only relates to:

- Requests related to locations within the City of Melbourne and on land it manages.
- Requests for one-off plaques.
- Requests for a cluster or series of plaques associated with a particular theme.
- Requests for memorials

The systematic addition of plaques and memorials to the City of Melbourne's mapping system, allowing members of the public to find their location and information about them online.

These requests may come from sources outside the City of Melbourne or from Council officers.

Out of scope

There are opportunities to commemorate people, groups, places or events outside of the scope of this policy. They include:

- Making a donation to the City of Melbourne's Urban Forest Fund, which will contribute to tree planting and greening the city.
- Developing website content or an augmented reality app. These can allow significant places to be mapped digitally and for people in the area to access information including music and visual data via their devices



After downloading an app, a mobile phone positioned in front of this mural on a building in Adelaide generates written information, a You Tube clip, photo booth image and other functionality. (Adelaide Fringe Street Art Explosion 2016)

- Writing a history. The City of Melbourne's libraries have information on how to explore family histories. Limited amounts of funding for history projects are available through our annual Arts Grants programs, details of which are on the website.
- The naming or renaming of a road (whether public or private). New road names need to comply with the State Government's Guidelines for Geographic Names that are established under the Geographic Place Names Act 1998. For information contact the City of Melbourne's Land Survey team.
- Making a donation to the Lord Mayor's Charitable Fund: www.lmcf.org.au/waystogive/donate
- Gifting pre-existing memorial artworks. People who wish to do this should contact the City of Melbourne's Arts and Heritage Collection team.
- Approaching private or federal, state or other local government land owners, who may have more appropriate sites available. These include places that are significant to particular cultural communities or activities, such as RSLs, sports grounds or areas where many people from a country of origin have settled.

4. Definitions

A **plaque** is a flat piece of metal, stone or other durable material with a two-dimensional face that can be fixed to an object, pavement or building. A plaque includes text and/or images to recognise a person, group, place or event, or to interpret the history of a public place.

A **one-off plaque** commemorates a person, group, place or event in a single location in the city.

A **plaque cluster** is a group of plaques on a particular theme in **one location**, such as the one celebrating colourful individuals at Sydney's King's Cross or commemorating communities affected by war outside Adelaide's Immigration Museum.

A **plaque series** is a group of plaques on a particular theme spread across **multiple locations** such as Melbourne's Golden Mile Heritage Trail, which has 'guiding' plaques embedded into the footpaths along its journey (<http://www.thatsmelbourne.com.au/Whatson/tours/ground/Pages/5fde5335-4111-45c7-bce6-c4497ab2be93.aspx>)

A **memorial** is a two or three-dimensional object or feature designed to recognise a person, group or event. It could be a sculptural or artistic work, or a water, horticultural or landscape element.

A **co-located memorial site** is a place where memorials on separate subjects are located, thus establishing the place as a destination for commemoration.

The **City of Melbourne** is the corporate identity and informal name of the legal entity, the Melbourne City Council.

The **municipality of Melbourne** is metropolitan Melbourne's innermost suburbs, including the central city, Carlton, Docklands, East Melbourne, Flemington, Kensington, North Melbourne, Parkville, Port Melbourne, Fishermans Bend, Southbank, South Wharf, South Yarra and West Melbourne. Maps can be found on <http://maps.melbourne.vic.gov.au/index.html>

5. Application

- This policy applies to people and groups wishing to place a plaque or memorial within the City of Melbourne as well as Councillors and staff who will decide on the applications.
- This Policy replaces previous Council Policy and Guidelines, including the Policy for Memorials and Monuments in the City of Melbourne Parklands (2003) and the Plaques and Memorials Policy (1999).

6. Policy and assessment criteria

Funding

- Plaques and memorials are costly to assess, design, make and install. These lifecycle costs must be paid for by the private individuals or groups making the request.
- Plaques generally cost several thousands of dollars. Various design options are permitted, ranging from simple and classic to more expensive and bespoke (see plaque style guide attached to this document).
- Memorials generally cost several hundreds of thousands of dollars and often involve lengthy fundraising campaigns by communities that wish to see them built.

Manufacture and installation will not occur until payment is made. Successful applicants must be capable of funding the project and have one year to pay the costs prior to their application lapsing.

Location

- The nature of a plaque or memorial affects its location.
- It must not detract from the location or existing art works, landscape features, plaques or memorials in the area.
- Many areas of the city are not appropriate for new memorials. The City of Melbourne will provide guidance on appropriate location options early in the application process.
- Stand-alone plaques require a strong connection to the place in which they are located.
- Memorials require a strong connection to Melbourne and a location appropriate to their purpose – such as a place to reflect or for communities to gather.

Gravitas, accuracy and community support

- Plaques and memorials should not relate to subjects memorialised elsewhere.
- Plaques and memorials must be significant to the civic, cultural or political life of Melbourne or Victoria.
- Plaques may relate to a particular community. As memorials have a more substantial impact on public spaces, they must hold great significance and be of enduring interest to the wider community.
- Memorials must have strong community support and their advocates must be able to demonstrate this support and commit to ongoing community engagement processes.
- Factual information associated with a plaque or memorial must be thoroughly researched by the applicant, and widely accepted by the community and endorsed by the City of Melbourne.
- As a capital city, the City of Melbourne is unable to consider personal or family related plaques or memorials on its land.

Businesses

- For a plaque to be linked to a business, either through its content or location, that business must be shown to have had an enduring social impact on Melbourne, whether it is currently trading or no longer trading.
- Logos and branding are not permitted on plaques or memorials.

The test of time

- Plaques and memorials remain in the public realm for many years. To ensure they pass the test of time, the City of Melbourne requires them to relate to subject matter that is at least five years old, i.e. events that occurred at least five years ago or people who died at least five years ago. There may be some exceptions and the Plaques and Memorials Committee may consider a reduced time frame in some circumstances.
- An example of an exception is a cluster or a series of plaques that might be created to celebrate a particular cultural aspect of the city, such as the City of Sydney installed to celebrate colourful individuals who lived in and around Kings Cross.

Artistic merit and form

- To ensure a high level of creativity, artistic integrity and durability is integrated into Melbourne's plaques and memorials, successful applicants will be required to work collaboratively with the City of Melbourne on their concept. This includes collaborating on artist selection, design, durability, environmental sustainability and maintenance.
- In the case of memorials, the strength of the artistic concept will be central to the storytelling.
- In the case of plaques, words will be central to the storytelling.

Digital additions

- The City of Melbourne will add the location and description of new plaques and memorials to its digital maps of the city, which can be accessed by the public through its website.
- Successful applicants will be encouraged to consider the suitability of digital enhancements to their project.

Policy and legislation

- Plaques and memorials must comply with relevant City of Melbourne and other policies and legislation, which will be outlined by Council officers during the application process. These range from planning legislation to cultural and gender diversity policies.

Removal

- If circumstances require that a plaque or memorial needs to be removed, the City of Melbourne will make all reasonable efforts to notify the applicant.
- If required, the City of Melbourne may remove a plaque after five years.
- If required, the City of Melbourne may remove a memorial after 10 years.

7. Responsibilities

Applicants are responsible for funding their proposal and working closely with the City of Melbourne to design a plaque or memorial of sufficient artistic and structural quality to be suitable for installation in a public place on land managed by the City of Melbourne. They will be required to demonstrate community support for their application.

The **Plaques and Memorials Committee** is responsible for applying the Policy and Assessment Criteria to each application, meeting four times a year to do so (or more frequently if needed) and carrying out follow-up actions as required, including seeking expert advice or community feedback.

The **Chair of the Plaques and Memorials Committee**, a relevant senior manager, is responsible for ensuring applicants are given timely information about the progress of their application and for the effective running of the committee. This includes ensuring appropriate input from relevant external experts and the following and other work areas as required:

- Arts Melbourne
- Urban Sustainability
- Parks and Waterways

- Planning And Building
- Engineering Services
- Smart City Office
- Business and Tourism
- Communications and Strategic Marketing
- City Design Studio

External experts may be approached to provide advice on particular elements of an application, such as historical accuracy, wording or artistic potential/merit.

The Council is responsible for approving applications for memorials on land owned and managed by the City of Melbourne.

Ongoing review and updates to this policy is the responsibility of the Arts Melbourne and Urban Sustainability Branches.

8. References

Plaques and memorials are expected to comply with relevant legislation and policies.

A range of current City of Melbourne policies will also guide the implementation of this policy, including the:

- Council Plan
- Parks Policy
- Open Space Strategy 2012
- Park Master Plans
- Public Art Framework 2014–2017
- Aboriginal Heritage Action Plan 2015–2018
- Heritage Strategy
- Art Strategy 2014–2017
- Street Management Plans
- Urban Forest Strategy 2012–2032
- Melbourne For All People 2014–2017
- Preventing Violence Against Women 2013–2016
- Beyond the Safe City 2014–2017
- Reconciliation Action Plan 2015–2018