Public Art Framework 2014-17

Introduction

The Public Art Framework 2014-2017 outlines the vision, direction and platforms of the Public Art Program over the next three years. It is future focused while reflecting Melbourne’s strong legacy of creative activation of the public realm.

The Framework is guided by the goals and commitments set out in the City of Melbourne Arts Strategy 2014-2017. It has been developed through a process of internal and external consultation with key stakeholders that explored expectations and priorities around public art in the City of Melbourne.

The Framework aligns the work of the Public Art Program with key Council work areas, strategies and plans. Central to the successful delivery of the Framework is successful ongoing relationships with external stakeholders including independent artists and arts organisations, cultural and educational institutions, private developers and other tiers of government. These relationships are reflected in the framework actions.

Rationale

Public art is by its nature highly visible. It sits in the public realm, impacting on the city and on people’s experience of the city. Everyone has an opinion about public art. Public art requires many partnerships: with a range of internal work areas and with building owners, developers and other tiers of government. A Public Art Framework is necessary in order to articulate how a successful and integrated public art program can be delivered within the municipality.

The framework addresses the challenges and opportunities identified through the consultation process. Key stakeholder findings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenges</th>
<th>Opportunities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of clarity and consistency around the program’s direction, internal processes and decision making</td>
<td>Articulate a bold vision for the program and provide clearly defined policies and transparent processes</td>
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<td>Program growth</td>
<td>Build strategic partnerships and explore different funding models with the private sector</td>
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<td>Quality of outcome is determined by the level of involvement of the artist</td>
<td>Align with key strategies and capital projects at the City of Melbourne, allowing for cross-departmental collaboration and the potential for artists to be involved strategically in projects</td>
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<td>Complex commissioning and administration processes create a significant barrier to entry for artists, particularly early career artists</td>
<td>Develop programs and mentorship opportunities that help to support the development of skills and capacity of artists and curators over the span of their careers</td>
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<td>A thriving arts community needs support in capacity building</td>
<td>Recognise and cross-promote art-related activities in the public realm in Melbourne</td>
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Vision of the Public Art Program

The Public Art Program will position Melbourne as a leading city for innovative and engaging contemporary art in the public domain.

The Public Art Program creates a dynamic interface between the people of Melbourne, its rich architecture and public art heritage, and its growth into a leading 21st century city. The Public Art Program attracts contemporary artists and key partners, creating the best conditions for them to explore ideas and enabling them to deliver high impact, transformative and inspiring public art in the public domain.

Responsive to the demands of a growing city and engaged with the city’s people, the Public Art Program inspires and enables civic dialogue about the role of art in a creative city.

Direction of the Public Art Program

Over the next three years, the Public Art Program will achieve this vision through establishing a three tiered approach to the development and delivery of public art in the City of Melbourne.

Leadership and Strategic Partnerships
- Partnering with Council work areas to deliver innovative, high quality public art projects through capital works programs
- Aligning these public art projects with key Council priorities, strategies and plans
- Working with key external partners including developers, building owners, arts organisations, artists and state and federal government to deliver innovative, high quality public art projects

Development and Investment
- Develop a quick response program that supports artists, curators and organisations to explore creative public art ideas as temporary public test sites
- Delivering a biennial laboratory in the public realm with a focus on early to mid-career artists which will present up to five temporary public art works within the municipality
- Establishing an annual Public Realm Fellowship connecting artists to key strategic initiatives

Communication and Exchange
- Developing a communications plan for the program and its three platforms
- Creating a Public Art page on the www.melbourne.vic.gov.au site that brings together in one accessible place the program’s structure, framework, processes and all related policies
- Developing regular newsletters and using social media to promote art in Melbourne and recognise the artists associated with working in public domain.
- Establishing a mobile, temporary public art office that is able to be deployed in key locations to enhance program activity.

Commissioning Public Artworks

Temporary Works
Temporary works are defined as installations or actions which activate a location for a specific period of time. They are exploratory and experimental in nature and can have an expected lifespan of 1 day to 2 years.

Temporary works will be developed through artist test sites and laboratories and will be delivered throughout the year. Temporary works may be further developed into permanent commissions.

Permanent Works
Permanent works are defined as enduring, site-specific cultural assets, commissioned with an expected lifespan of 25 years and minimum lifespan expectations. Permanent works belong to the Art and Heritage Collection and are managed and obtained by this program.
Permanent works will always be produced in partnership with external or internal partners or both. These major commissions will not necessarily take place annually.

**Unsolicited Permanent Public Art Works**
Unsolicited offers of permanent public art works, both existing and proposed, will in the first instance be referred to Council’s Public Art Advisory Panel. This panel will consider the art work based on criteria including artistic merit and compatibility with the Public Art Program vision and Council’s 2014 – 17 Arts Strategy.

Should the panel recommend further consideration, the proposed work will then be reviewed by an internal committee drawn from key branches where an assessment will be made in consideration of the availability of appropriate site, feasibility, materiality, and other relevant aspects important to the location of art works in the public domain.

The recommendations of the Public Art Advisory Panel and the internal committee will be presented to Council as required.

**Street Art**
Street art is defined as uncommissioned work - stencils, paste-ups and murals - and does not include graffiti or tagging which is illegal. Street art will not be directly commissioned by the Public Art Program.

Street art projects which are of a scale and significance that artists are unable to deliver independently may be commissioned via the program in strategic partnership and collaboration with stakeholders and in alignment with the Graffiti Management Plan 2014-18.

**Platforms and Actions of the Public Art Program**

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<th>Actions</th>
<th>Arts Strategy</th>
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<td>1. The program is positioned as a public and private sector resource and facilitator for public art within the municipality</td>
<td>Activation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Work with internal City of Melbourne departments to deliver public art projects through Council's capital works program and in alignment with relevant Council strategies and plans.</td>
<td>Connection</td>
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<td>3. Work with key external partners to develop and deliver public art projects.</td>
<td>Recognition</td>
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<td><strong>Development and Investment</strong></td>
<td>4. Provide quick response support for artists, curators and organisations to test and explore creative ideas at temporary ‘test-sites’ in the public realm of Melbourne.</td>
<td>Activation, Spaces, Funding</td>
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<td>5. Initiate a biennial laboratory in the public realm for early career and mid-career artists.</td>
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<td>6. Establish an annual Public Realm Fellowship that connects artists and curators to key strategic initiatives.</td>
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<td><strong>Communication and Exchange</strong></td>
<td>7. Develop a centralised customer contact point for all matters relating to the Public Art Program.</td>
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<td>8. Develop a communications plan that identifies the best channels to recognise and promote the value of public artwork presented within Melbourne's public domain.</td>
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<td>9. Directly engage with artists and audiences by establishing a mobile, temporary pop-up public art hub that will be installed in key locations in the municipality</td>
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Leadership and Strategic Partnerships

Foster relationships and strategic partnerships between Melbourne’s arts networks, tiers of government and the private and public sector to deliver major commissions and enhance the program’s profile at a high level.

Provide information, resources and advocacy regarding best practice in the commissioning and delivery of new public art projects.

Develop partnerships with key internal and external stakeholders to deliver public art projects that are of a scale which the program is unable to deliver independently.

Art Strategy Themes: Activation; Connection; Recognition

Action 1:
The program is positioned as a public and private sector resource and facilitator for public art within the municipality

- Define the program’s operational role as a public art service provider to support key internal City of Melbourne stakeholders and external partners.
- Provide a coordination function between a range of City of Melbourne work areas relating to public art activity.

Results:
1. Publicly accessible information, advice and guidance to all internal and external customers regarding public art in the municipality.

Action 2:
Work with internal City of Melbourne work areas to deliver public art projects through Council’s capital works program and in alignment with relevant Council strategies and plans.

Partner in relevant Council capital works projects to deliver significant public art.
Develop and deliver public art projects aligned with relevant Council strategies and plans. These include:

- Melbourne Walking Plan
- Places for People
- Open Space Strategy
- Queen Victoria Market (QVM) Development
- Melbourne Arts Precinct Blueprint
- City Road Master Plan
- Graffiti Management Plan
- Indigenous Heritage Action Plan
- Reconciliation Action Plan

Results:
1. Pro-active and integrated program planning processes, including the consolidation and strategic use of program budgets
2. Increased strategic involvement of artists/curators within internal City of Melbourne capital projects
3. Increased public art opportunities for artists and curators
4. Increased public art within Council buildings and public realm works.
**Action 3:**

**Work with key external partners to develop and deliver public art projects.**

- Develop public art projects in partnership with developers and building owners, artists and arts organisations and state and federal government.
- Deliver a diverse range of public art projects of a scale unable to be delivered independently.
- Promote the commissioning and delivery of high quality public art within the public and private sector, including Docklands via the Docklands Urban Art Coordination Group (DUACG).

**Results:**

1. Robust relationships with private sector and state and federal government.
2. Shared financial support for public art projects.
3. Delivery of public art projects of significant scale.
4. Increased opportunities for artists.
5. Increased public art in the municipality including projects of significant scale.

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**Development and Investment**

**Invest in the development of artists and the activation of the public realm by positioning the city as a live laboratory.**

As a local government service, the City of Melbourne’s Public Art Program is uniquely placed to support artists to access spaces and test ideas within the municipality’s public realm.

Inspired by Melbourne’s robust public domain, the Public Art Program will support the temporary testing of new and experimental forms of public art, underscoring our reputation as a dynamic, creative city.

The program will provide a strong emphasis on experimentation, and concept ideation and development, particularly focused on building the capacity of early-career artists.

**Art Strategy Themes:** Activation; Spaces; Funding

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**Action 4:**

**Provide quick response support for artists, curators and organisations to test and explore creative ideas as temporary ‘test-sites’ in the public realm of Melbourne’s CBD.**

- Design and deliver a responsive program that provides material, administrative and/or permit support to artists for the testing of public art ideas and concepts.
- Minimise artist’s administration by delivering simple application & acquittal processes.
- Develop ‘test-site’ opportunities that align with Council’s strategic initiatives and private and public sector partnerships.
- The first year program will offer artists up to $3000 in seed funds via a six-week cycle, with a one day mini-lab facilitated by an experienced arts mentor every three months.
Results:

1. Public space becomes more accessible for artists / curators via the simplification of administrative and approval processes and the provision of material / technical support.

2. Capacity of artists to develop innovative and exciting concepts and projects within public space is strengthened, contributing to an environment in which artists can flourish.

3. The city is activated in interesting and innovative ways by artists.

4. City “audiences” are connected with artists and their creative processes.

**Action 5:**

**Initiate a biennial laboratory in the public realm for early career and mid-career artists**

- Provide funding and mentoring support for fifteen early to mid-career artists to develop temporary public artworks in the public domain.
- Provide opportunities for mid to late-career artists to be mentors supporting artists in the development of new work.

Results:

1. Artists working across disciplines from around Australia are attracted to work in Melbourne.

2. The public domain is opened to artists / practitioners who do not traditionally work within this arena.

3. Artists are supported to explore and realise new ideas.

4. Significant public presentation of a biennial cycle of up to five temporary public artworks aligned to City of Melbourne key strategic areas.

**Action 6:**

**Establish an annual Public Realm Fellowship that connects artists and curators to key strategic initiatives**

- Provide support for mid to late career artists and/or curators to explore and realise ideas. Projects vary in scale and focus and may be project or precinct specific based on opportunities.

Results:

1. Increased strategic involvement of artists/curators with City of Melbourne projects.

2. The potential of the arts to add value to City of Melbourne projects is harnessed.
**Communication and Exchange**

Establish robust communication platforms for the program.

Transparency and clear communication is the foundation of building strong and long-lasting relationships and creating the best conditions for great collaboration between Council, the public and private sectors, art networks and the community.

A bold program identity and communication strategy will broaden the program’s reach to a diverse range of artists and audiences. It will encourage and support new and meaningful connections between artists, audiences and key stakeholders as well as acknowledge artists’ role in a creative city.

The intention is to reposition public space as a temporary / pop-up venue with the Public Art Program acting as “venue” manager and facilitator.

*Themes:* *Connection; Recognition*

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**Action 7:**

**Develop a centralised customer contact point for all matters relating to the Public Art Program**

- Promote the program vision and direction to artists, curators and key stakeholders via a public art page on the melbourne.vic.gov.au, regular newsletters and City of Melbourne’s social media channels.

- Enable easy access to information about the program’s opportunities and activities for artists & audiences.

- Ensure that the program structure and associated public domain processes and guidelines are current and accessible to artists, audiences and key stakeholders.

**Results:**

1. Increased program profile
2. Clearer understanding of program identity, process and objectives.
3. Easily accessible information, resources and guidelines.

**Action 8:**

**Develop a communications plan that identifies the best channels to recognise and promote the value of public artwork presented within Melbourne’s public domain.**

- Acknowledge City of Melbourne is part of a network of organisations that commission public art in Melbourne and optimise on this critical mass of activity when developing a communications plan.

- Develop a showcase and centralised contact point for art presented in the public realm across Melbourne and beyond, not just those commissioned by CoM as a creative resource for artists, curators and audiences.

- Make it easier for new audiences to access information.
Results:

1. On-line platform which promotes artists and arts networks and enable artists and audiences to engage and connect with each other

2. Strong partnerships with other art networks / organisations working in the public domain via cross-promotion on-line

3. Increased program profile and promotion of Melbourne as a creative city

Action 9:
Directly engage with artists and audiences by establishing a mobile, temporary pop-up public art hub that will be installed in key locations in the municipality

- Program team will operate out of a mobile / pop-up ‘public office’ adjacent to key sites across City of Melbourne.

- The pop-up office will host temporary talks and be an event hub during key points in the programming calendar, encouraging Melburnians to get involved in the public art program

Results:

1. Make the public art program public via a temporary pop-up hub

2. Stimulate public discussion and engagement with artist’s creative process via a biennial public forum about art and the public domain as part of the lab program.