



COUNCIL POLICY

PUBLIC ART POLICY

Responsible Officer: Manager Economy and Creative Industries

Due for Review: July 2028

PURPOSE

This policy outlines the framework for commissioning, managing, maintaining, and deaccessioning public art within the Colac Otway Shire.

STATEMENT OF POLICY

1. Policy Statement

Colac Otway Shire Council supports the enrichment of public spaces through the acquisition and sponsorship of public art. This policy outlines the methods and criteria for acquiring, commissioning, and maintaining public art to ensure it aligns with community values and strategic goals.

2. Acquisition Methods:

2.1 Purchase or Donation of Existing Works:

- **Example:** Artwork donated by a local artist or organisation to Colac Otway Shire. The artwork existed prior to the donation or purchase and was not created specifically for a site or developed with a predetermined brief.

2.2 Commissioning for Specific Sites or Projects:

- **Example:** A new mural is commissioned to feature on the side of a community hall. The mural is created specifically for the site and developed in response to a brief.

2.3 Community Arts Projects or Workshops:

- **Example:** An artist works with the community on a project, and the resulting works are displayed in a public place. The focus is on community engagement and process rather than the outcome. For instance, an artist might work with local school students on a mural or sculptural installation. Community-led initiatives are encouraged, particularly those that foster intergenerational participation and reflect local stories or identities.

2.4 Colac Otway Shire Community Grants:

- **Example:** A community group applies for funding through the Community Grants program to develop or establish an artwork in the public domain. This can be achieved either through commission or as a community arts project.

2.5 Community Project Initiatives Program:

- **Example:** A community group submits an idea for a project to the Council. The idea is assessed for feasibility and appropriate support. If feasible, the project receives support for scoping and development, as well as limited financial support.

2.6 Projects Funded by External Grants, Philanthropic Trusts, or Individuals:

- **Example:** A project is funded by an external source, usually following a proposal submission that includes a project brief. Sources might include state or federal government.

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Policy No.	1	Record No.	D25/194393	Date Adopted	28 October 2025
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2.7 Integrated Art as Part of Capital Works Projects:

- **Example:** A new footbridge is constructed, and an artist is commissioned to design the handrail.

2.8 Partnerships or Sponsorship of Public Art:

- **Example:** A partnership is formed between entities to deliver project outcomes. This might involve a commercial sponsorship agreement or a funding agreement between a community group and a government department or business.

2.9 Public Art Curated on a Theme, Commemoration, or Specific Event:

- **Example:** Artworks such as commemorative sculptures are created to honor significant events or individuals. A commissioning brief outlines the function or core theme of the commission.

2.10 Public Art Produced During Artist in Residence Projects:

- **Example:** A residency program supports the development of the artist's practice and creative engagement with the community. A public outcome, such as a sculpture, is often required and left with the host community for display.

2.11 Public Art Identified Through Structure or Placemaking Planning Initiatives:

- **Example:** Structure Plans provide a strategic framework to guide future land use and development decisions, ensuring growth is responsive to the landscape and respectful of the rural character. This involves significant community engagement.

3. Selection and Approval Criteria

When looking at proposals for new public art, Council will consider the following points:

- **Relevance to Colac Otway Shire:** Reflects the unique cultural and historical aspects of the area, aligning with community themes and concerns as guided by the Council Plan and other relevant strategies.
- **Quality and Innovation:** Ensures high standards of artistic practice and offers unique, innovative ideas that engage the space in new ways.
- **Economic and Social Impact:** Potential to attract visitors, boost local businesses, and enhance social cohesion.
- **Environmental Integration and Durability:** Complements and enhances the existing environment, considering scale, materials, placement, and the ability to withstand environmental conditions.
- **Local Artist Engagement:** Proposals that engage artists living or working within the Colac Otway Shire are encouraged, where appropriate, and where the artist's experience and concept align with the objectives and quality standards of the project.
- **Safety and Suitability:** Safe for public interaction and suitable for the intended location.
- **Budget & Materials:** Cost-effective and use sustainable materials.
- **Maintenance:** Includes a clear plan for upkeep and lifecycle.
- **Compliance:** Meets all approval and permit requirements.

4. Types of Public Art

4.1 Permanent Art

Permanent public art can be commissioned at both existing and new public sites and facilities, planned to remain in situ for 5-25 years. These works must be integrated into civic infrastructure and urban design planning from the earliest stages.

4.2 Temporary Works

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Policy No.	1	Record No.	D25/194393	Date Adopted	28 October 2025
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Temporary public art provides opportunities for lower-cost, short-term installations that respond to current community themes. These works can be exhibited for 1 day to 5 years, supporting emerging and professional artists.

4.3 Third-Party Works

Public art commissioned by private enterprises, associations, or individuals will be assessed using the same criteria as Council-commissioned works.

5. Donations and Transfers of Public Art to Council Collection

Proposals to donate public artworks to the Council must meet the same criteria as new commissions and acquisitions.

6. Funding and Maintenance

- **Funding:** The Council's commitment to public art is demonstrated through the allocation of funds, which can leverage additional support from grants and private sector contributions. Public art project proposals will be reviewed annually and considered during the Council's budget process.
- **Maintenance:** The Council is responsible for the maintenance and safekeeping of all public art it commissions or acquires. Public art will be managed under the Council's Asset Management Policy, with maintenance needs assessed every five years and an annual review.
- Council will consider annual or biennial funding rounds, including Expressions of Interest (EOIs), to support new public art projects. These will be promoted publicly and assessed using the criteria outlined in this policy and associated guidelines.

7. Deaccessioning: Public art is expected to remain in place for at least five years. The Council may remove or relocate artwork if it becomes damaged, poses a safety risk, or no longer aligns with community values. Proposals to remove art based solely on aesthetic grounds will not be considered.

8. Intellectual Property: The artist retains intellectual property rights, with the Council using the artwork's intellectual property for purposes consistent with its objectives, with the artist's written permission. Guidance follows best practice guidelines from the National Association for the Visual Arts (NAVA).

Council will develop guidance on the commercial use of images of public artworks, in consultation with artists, to protect intellectual property while supporting reasonable public use.

9. Ownership and Rights: The Council retains ownership and rights to all public art it commissions or acquires. For third-party public art, the property owner retains ownership and is responsible for maintenance but must comply with Council guidelines.

10. Roles and Responsibilities:

Council: Guides public art initiatives, assesses proposals, allocates resources, manages policy implementation, coordinates projects, and liaises with artists and community groups.

Community Groups and Artists: Propose and participate in public art projects, ensuring alignment with the policy and community values.

External Partners: Provide funding or support for public art projects and may propose initiatives for Council consideration or fund projects independently.

This policy ensures that public art in Colac Otway Shire is high-quality, relevant, and sustainable, enriching the community and public spaces.



The Colac Otway Shire Public Art Policy provides a structured approach to integrating public art into the community, enhancing cultural, aesthetic, and social value in public spaces.

Why This Policy is Needed:

- **Cultural Enrichment:** Reflects the community's unique identity and heritage through diverse and meaningful public art.
- **Community Engagement:** Fosters a sense of belonging and pride by involving residents in public art projects.
- **Economic Development:** Attracts tourists, supports local artists, and boosts the local economy through public art investments. Public art will be strategically located to enhance visitor experiences and support tourism, particularly in key entry points and commercial precincts.
- **Urban Aesthetics:** Improves the visual appeal of public spaces, making them more attractive and enjoyable.
- **Social Cohesion:** Promotes inclusivity and understanding through public art that serves as a platform for social dialogue.

Guiding Principles:

- **Inclusivity:** Ensures accessibility and relevance to all community members.
- **Sustainability:** Prioritises environmentally sustainable practices.
- **Quality:** Maintains high standards of artistic excellence.
- **Safety:** Ensure public art installations are safe and compliant with regulations.
- **Collaboration:** Foster partnerships with artists, community groups, businesses, and other stakeholders.

Implementation: The policy outlines clear methods and criteria for acquiring, commissioning, and maintaining public art, aligning with the Council's strategic goals. It establishes a framework for funding and maintaining public art, ensuring its longevity and positive impact on the community.

Council may invite Expressions of Interest (EOIs) from the community for public art proposals. EOIs will be open for a defined period and assessed against the criteria in this policy and associated guidelines.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all Council activities and guides engagement with third parties interested in providing public art on Council land and in public spaces. It defines the roles of the Council and third parties in facilitating public art projects.

The policy covers:

- Public art commissioned and developed by the Council.
- Public art commissioned and developed by private enterprises, associations, individuals, property developers, community groups, businesses, or other third parties.
- Public art commissioned by third parties (including other government bodies) and transferred or donated to the Council.

RELATED DOCUMENTS AND PROCEDURES

Terms presented in ***bold italics*** in this policy represent terms used across multiple Council policies and their definitions are detailed in the "*Council Policy Terms and Definitions*" document located on Council's website www.colacotway.vic.gov.au.

- 2050 Community Vision
- Creative Colac Otway – Arts and Culture Strategy 2018-2022
- Council Plan

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Policy No.	1	Record No.	D25/194393	Date Adopted	28 October 2025
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- Sustainable Design Policy
- Asset Management Policy
- Community Grants Program Guidelines
- Risk Management Policy

DOCUMENT HISTORY

Version	Document History	Approved by	Date
V1	D25/194393	Manager Economy and Creative Industries	28 October 2025

Policy No.	1	Record No.	D25/194393	Date Adopted	28 October 2025
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