

**CO2 – Sculptures by the Creek / Public Art**

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**Sculptures by the Creek/Public Art**

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TRIM 993

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- This report is submitted in response to Council Resolution 246/2016 on 21 November 2016.
- The purpose of this report is to advise Council of the feasibility and options for a proposed "Sculptures by The Creek" project.
- This report recommends that Council not proceed with a "Sculptures by the Creek" project in Picton at this stage, but rather examine longer term opportunities.
- The report also recommends that Council consider including the preparation of a Public Art Strategy in the 2017/18 Operational Plan.

**REPORT**

**BACKGROUND**

Council resolved on 21 November 2016 "That Council investigate the concept of a project called Sculptures by the Creek in Picton".

**PUBLIC ART**

Public art is art work located in public spaces and buildings (as distinct from galleries and museums). Local Councils play a key role in the implementation and delivery of public art programs, integrating public art into building projects and public places to enhance our urban landscape.

The artworks can take many forms in many different materials, such as sculptures or murals. They can be free-standing works or integrated into the fabric of buildings or outdoor spaces, whether publicly or privately-owned.

Public art can be permanent, lasting many years, or temporary, lasting a couple of hours, a few days or several months. It can be site-specific, drawing its meaning from and adding to the meaning of a particular site or place, or non-site-specific, located in a public place primarily for display purposes.

Some key "types" of public art include:

**Functional:** where the primary purpose of the art is utilitarian, such as seating, lighting, furniture, bollards, signage, rubbish bin surrounds etc.

**Decorative:** where the primary purpose is to aesthetically enhance an environment or structure, such as incorporated imagery, sculpture or paving elements.

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Iconic: a stand-alone or significant work, where the artist's approach is largely independent of other considerations – 'art-for-art's-sake'.

Interpretive: where the primary purpose is to describe, educate and comment on issues, events or situations.

Commemorative: where the primary purpose is to acknowledge and recall an event, activity or person important to the local community and its visitors.

Transient: a piece or event which may be momentary or remain for a limited period such as performance art, garden planting, lighting installations and multimedia.

**SCULPTURES BY THE CREEK CONCEPT**

The obvious location for any Sculptures by the Creek project within Picton would be in the Botanic Gardens. Two options could be:

- An "iconic" fixed sculpture walk of permanent installations commissioned and installed over time.
- A "transient" sculpture walk of temporary installations as part of a festival - for example as an additional attraction element of IlluminARTE. (Sculptures by the Sea being a well-known benchmark model)

Based on preliminary investigations and consultations with Southern Tablelands Arts, and other Councils including Wingecarribee, Yass Valley, Forbes and Lockhart there are a range of costs and issues to consider:

- Prize money (other Councils' first prize monies range from \$3,000 to \$20,000 and are awarded to attract high quality works by arts practitioners)
- Acquisition costs if artworks are to become Council property
- Local funding capacity through corporate sponsorship
- Asset management costs (installation, vandalism prevention and ongoing maintenance)
- Security (relevant for any transient project) - locations that are fully enclosed are able to be closed to the general population each day
- Insurance arrangements - essential for damage to the works, volunteers and public liability
- Flood risks (if a creek side location is used)
- Applicability and logistical practicality of revenue-raising through visitor fees - dependent on ability to close off the site
- Applicability of a competition entry fee - consideration needs to be given to charging art practitioners a fee to enter their works.

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Significant staff resources would also be needed for any sculpture walk project to be a success:

- Devising and pre-planning the project
- Inception, launch and promotion
- Management of the project during implementation and on an ongoing annual basis.

The Community Projects and Events team has a full schedule of events and projects and so does not have the capacity to undertake a Sculptures by the Creek project at this stage. IlluminARTE has become Council's annual premier arts and culture event and was in fact borne out of discussion about the idea of launching a murals project. This event is the current focus of Council's limited event resources (both staff time and funding).

**CONSULTATION AND OTHER EXAMPLES**

The Executive Director of Southern Tablelands Arts has advised that:

- Sculptural projects require enormous amounts of resources by staff, volunteer committees and art practitioners. Across local government, there are many examples of success and failure for divergent sculpture projects.
- Projects such as Sculpture by the Sea are viable tourism projects but do not attract State or Federal funding and are reliant of philanthropic and commercial funding.
- Sculptural projects that are part of the fabric of the townscape require significant artistic investment and financial sponsorship.

Some different local government examples of sculpture projects:

**Wingecarribee – “Sculpture on Hillview”** is a biennial event that is held at the National Trust Property for 16 days. In 2016 one hundred and fifty sculptures were exhibited which attracted 8000 people. Top sculptures are invited to be onsite for 12 months. A first prize of \$12,000 is offered. An entry fee of \$10 is charged per person. The Hillview organising committee are responsible for acquiring sponsorship, promotion, marketing and security plus general operational issues including insurance. Sculptures are offered for sale with a 25% commission payable to the organising committee. Council's total contribution is \$2,000 sponsorship.

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**Yass Valley – “Sculpture in the Paddock”** is an annual event hosted by The National Trust at Cooma Cottage in Yass for 23 days. In 2016 thirty-five sculptures were exhibited attracting 400 people over the duration of the event. There are major prizes of more than \$3,000 including a People’s Choice Award, and the Yass Soldiers’ Club Encouragement award, as well as the Tuggeranong Arts Centre Prize. The organising committee are responsible for all sponsorship and operational issues. Council does not contribute to the event.

**Forbes - “Somewhere Down the Lachlan” Sculpture Competition**

An annual competition managed by a committee of the Forbes Arts Society who are responsible for all expenditure associated with the purchase of sculptures and their installation (Finances come from its own activities, sponsors and benefactors including members, philanthropists, the general public, local companies and businesses, Forbes Council, and grant funds from government and large international companies).

An “acquisition” prize of \$20,000 is awarded to the winning sculpture which is then permanently displayed on a plinth. All sculptures acquired first become the property of the Forbes Arts Society who then passes on ownership to Forbes Shire Council. As Council property, the sculptures are then be added to their asset register for ongoing management, maintenance, insurance etc. Other lower category prizes (\$4000) are also available.

**Lockhart - “Spirit of the Land”**

A 2 day annual festival which incorporates a National Farm Art Sculpture Award (a non-acquisition award). The sculptures are primarily made of metal and capture the uniqueness of the Australian landscape, flora, fauna, and lifestyle of living on the land. First prize in the National Farm Art Sculpture Award is \$10,000 but the art work remains the property of the artist. Sculptures must be displayed for the 12 months and may be sold but cannot be removed until the end of the 12 month term. Other lower category prizes (\$500 - \$1000) are also available.

Funding appears to be primarily through sponsorship packages ranging from \$500 to \$20,000 and above. Main sponsors appear to be Bendigo Bank and Lockhart Shire Council.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Council does not have any budget to pursue a sculptures project and it is not included in Council’s Operational Plan. Funding and support through corporate sponsorship would most likely be required. However it should be noted that the local business sponsorship “pool” is finite with Council staff already struggling to attract sufficient sponsorship for our existing events calendar - IlluminARTE, Winterfest, Garden Competition, Christmas Lights Competition, Mayor’s charity events.

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**CONCLUSION**

Council does not have the financial or staff resource capacity to pursue a sculpture project at this stage and it is not seen as a community priority. It would involve significant resources and, if not executed as a high quality project, would be at risk of being unsuccessful and yielding little benefit.

Council should nevertheless consider its longer term objectives and directions in relation to the provision of public art through the development of a Public Art Strategy. The development of a strategy would ensure that a planned and funded approach is pursued. The strategy would need to cover:

- Consideration of all forms of public art
- Key strategic objectives for the provision and support of public art
- Community attitudes to the importance of public art
- Research on other Local Government approaches
- Potential synergies with objectives of economic development and tourism
- Potential synergies with objectives of "place making" and public domain activation
- Community development, lifestyle and well-being benefits through arts and culture
- Mechanisms and options to fund and support, including developer contributions, grants, sponsorships, voluntary planning agreements
- Partnership opportunities with local arts groups and community organisations
- Role of / need for a local arts committee
- Identification of future opportunities and locations for the installation of public art including Wilton New Town.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Nil.

**RECOMMENDATION**

1. That Council not proceed with a Sculptures by the Creek project in Picton at this stage, but rather examine longer term opportunities.
2. That Council consider including the preparation of a Public Art Strategy in the 2017/18 Operational Plan.