



#LOVEGERALDTON

City of Greater Geraldton Public Art Strategy 2016 - 2020



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Executive Summary

The Public Art Strategy for the City of Greater Geraldton explores both a vision, and strategies to implement the vision, so the stories told through public art are relevant to Greater Geraldton and its people and culture. Linkages to current City of Greater Geraldton priorities and planning ensure this Public Art Strategy works closely to develop a vision of Geraldton shared by its local government.

After consultation with members of Geraldton and Mullewa's communities, including local government, cultural and visual arts sectors, a curatorial response to the region has been developed. This response identifies narratives that reflect stories from the Greater Geraldton region. These narratives are deliberately broad and can be tailored to each location by individual artists to reflect stories that are relevant and appropriate. Along with the stories and narratives that can be explored through public art, there are ways of working with public art which can help enrich place making and strengthen communities. The methodologies of quality, inclusion, connection and diverse thinking about public art in Greater Geraldton can contribute strongly to its acceptance and relevance by Geraldton and Mullewa people.

The Public Art Strategy addresses issues of prosperity through the exploration of economic opportunities provided by public art to regional artists, fabricators, suppliers and installers. The guiding principles, key strategic priorities and underpinning strategies outlined in this document provide a model as to how these economic opportunities can benefit the region and the people who live and work within it.

This document highlights areas in the city centre precincts which are priorities for development and revitalisation. A closer look will identify the local flavour for each narrative, look at existing works in the public realm and target some specific locations and opportunities for public art work. A further section highlights the Mullewa town site and again, highlights possible narratives and priorities for implementation.



Local Context:

Links to the City of Greater Geraldton Planning Documents

This strategy endorses goals developed by the City of Greater Geraldton in the following documents:

2013 - 2023 Strategic Community Plan: community aspirations

- 1.1, 1.2, 1.3: Vibrant arts culture and education - Our heritage, multiculturalism, the arts
- 2.35: Sustainability - Becoming a bicycle and pedestrian friendly City
- 3.12: Recreation and sport - Encouraging informal recreation through well planned and developed public open spaces/walk paths
- 4.13, 4.15, 4.32: A dynamic, diverse and sustainable economy
- 5.22: Governance - Supporting local procurement processes.

City of Greater Geraldton Creative Community Plan 2013

- Theme - Welcome: initiative 1.2, 1.3, 1.8
- Theme - City of Art: initiative 2.1, 2.5, 2.7, 2.8, 2.10, 2.12, 2.13
- Theme - Identity and Place: initiative 3.1, 3.3, 3.5 - 3.12
- Theme - Cultural Tourism: initiative 4.5, 4.9, 4.10
- Theme - Youth: initiative 5.3, 5.5
- Theme - Yamaji Culture: initiative 6.1, 6.7
- Theme - Rural Communities: initiative 7.10
- Theme - Digital Connections: initiative 8.2, 8.7, 8.8, 8.9.

#Changes the City of Greater Geraldton Community (recommendation and report, 7 April 2014)

- Page 25 - Support Greater Geraldton's thriving arts community through local purchase
- Page 28 - Tourism.

#Changes the City of Greater Geraldton Community (10 year capital works plan 30 November 2013)

- Project ID 70: World War II heritage trail/interpretive signage
- Project ID 29: Aboriginal trail/Aboriginal heritage
- Project ID 100: Chapman Road streetscape
- Other capital works projects via the City of Greater Geraldton Percent for art commitment.



Local Context, *continued*

Links to the City of Greater Geraldton Planning Documents

Greater Geraldton Economic Development Strategy (2013 - 2023)

- Economic Thrust 1.4: Support the development of precincts that enables innovation and collaboration
- Economic Thrust 4.7 and 4.9: Economic diversification
- Economic Thrust 5: A creative and vibrant regional City, notably 5.8 *Identify and encourage the development of cultural public art within the CBD*
- Growth opportunity for Arts industry sector and Tourism.

Geraldton City Centre Vibrancy Strategy 2012

- Goal - Key destinations designed for people: strategy 1. Focus planning and development efforts around key destinations, focal points and attractions 2. Tailor uses and activities to key target audiences within the CBD
- Goal - Entice people to come and then not want to leave: 1. Facilitate place activation initiatives through capacity building and infrastructure 2. Consolidate a regular programme of strategic events and community activities in the CBD 4. Deliver high quality public realm and streets.

City Centre Planning policy 2012

- 5.5: City centre landmarks; 5.6: positive entrance identity; 7a: Pedestrian links design guidelines; 7e: streetscapes; 11.0 Additional criteria for height bonuses (11c, 11t).

CP046 Art Development fund 2012

Whole policy.

Mullewa Townscape Project Report 2007 and supporting suite of documents

Whole report.



Policy Context

(including National Planning Policy and Relevant Council Plans, Policies and Strategies)

This Public Art Strategy acknowledges *Our Cities, Our Future | A national Urban Policy Framework for a productive, sustainable and liveable future*, 2011. Specifically the liveability of cities depend heavily on cultural resources and cultural infrastructure to assist with perceptions of wellbeing.

Objective 11 discusses supporting community wellbeing through improving the quality of the public domain and enhancing access to cultural, sporting and recreational activity. High quality, diverse, well considered public art can assist the City to meet these objectives.

The City of Greater Geraldton Public Art Strategy is informed by the following:

Our Cities, Our Future, National Urban Policy Framework, Infrastructure Australia, 2011;

City of Greater Geraldton Strategic Community Plan 2013-2023;

City of Greater Geraldton Art Development Fund Policy, 2015;

City of Greater Geraldton Creative Community Plan, 2013;

City of Greater Geraldton City Centre Vibrancy Strategy, 2012;

City of Greater Geraldton City Centre Planning Policy, 2012; and

City of Greater Geraldton Asset Management Plan.



Vision

Public art and creative public place making will help achieve the vision to become a creative city-region with the capacity to sustain a population of 80,000-100,000 which has a prosperous, diverse and sustainable community within an attractive Western Australian setting.

Mission

The City is committed to creating, enhancing and sustaining our built, natural and cultural environments for our people, our place and our prosperity.

Guiding Principles

1. The City will work collaboratively with business and industry to acknowledge the creative industries as potential economic drivers in the region.
2. The City and its public art partners will develop high quality public art in key tourism locations.
3. The City and its public art partners will engage in capacity building with our community and our artists.
4. The City and its community partners will encourage the integration of public art, including the use of ephemeral public art, to enrich performances, festivals and events.
5. The City understands that a sustainable, healthy society has a balance in the interaction between the society and the economy.



Key Strategic Priorities

The Public Art Strategy for City of Greater Geraldton 2015 has established a number of key strategic priorities being:

Our People

In recognition of the unique historical and contemporary cultural makeup of Geraldton and Mullewa people, and notably the Traditional Owners and the Aboriginal language groups in the Yamaji region.

Our Place

Being the broader Geraldton region.

Our Prosperity

With economic gains provided through the promotion of the creative industries throughout the Greater Geraldton region.



Introduction

As well as economic and social opportunities, our cities can offer its residents and visitors cultural resources and look to government to assist with the provision of this. Culture is a key factor in how the liveability of our built environments is measured.

Public art plays an important role in our everyday lives as it can enhance and complement our environments, bring communities together, offer social and educational opportunities and promote tourism. Public art should be used as a tool to reflect and promote local identity and enhance buildings and open spaces.

Public art can fit into the physical, social and cultural context of a community and embrace a process that acknowledges history, place and community. At its best, public art can tap into the richness that underpins our land and our shared contemporary culture, De Lorenzo, p43, Artlink, 30(3).

Economic drivers within the region

The celebration of economic drivers can acknowledge the role business plays within a region. Engagement with the business sector as property owners, developers, employers, patrons or potential funders of public art can prove fruitful for a community.

The Greater Geraldton Economic Development Strategy (2013-2023) cites a number of industries as having importance to the region, including mining, manufacturing, construction, transport and health care; with the retail sector being Geraldton's largest employer. The tourism and arts sectors are seen as a growth industry for Greater Geraldton with public art enhancing the visitor experience within public spaces.

Tourists may stay longer in an area, increasing the chance for retail and hospitality businesses to make sales. The conceptual and interpretive elements provided through public art can increase visitor understanding of place and offer a contemporary take on established industries such as mining, horticulture and agriculture.

Partnerships

Engagement with the business sector as property owners, developers, employers, patrons or potential funders of public art can prove fruitful for communities within the Geraldton region. This creative capacity is also enhanced by partnerships and co-operation between arts and cultural community groups, other community based organisations, educational institutions, and all levels of government and government agencies. Participation in shared strategies will lead to joint commitment and ownership, with some individual public art projects providing an opportunity to enhance or develop a partnership.

Quality public art and tourism

Geraldton has a number of key tourism attractions. As well as a number of cultural institutions such as the Geraldton Regional Gallery and the WA Museum Geraldton, there are a number of other key heritage attractions within the town and within the Greenough and Mullewa districts.



As part of the Coral Coast, and with the presence of the Abrolhos Islands, beaches, swimming, fishing, camping, surfing and wind sports make Geraldton strategically located. Other natural regional attractions such as the proximity to wildflowers give Geraldton a spread of tourist related activities. Mullewa is heavily reliant on seasonal wildflower tourism to provide an economic stimulus over the winter and spring period.

The interpretation of place through the medium of public art enables visitors to engage with the richness of these locations. The inclusion of Aboriginal interpretations of place initiates and produces a cultural experience that many visitors are seeking; a Yamaji heritage trail will provide a positive cultural tourist experience as well as acknowledge past and present Yamaji social history to Geraldton and the region. Similarly, Mullewa, with an Aboriginal population around one-third of the Mullewa region, would enhance the tourism experience for its annual visitors through the provision of specific Aboriginal interpretations of place and heritage. To do this well involves a considerable investment of time and money to produce a high quality visitor experience. If this investment is not likely to happen, it may be better to leave these sites with signage and functional structures rather than commission and install public art of insufficient calibre with its capacity to diminish the significance of the location.

Discussions around public art and tourism often results in suggestions for a major destination artwork from an internationally acclaimed artist – meaning people travel to a destination to see it - to enhance the tourism experience within Geraldton and its region. United Kingdom artist Anthony Gormley's works at Lake Ballard, near Menzies, is often cited as a Western Australian example of destination artwork. This would require a large financial commitment, possibly at over \$1,000,000, and is best planned by a multi organisational, Geraldton based group with the City at its core. Grant funding may be possible to secure if based around a solid tourism related premise.

Street or urban art is a genre of art that has international acclaim and could attract a different section of the tourist market. Street art trails and events are a good way of encouraging a younger visitor to the City centre.



Definitions of Public Art and Creative Public Place Making

Creative public place making

The ability to use arts, culture and creativity to drive a broader agenda for growth and transformation of place is the essence of creative public place making. Creative place making strategies such as the creation of cultural precincts, clusters of creative industries, mixed use development and urban design, prioritising artists' spaces, and cultural planning, can contribute to engaging residents, enhance public space and create sustainable communities. Successful creative place making is dependent upon collaborations between stakeholders including government, private investment, not for profit groups, artists and others involved in the creative industries.

Public art

Public art is a term given to the practice of involving artists in the conception, development and transformation of a public space. Public art is specifically commissioned for a known site and its audience is the public or community, be it a social, tourist or working community, occupying that space. Artworks can be sited permanently or temporarily; with participatory or community based arts practice being a rapidly evolving field of temporary or ephemeral public art. Public art can also be seen as essential cultural infrastructure for an increasingly sophisticated city.

Public art is, at its best, a sophisticated genre of visual art that takes into account spatial relationships, architecture and space in a way that other visual art doesn't necessarily need to.

Place activation: temporary and event based public art works, including digital and electronic works

The notion of fixed and permanent art works can form one genre of art in public spaces. Temporary and ephemeral art in public spaces is another way of using public art to support festivals and events and temporarily activate spaces. There is an opportunity to develop a visual iconography with the inclusion of sculptures as part of a festival programme. The ephemeral nature of such works means that artworks can be more experimental, offering opportunities to emerging artists or other community groups. The changing nature of such works means that a space has an opportunity to renew or regenerate the way people engage with public places. Projection and digital works, murals, sound works, light works and temporary installations are all ways of encouraging people to interact with their public places in new ways.

Many local governments work with the idea of installing or exhibiting temporary works in unoccupied or under occupied buildings. Not only do places get the advantages of place activation through the installation of art which changes perceptions of a place, artists get to showcase work to a broader audience, and there is an opportunity to forge stronger links between business, property owners and the arts community.



Examples include the City of Fremantle which has installed contemporary visual art work in “Window Galleries” in vacant shops along High Street, City of Swan which opened a gallery in an empty former bank and which maintain a shop front for community art work, and the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority which have worked with artists to install temporary work on shop windows or within the shop itself in the Northbridge entertainment precinct.

The use of temporary public art installations is a strategy supported by the Geraldton City Centre Vibrancy Strategy 2012 as part of an overall programme. Similarly the Mullewa Townscape Project Report recommends the extensive use of shop front murals to assist with the revitalisation of the town centre and create an outdoor gallery.

An approach which includes a component of temporary public works in an overall strategy can assist the Geraldton region to deal with the worst of environmental rigours in this region. Constant exposure to sun, wind and salt air can take their toll on materials. Materials that are robust enough to handle this environment tend to be limited and have a certain aesthetic which can seem harsh and unforgiving; temporary works can introduce a softer materials palette which talks of fragility and transience. Works that are designed to be exhibited for a short time, then decommissioned, can overcome the need for all public works to be cyclone or storm rated.



Narratives

The content of meaningful public art is informed by the context. Every region has its stories: sites have historical and cultural significance, a local flavour, with the opportunity to exchange ideas and explore identity within a community. Defining some broad narratives that have relevance to the region can help articulate a complex cultural identity and sense of place.

Geraldton region narrative: our natural world

Appreciation of the flora, fauna and the natural environment is a rich field for public art. Artworks based around our natural world can be beautiful, identifiable and as such are accessible to the general public. The ever present coast, viewable along the Coral Coast and from foreshore and Marine Terrace locations within the city of Geraldton, the great expanses of the sky and the earth all impact on the greater Geraldton region.

Themes which explore the narrative of **our natural world** include:

- The ocean has a constant presence along the coast and in the Geraldton city centre, and is a source of recreation, economic return and solace.
- Artistic interpretation of a scientific view of the natural world: for example, the artistic collaboration between astronomers, Yamaji and South African Indigenous artists explore the idea of a shared sky, under the auspice of the square kilometre array.
- Cultural interpretations of the natural world: Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal interpretations of flora, fauna and other features of the natural world are an accessible way to highlight traditional and aesthetic views.
- Regional biodiversity: the Mid West region showcases an abundance of internationally acclaimed wildflowers.

Priority theme: wildflowers

Artworks based around wildflowers are an accessible, reasonably uncontroversial and an almost universally loved genre, with strong historical aesthetic links through forms such as botanical illustration, Aboriginal and other cultural interpretations, landscape painting, printmaking and drawing. The uniqueness of the flora of the Mid West region is an outstanding feature of the broader Geraldton region. The Mullewa Wildflower Show capitalises on the proliferation of wild flowers each winter and spring, forming a significant tourist attraction for Australian and international tourists. The use of wildflower imagery in permanent public art work reinforces this feature. A series of temporary public art works, exhibitions and/or events could extend the reach of the wildflower trail into Geraldton City, as a gateway for accessing wildflower locations and reinforce Mullewa's central position along the annual wildflower tourist circuit.



Shop window displays and temporary sculptural works along the road between Geraldton and Mullewa and within the Mullewa town site, could add value to the Mullewa Wildflower Show. A modest prize pool for an artwork competition based around wildflower or regional flora could be a relatively low cost way of increasing the reach of the Mullewa Wildflower Show. The ability to sell works could give economic opportunities to regional artists. If coupled with Geraldton based art events, murals or complementary exhibitions, tourists and residents alike could celebrate wildflower season with cultural events which would add economic value to the region.

Some existing works in Geraldton which use this narrative



Image

Discovery work in the paving.

Artist

Edmund Stewart



Image

Mural off a building in parking lot off Marine Terrace.

Artist

Cooper Crothers and local youth



Image

The “Zephyr” is located on the Foreshore and coincides with the meteorological phenomenon of wind.

Artist

Nigel Helyer



Geraldton region narrative: our contemporary cultural life

Geraldton is an increasingly sophisticated, culturally diverse city which is rapidly transforming due to a number of key infrastructure projects. How the culture manifests today is an expression of Geraldton people and the town in which they live.

The Yamaji language groups traditionally inhabited the broader Geraldton region. Waves of migration from European settlers, and subsequent migrations of people seeking to live in the Geraldton region have created a cultural mix that is rich and layered. Today, people with Aboriginal, Vietnamese, African, Malay, Southern European, British and other cultural backgrounds make up the people of the broader Geraldton region. Contemporary expression of this rich cultural mix results in a complex and relevant visual language particular to the region.

Priority theme: urban or street art

Young creative people give Geraldton an artistic energy present in many of the urban (street) art seen around the city and suburban streets. The immediacy of this genre of art, its appearance in unexpected places and its quite sophisticated use of infrastructure makes walking the streets of Geraldton a delightful experience. Similarly, the Mullewa Townscape Project has provided a strong vision for revitalising the Mullewa townsite. The “Open for Business” street gallery concept injects a vibrancy into the streetscape. The opportunity to provide a contemporary feel to these murals, in line with the very popular street or urban art genre, can help engage local artists, especially younger artists.

Bunbury, which has similar cultural infrastructure and is of a similar population size to Geraldton, has recently implemented a major street art initiative called Six Two Three Zero. Bunbury based initiative that seeks to use street art as a catalyst for urban development & social change by bringing communities together in conversation & creative inspiration. The initiative offers a live painting event over a three day weekend and is a walking event, designed to help people connect with Bunbury city centre.

A Geraldton based initiative such as this would be a fabulous boost for the city vibrancy project, could generate tourist traffic from younger age brackets, would offer Geraldton artists' skills development opportunities and could become a recurring event. Such a project offers the Geraldton business, development and artistic communities the opportunity to interact, building strong regional partnerships and adding to community cohesion and tolerance. An outreach component which incorporated Mullewa residents, could add to the reach of this project into the community and help establish a regionally based and accessible art form.

Other temporary public art works can similarly add vitality to a town and city centre, with light installations, projection works, sound works, digital works, sculptures in shop fronts or ephemeral works in the street working with painterly street works.



Some existing works in Geraldton which use this narrative



Image

Located in the old Post Office laneway on Chapman Road.

Artist

Jordan Andreotta



Image

A collaborated piece in the laneway next to City Hive.

Artist

Shah Jockey and local youth



Image

This painting is part of the City Vibrancy project and located in the West End on Marine Terrace.

Artist

Jordan Andreotta



Image

Also part of the City Vibrancy project, these stunning light boxes can be seen on the old Blue Heelers building in the West End on Marine Terrace.

Artist

Anthea da Silva



Geraldton region narrative: our history

The broader Geraldton region is rightly proud of its settler history; many existing public art works, memorials, artefacts and signage are testament to this pride. The WA Museum in Geraldton is a state based cultural institution which reflects on regional stories; local government has heritage officers and local history available through the library; and community heritage groups such as the Batavia Coast Maritime Heritage Association are active.

The built landscape of Geraldton City contains many beautiful historic buildings and sites of historical significance including the old gaol, old hospital and buildings in the Bill Sewell complex, St Xavier's Cathedral, train station and other sites within and around Geraldton and surrounding districts. Greenough, too, has a large number of restored stone character buildings which provide evidence of a once thriving community of 19th century pioneers and tourist facilities to help people interpret these stories.

Some heritage themes that emerged during consultation include:

- Maritime history
- The Aboriginal history of the region, with particular note of Geraldton and Mullewa
- Industrial and economic heritage, including Geraldton Port
- Agricultural heritage, particularly in the pastoral regions such as Mullewa
- The architectural story
- The convict story
- The migrant story, as part of Geraldton's social history.

Priority theme : Yamaji and Wajarri history trail

Geraldton is the gateway to the exploration of Aboriginal culture in the Mid West region. There was a strong Aboriginal presence in the Geraldton area prior to the town site being established in the 1850's: there were semi permanent Aboriginal settlements in the region that were marked by well constructed huts, defined pathways and intensive land and sea management practices (MWA publication). Conflict with white settlers and exposure to disease decimated the local Aboriginal population; those few who remained continued to live in huts and shelters amongst the town's sand hills.. Other recorded camps and settlements within Geraldton include the site now occupied by the town's cathedral and the Flour Mill, Quarry Street, Native Reserve and Blood Alley. Whilst the foreshore holds a very beautiful public artwork based on the Yamaji Ilgarijiri: things belonging to the sky story, some sites of historic importance to the Yamaji people remain unmarked and unrecognised except via local histories, such as the "Footprints in the Sand" publication.

There is strong evidence put forward by the Australian Tourism Council that both Australian based and international tourists want authentic engagement with Aboriginal culture as part of their visitor experience. Significant numbers of tourists already visit Mullewa during wildflower season; to value add to this experience through an exploration of the local Wajarri culture could see visitors stay longer and provide more economic opportunities for Mullewa.

The development of a specific Wajarri trail, to complement the other heritage trails in and around Mullewa, and the consideration to co-labelling existing trail locations in Wajarri language, fits within the existing public realm of Mullewa.



There may be some sites that intersect with existing trails, which help people understand the complex cultural history of Australia, especially post European settlement.

A project currently being undertaken by the *City of Greater Geraldton, Geraldton Foreshore: Yamaji historical sites of significance foreshore*, will help to identify the locations and significance of some key sites along the Geraldton foreshore. An expanded version of this project would help identify significant sites, and the reasons for their significance, within the broader City of Geraldton, including the town of Mullewa. Methodology that includes extensive consultation with local Aboriginal residents and former residents, local history experts and the Geraldton Museum will help ensure historical accuracy and identify the emotional and cultural significance attached to certain places.

Other local governments which have taken this approach, for example the City of Mandurah with the Yaburgurt project, have used the research material to give the project a broad cultural reach, including the development of public art works and interpretive walk and cycle trails, using public art as trail markers. The development of this knowledge into a trail marking key sites within the Geraldton region will acknowledge the social history.

There may be commissioning opportunities for Aboriginal artists presented under the Aboriginal Business Directory Scheme or other possibilities which will facilitate the commissioning of Aboriginal artists to explore Yamaji and Wajarri themes as well as all other public art themes.

Some existing works in Geraldton which use this narrative



Image

The statue of Wiebbe Hayes was Erected in 2009 in commemoration of the hero for leading a group of soldiers, sailors and other survivors of the shipwreck of the Batavia against murderous mutineers. Located on Foreshore Drive.

Artist

Anthony Horn



Image

Established in 2010 this statue was named the "Batavian" after the Batavia mutiny off the Western Australian coastline (now commonly known as the Abrolhos Islands) in 1629. Located on Bayly Street.

Artist

Tony Jones



Image

Interpretive sign on the history of the Esplanade. Photo credit to Creative Spaces.

Artist

Creative Spaces



Image

The Iris Sundial, located in front of the Queens Park Theatre.

Artist

*Design by Bob Newbold
Work by Dan Gentle*

Artistic interpretations of historical stories

Historical stories, themes and events can be interpreted in imaginative ways rather than literal works or traditional interpretive signage which can be informative but lack the ability to contextualise our response to history in ways that speak of contemporary life and values. Existing works like the HMAS Sydney 11 Memorial artwork and Batavian allow a wider and more subtle response by both the artist and the viewer to history and makes room for emotional responses on behalf of the viewer.

Heritage artefacts

Geraldton makes use of historical artefacts in the public realm in the way it chooses to present its history. Many factors should determine the use of such artefacts: public safety, appropriateness of the site, public recognition of the artefact as significant to the cultural history and the visual appeal of the artefact as an object in itself. The restoration, repainting and setting can help add to the visual appeal of a historical artefact.

Artists may use historic artefacts in the creation of artworks, thus forming new and less literal meanings we can attach to these objects. Whilst noting this, historical artefacts are not art objects or public art in themselves and the use of historical artefacts as a replacement for an artistic interpretation of history, or as public art, is not supported by this strategy.



Key Locations for Public Art

Public art is a genre of art which gets much of its meaning from its location. It makes sense that public art be sited at points of contact with the public. Places where people gather include cities, towns, public buildings, streets, tourist locations and recreational spaces. Public art works can play the role of heritage interpretation at heritage sites. There is a case to make for developing public art where the main audience drive past, such as threshold works at population centre boundaries. Due to the size needed to make an impact and engineering requirements usually associated with road verges, these sort of threshold works tend to be expensive to commission and need careful planning. Road side art works can encourage links between communities such as Geraldton and Walkaway, Bringo, Mullewa, Moresby and the like, where repetition can be effective and placement well off the road verge can negate some engineering concerns.

In recognition of the importance of the interaction between the audience and public art works, a report appended to this strategy explores, in detail, locations for public art works in the population centres in Geraldton city centre and Mullewa town site.

Existing public art work

Geraldton

Geraldton has a number of existing public art works, amongst the most significant being the HMAS Sydney II Memorial by Joan Walsh and Charles Smith in 2001. Other works have been commissioned through the State Government Percent for Art Scheme, such as Tony Jones' work outside the WA Police complex on Marine Terrace. A number of disparate works are collected along the foreshore, notably the beautiful Ilgarijiri by Yamaji artists Margaret Whitehurst and Barbara Merritt, Zephyr II by Nigel Helyer and Wiebbe Hayes, by Anthony Horn. Geraldton has a rich urban street art presence, especially within the city centre. It also has a number of works which refer to scientific themes, such as the Iris Sundial outside the Queens Park Theatre, and a considerable number of community based artworks.

There is some discussion about the existing art works within Geraldton lacking cohesion. This strategy will go some way to address this concern as the narratives and themes identified link reasonably closely and build on the concepts behind many of the existing works. A comprehensive landscape strategy and implementation plan would also act to unify and soften the visual aspect of the public realm. The listing within this document is not a documented survey of all public art, but rather an indication of the types of work found in key locations within Geraldton city centre.

**Image**

Ilgarijiri: things belonging to the sky. Erected in 2013, located on the Foreshore.

Artist

Margaret Whitehurst and Barbara Merritt

**Image**

The "Zephyr" is located on the Foreshore and coincides with the meteorological phenomenon of wind. Established 2010.

Artist

Nigel Helyer

**Image**

Street or urban art located in various places within the City. Example show: located on Cathedral Avenue in the West End.

Artist

Jordan Andreotta

**Image**

Paving artwork as part of the former Go Gero! initiative, various locations.

**Image**

The Sea Meets the Shore, located on the Foreshore.

Artist

Charmaine Green

**Image**

Museum of WA - Geraldton entrance.

**Image**

The Welcome Wall located on Marine Terrace signifies our diverse culture through different languages.

Artist

Design by Jane McIntyre

Work by Pamela Molloy and multicultural community members

**Image**

Situated in front of the Police Station on Marine Terrace.

Artist

Tony Jones



Mullewa Town

Mullewa has a series of community driven mural projects, commissioned in the 1990's; whilst these murals are in need of some restoration, it indicates a strong level of community commitment to beautifying the Mullewa townscape. Other murals, including painted light poles and other street furniture, have been painted as part of Mullewa Townscape Project: streetscape enhancement concept plan. Various trails explore the wildflower experience, heritage, Monsignor Hawes' architecture and rail history of Mullewa within the town site and surrounds. Public art work, including shelters and a repeating structure reflecting Monsignor Hawes' architectural style

The following guidelines are recommended for Mullewa public artworks:

- Most free standing sculptural public art works will be around 3 meters or under. This helps create a sense of intimacy and engagement, with most public art works being on a roughly human scale or smaller. The exceptions to this are landmark or iconic works, noted under the following precinct specific notes.
- Public art wall works can vary in size, with their scale in relation to the building or wall they are on. Therefore large walls can have large public artworks that work over the entire surface; or wall works may be very small occasional stencilled works.
- Public art works can be sited at key sight lines and visual nodes or intersections throughout the region. Functional public art works such as artist designed seating, shade structures, bicycle racks, tree grates and bollards should be used to provide public amenity wherever these are needed. These need not be the same throughout the region, as different locations may have a differing aesthetic or thematic requirement, however there are certain economies involved in repetition.
- As population centres and tourist attractions are places where people congregate, all public art works should be child friendly. This does not mean that they need to aesthetically appeal only to children, but is rather a recognition that children, and possibly adults, will sit and climb on public art works, so the materiality and safety of the public art work needs to accommodate this.
- All public artworks will comply with occupational health and safety standards and the materials will be suitable for public spaces - these items are defined in a public art policy.
- Small "discovery" public art works and public art works in the ground plane can add unexpected pleasure to a pedestrian journey through a town or city centre.
- A focus on temporary public art works that have a longevity of up to five years, or the use of artworks that respond to, or are the basis of events, help create a sense of vibrancy throughout the region, particularly within cities and towns.



- The use of a few substantial and iconic public artworks can provide anchors for a predominantly temporary response.
- A diversity of forms, materials, artists and cultural backgrounds can help create a sense of vibrancy throughout the region.
- A focus on landscaping can enrich public spaces and help soften and embed public artworks within their surroundings.



Implementation Plan Recommendations

Public Art Policy

In identifying narratives and locations for certain types of artwork, the Public Art Strategy allows for the roll out of public art over a number of years. This can maintain a cohesion and consistency of theme and values identified through community consultation.

A public art policy differs from a public art strategy. A policy encapsulates a local government's vision for public art. Public art policies usually document:

- Vision, including policy scope and guiding principles, narratives, priority locations as identified in this strategy;
- Internal council processes related to responsibilities, decision making and linkages to existing planning, building and works and community consultation plans;
- Funding for public art, generally through a combination of internal and external sources, including developers contributions via a Percent for Art contribution policy
- Commissioning guidelines which reflect industry practice and acknowledge legal obligations under Copyright Act, 1968 (Commonwealth);
- Managing the public art collection, including maintenance, restoration and decommissioning works;
- Practical considerations such as occupational health and safety and materiality; and
- Exclusions to public art.

The position taken by a local government on these factors are dependent on the capacity and structure of each local government; with many local governments having published public art policies available via the internet.

Funding Public Art

Funding for public art at local government level can be acquired in a number of ways:

Percentage of Rates:

Some local governments in Western Australia levy a percentage of rates which then goes towards the project management and commission fees for the creation and installation of public art. Current practice has set this sort of levy in the vicinity of 0.75 per cent to 1.0 per cent.

Percent for Art Contribution:

Other local governments fund public art via a Percent for Art contribution policy, which addresses contributions from either local governments or local government and private developers towards the ongoing provision of public art in the region.



Currently, the City of Greater Geraldton a percent for art contribution covering its own projects: CP046 Art Development fund 2012; this is due to expire mid 2015 and is not slated for renewal. Starting discussions about public art early in the stages of development produces sound results. For the City of Greater Geraldton's own development projects, a requirement for public art will need to be captured early by the project management team and included within tender documentation. The implementation of public art could be managed internally by appropriate the City of Greater Geraldton staff after the percent of funding is calculated from the successful tender.

Percent for Art Developer Contribution:

Such policies can be tailored to capture certain sorts of development likely in a region; for example, local governments can define a threshold of development cost for where the policy becomes valid, the types of development covered by the policy and other factors which balance the desire to support economic growth within a region whilst maintaining funding for contributions to the cultural infrastructure of public art. Supporting documents such as guidelines for developers and refining internal approvals processes around development approvals and planning will help ensure the best outcomes for the implementation of this policy. The City of Greater Geraldton may mandate this contribution for certain projects, such as the Airport Technology Park and enshrined in the design guidelines that cover this project. This could be extended to all private development over a certain threshold. A cash in lieu option, where a developer provides the contribution to the City of Greater Geraldton rather than commission their own art work, will assist the City of Greater Geraldton to accumulate funding towards implementing its public art vision.

Voluntary Contributions via Planning & Development Incentives:

Voluntary contributions are encouraged by some local governments by offering planning incentives in return for developers providing public art within their development. These planning incentives will vary for each local government, depending on planning guidelines for a location but may include off sets for provision of parking spaces, building height, plot ratios or other planning considerations. Currently the City of Greater Geraldton offers additional height bonuses with the inclusion of a 1% public art contribution (11c of the City Centre Planning Policy). Other built form requirements encourage the inclusion of public art into the fabric of the building to contribute to "interesting urban walls" (5q - u, City Centre Planning Policy (CCPP) and gateways that contribute to a "sense of arrival" (5x and y, CCPP). In these circumstances, a public art strategy, policy and guidelines for developers would assist in delivering cohesive and quality public art within the Geraldton city centre.

Other External Funding:

Major infrastructure project funding sourced through state or federal government can rightly include a percent for public art as this is part of the City of Greater Geraldton policy stance. The expectation that public art can be successfully delivered as stand-alone items via other external grant funding needs careful consideration. There are very few sources of grant funding available for the production of public art. Grants may cover a community development or cultural heritage aspect of working with community or telling local stories towards the development of appropriate public art. Strong partnerships with industry and financial commitment from the City of Greater Geraldton may assist in gaining funding for some aspects of a public art project.



Integrating Public Art into the Design Phase of Development:

The provision of public art through incentives or a Percent for Art Developers Contribution Policy is usually integrated into planning policies and processes. The planning department assesses a potential development against a number of criteria, including whether the development triggers a percent for art contribution according to the local government's guidelines. If this is the case a number of internal and external processes ensue; usually the provision of public art, or a cash in lieu contribution for the same amount, forms a condition of development on a Development Approval. Even without a mandated policy, it is prudent for local government to maintain checkpoints on any public art proposed by a developer to ensure it meets this strategy and any other policy that may be relevant. A local government needs to decide on a number of factors:

- Who manages the project? Policy wording under a Percent for Art Developers Contribution Policy differs between local governments within Western Australia with some local governments having the contribution paid directly to them as the default and developers specifically applying to administer the project themselves as an exception. Other local governments phrase this more as a choice. This initial condition would seem dependent on the local government's capacity to administer the public art funding that ensues from this contribution. Developer managed projects allow certain expenditures from the public art allocation for project management by an arts consultant, with the aim to ensure a high quality outcome.
- What information is given to the developer? Developers need to be given clear guidelines as to how they can meet this obligation. Guidelines for Developers are generally developed alongside a Percent for Art Developers Contribution Policy for distribution to developers who wish to manage their own public art projects; but are also vital to guide any voluntary contributions. Legal information about obligations under the Copyright Act, 1968, specifically the Moral Rights amendments, are usually included in this information. Establishing internal processes between the planning department and the public art officers at this point allows public art officers to become part of the process in linking between the developer and a decision making panel.
- What information does the developer give to the local government? At a minimum, the local government needs enough information to assess that the artwork proposed meets the dollar contribution, if mandated under a Percent for Art Developers Contribution Policy, conforms with strategies or master plans determining appropriate public art and that artists are contracted legally and according to any policy or strategy guidelines.
- What is the internal decision making process? Local governments have differing decision making processes; in essence, to ensure the best quality outcome, any decision making process must consist of assessment by people with visual art and public art expertise, such as an experienced visual arts officer or an arts advisory panel which contains a majority of members with visual and public arts expertise.
- What assessments or sign offs are needed? Planning departments will need at least a final sign off process as per conditions of development. Generally public art needs to be in place before certificates of occupancy can be issued.



- Local government public art contributions can be managed in a similar way, as the majority of development projects will be part of a tender process. Any successful tenderer will need to feed into the public art approvals process as would a private developer.

Community Engagement, Public Consultation and Capacity Building

Public Consultation:

A desire to consult and inform its community underpins many local government strategies. However continual consultation can be time consuming dilutes more challenging concepts and slows project implementation time lines. Therefore, the City of Greater Geraldton needs to find a workable balance. The City of Greater Geraldton needs to be clear about how it will deal with community feedback and strike a balance between maintaining the integrity of an artistic proposal and reacting to populist comment. Public art projects may be assessed via the Public Art Advisory Panel; as members of this panel are drawn from the community, contain visual art experts, and include community representatives, this may alleviate the need for individual public art projects to call for community comment.

Community Engagement & Capacity Building:

Communities are well served by a strong, vibrant and engaged community; capability and creativity around art practice is integral to this philosophy. Building capacity within communities enables them to take part in the delivery of public artwork and helps to stimulate economic and creative growth, build community identity and a sense of ownership and belonging. Geraldton has a number of skilled artists who work sculpturally or in a way that can be translated into public art. It is likely to be uneconomical and lacking the sense of place to use artists other than Geraldton or mid West based artists for smaller public art projects for which they have the skills.

The creation of public art can become a celebration of Geraldton people's diversity and cultural expression; with contemporary Aboriginal cultural expression being absolutely vital to this expression. A mix of strategies can assist in the building of community capacity in the provision of public art. A skills audit of the current community capacity to deliver public art projects, including public art fabrication and installation, gives a clear starting point. Strategies can then be tailored to suit an individual community and the community goals and visions.

The City of Greater Geraldton could consider allocating part of a public art budget to a capacity building programme within artist communities in the Geraldton and mid West region. This approach can raise community capacity in the provision of public art as well as engendering a sense of ownership within the broader community. The option of combining this approach with commissioning an experienced public artist to produce a stand-alone artwork is one that may work to combine artistic excellence with reach into the community.

Skills development can include:

- Direct instruction in skills related to public art, such as design documentation, working with fabricators, interpreting stories, working in three dimensions, talking about concepts etc.
- Targeting certain groups, for example the Aboriginal artist community, or young artists, in eliciting stories and skills which can be expressed through public art.



- Having a commissioned public artist talk to artists and the public about the artwork, usually at an artwork launch. This information can be reproduced in print or digitally and used to help market the artwork.
- A public artist in residence who can act as mentor to local artists through a competition or tendering process.
- Assistance with the formal application and commissioning process.
- Ways of working with non-artists to incorporate designs and ideas into a public work.
- Ways of working with other professionals such as landscape architects, construction managers, architects and others involved in large scale development projects.
- Working with arts administrators and arts managers to enable them to act as project managers and public art consultants for future projects. This is particularly relevant for communities such as Geraldton where public art projects may rely on regional artist involvement and community groups, Government agencies, consultants, contractors and corporate businesses.

Role of Public Art Advisory Committee

A Public Art Advisory Committee can be successfully used to assist the City of Greater Geraldton to develop and foster key partnerships with stakeholders whom it considers pivotal to the success of public art implementation within the broader Geraldton region. These stakeholders might include key community cultural groups, such as the Arts and Cultural Development Council of Geraldton, Yamaji Arts and the Geraldton Regional Art Gallery, and individual visual or public artists; thus ensuring a degree, if not a majority, of visual or public art expertise on the committee. Other stakeholders may be dependent on context and could include interested business and commerce organisations, tourism representatives, and individual community members. All members of a committee will need to act as advocates for public art within the Geraldton region and be prepared to work with the City of Greater Geraldton marketing and media to present public art outcomes in a positive light.

The role of the committee should focus on strategic, rather than operational, matters around public art; with appropriate support and professional development provided to the committee to assist it in understanding conceptual and strategic issues around public art and ensuring effective committee functioning. There may be an opportunity for members of the committee to serve on selection panels, thus having a defining role in the public art commissioning undertaken by the City of Greater Geraldton. It may be more appropriate for such a committee to meet as needed determined by committee workload and public art activity, rather than on a regular basis.



Artist Selection and Project Management

There are a number of choices for commissioning artworks. All have certain advantages and drawbacks and should be chosen on that basis. Any commissioning process works best if it is fair, with expectations clearly defined and contractual obligations identified and documented. To some extent, the City of Greater Geraldton is bound by the Local Government Act (1999) in its procurement strategies. Contracts specifically designed to cover art commissions are available for purchase and download from Arts Law Centre of Australia at www.artslaw.com.au. Artsource also have specially developed public art commissioning contracts. In some instances, it is recommended that working with an art consultant will allow commissioners to take advantage of the very specific expertise art consultants have in working with design professionals, artists and artworks through all stages of a commissioning process.

Expression of Interest:

A publicly advertised, open competition implemented through a tender or expression of interest process is one way to commission art works. This is very successful when dealing with high value, iconic works as the competitive process favours experienced practitioners, or groups of practitioners, who are able to suggest a diverse range of responses to site and deliver high quality outcomes.

Curated Shortlist:

A small number of artists are selected by the commissioner and asked to submit material for review and selection. This method may be used because:

- The project requires a quick turnaround time so the more lengthy expression of interest process can be shortened.
- The selected artists have an affinity to and experience with a certain type of work targeted in the strategy.
- Because they represent a group that may be selected to achieve outcomes other than public art, such as community development.

Definition of an Artist for the Purposes of Public Art Commissions:

Professional artists will be eligible to carry out public art commissions. Although the term 'artist' is self-referencing to a certain extent a common definition used in public art strategies and policies is that a professional visual artist can be defined as a person who fits into at least two of the following categories:

- A person who has a university degree or minimum three year full time TAFE Diploma in visual arts, or when the brief calls for it, other art forms such as digital-media.
- A person who has a track record of exhibiting their artwork at reputable art galleries that sell the work of professional artists.
- A person who has had work purchased by major public and private collections.
- A person who earns more than 50% of their income from arts related activities, such as teaching art or design, selling artwork or undertaking public art commissions.



Given that it is appropriate for a regional centre such as Geraldton to consider community engagement and capacity building amongst its regional artists, and that it may be harder for regional artists to generate income through professional opportunities, sometimes it will be appropriate to be more flexible and seek emerging artists and practitioners other than defined professional artists to carry out artwork commissions. This particularly applies in instances when emerging, Aboriginal artists, artists of other cultural backgrounds or students may be considered appropriate for specific commissions. There may be preferential tendering and other schemes such as the Aboriginal Business Directory Scheme that can be used to support regional artists where appropriate.

Project Implementation for Commissioned Art:

Best practice art commissioning project implementation follows a number of established stages that include:

- Scoping:
 1. Liaise with clients, architects, landscape architects, other stakeholders and local government as necessary to clarify aspects of the project including site information, project timeframe, supporting documents, budget and contracting arrangements.
 2. Clarify any marketing strategy.
 3. Determine commissioning models.
 4. Develop a selection process, with reference to the commissioning model.
 5. Determine reporting mechanisms.
 6. Determine exact budget breakdown for individual artwork projects including design development fees, artists fee for successful candidate(s).
 7. Document an artist brief.
- Artist selection and commissioning
 1. Commission artists according to the commissioning model.
 2. Manage the selection panel to allow them to select the artists, according to the agreed selection process.
 3. Organise a briefing and site meeting to be held with the artists.
 4. Manage the concept development stage.
 5. Prepare contracts which cover issues of copyright specific to the arts industry as well as the normal issues of insurances, transport, engineering certificates, work schedules and payment schedules.
 6. Ensure the artist finalises design documentation.



- Fabrication stage
 1. Monitor the progress of the creation/ fabrication of artwork by the artist.
 2. Clarify any issues as they arise.
 3. Ratify fabrication stages in order to maintain the project schedule.
 4. Work with the artist and other stakeholders regarding installation.
- Installation stage
 1. Assist the artist with details regarding transportation and installation, as necessary.
 2. Ensure that maintenance schedules are prepared by the artist.
 3. Ensure project documentation is completed.

Artwork Legal Issues, Asset Management, Gifting , Relocating and Decommissioning

Copyright: Moral Rights, as part of the Copyright Act, 1968. Any advice in this section is for guidance only, does not constitute legal advice and should be ratified by a lawyer. ArtsLaw is a body which specifically deals with legal issues around art and can provide advice in certain circumstances.

All artwork, including public art work, is covered by the Copyright Act, 1968. The act provides creators of public art work the exclusive rights to reproduce, publish or communicate the work to the public, including by uploading it to the Internet or publishing it in brochures. Artists can give permission for copyright to be waived in certain circumstances or artists can be paid a fee for image use.

How copyright is managed after commissioning should be addressed as part of a contract with an artist at the time of commissioning. Generally this covers how the commissioner can use of images of the work. ArtsLaw and Artsource have developed public art commissioning agreements which cover the issue of copyright and use of images of the artwork for non-commercial purposes. <http://www.artslaw.com.au/info-sheets/info-sheet/copyright/>; <http://www.artslaw.com.au//checklists/lists-and-guides/displaying-visual-art-on-the-internet>.

There are obligations under the Moral Rights Amendments of the Copyright Act, 1968; that is, the right for an artist to be identified and named as “author” of a work (via a plaque or sign near the work); right of an artist to prevent others being incorrectly named as the “author” of a work; and the right to ensure their work is not subject to derogatory treatment. Unlike copyright, these rights cannot be sold, traded or disposed of. Legal advice should be obtained from ArtsLaw or another source in the event of any concerns.

The Copyright Act, 1968 also covers circumstances around decommissioning public artworks from a copyright view point.

Asset Management:

Artwork that is part of a private building or on private property remains so; obligations for maintenance are with the building owner and the obligation to maintain public artwork appropriately may form part of a development condition.



Artwork that is commissioned by local government or is gifted to local government needs to be managed as an asset in accordance the Local Government Act (1999). The same duty of care obligations applies to public art as with other local government assets. The City of Greater Geraldton currently maintains a Public Art Register of Public Artworks and this provides an excellent starting point for an updated and more comprehensive Public Art Register.

Dependent on the nature of the project, as part of standard industry practice and according to contracts for public art commissions, artists may be required to prepare a manual containing comprehensive instructions for the proper cleaning, operation and maintenance of the artwork. The manual will include, where applicable:

- A description of the materials used, including Materials Safety Data Sheet where relevant, and any installed services or equipment and their mode of operation.
- An inspection, testing and maintenance program detailing the routine required to maintain the artwork throughout its intended lifespan.
- “As installed” certified engineers drawings for the artwork and all related equipment and services.
- A list of major sub-contractors used with appropriate contact details.
- Any other relevant issues relating to the cleaning, operation and maintenance of the artwork.
- Professionally documented and publishable quality images of the design and fabrication of the artwork, where appropriate and images of the completed artwork.
- Contact details for the artist.

It is recommended that a copy of the manual be sent to the assets management job role. This enables the assets manager to register the artworks as assets and prepare a database entry according to:

- Name and contact details of the artist (telephone/email/address).
- Title of the artwork.
- Date of commission.
- Date of installation.
- Location.
- Dimensions (height, breadth and length for 3 dimensional works).
- Approximate lifespan.
- Commission value.
- Materials and surface treatments.
- Details of plaque or signage.
- Details of regular required maintenance at certain intervals.
- Any other information as required by the City of Greater Geraldton.



It is useful to record other information which may be used for promotional or other internal processes. For example, a photographic record of the work; artist's statement; artists CV; and records of any marketing material may prove useful if the City of Greater Geraldton wishes to publicise or assist with the production of tourist material or interpretive material on the works.

It is crucial that regular required maintenance be performed by the City of Greater Geraldton; for example works in public open space be inspected and maintained by parks and gardens staff and works attached to City owned buildings be inspected and maintained as any other aspect of the building. The cost and record keeping would be borne by the programme areas, as with any other asset maintenance performed. Regular maintenance and inspection ensures that works are presented as intended by the artist, according to their moral rights, enshrined in the Copyright Act 1968 and ensures public safety is maintained. Any large scale repairs or alterations to the aesthetic nature of the work should be performed by the artist themselves. To alter an artist's artwork without their permission may be in breach of the Copyright Act 1968.

Gifted or Donated Art Works:

From time to time art works may be offered to the City of Greater Geraldton. Careful consideration of the works against a number of criteria should determine whether the City of Greater Geraldton accept this gift:

- Does it align with vision, mission, guiding principles and key strategic priorities outlined in this strategy?
- Does the work fit within the narratives outlined in this strategy?
- Does the work fit within the precinct master plans outlined in this strategy?
- Does the work fit within any landscaping plans or strategies in place?
- Does the work fit any materials criteria in terms of safety, durability and future maintenance requirements?
- Is the work from a reputable artist?
- Is the work a high quality example of this artist's work?
- Is the work relevant or appropriate?

Decommissioning or Removal of Works from a Site:

The City of Greater Geraldton, if it is the "owner" of the work, is able to remove, relocate, alter or destroy an artwork provided that they give the artist three weeks written notice of intent, or make a reasonable attempt at such, and complies with the procedures set out in section 195AT of the Copyright Act 1968.

A public artwork may be decommissioned for a number of reasons:

- The work is at the end of its intended life span.
- Maintenance and repair obligations and costs have become excessive in relation to the value and age of the artwork.
- There is irreparable damage to the work through vandalism or decay.
- There is a significant threat of damage of the work if left in its current location.
- The work has become unsafe, or is affected by changes in health and safety regulations.



- The site where the work is located is to be redeveloped or physically altered.
- The work is no longer relevant or appropriate.

If the work is identified for decommissioning, the City will:

- Consult with the artist, maintenance contractors, professional assessors and any other stakeholders, as far as possible. Where possible it is important to be sensitive to the views of the general public and to any community and cultural groups who were involved in the original commission.
- Examine the artwork maintenance record, as well as any contractual agreements between the artist and the commissioner regarding the maintenance or decommission of the work.
- Consider offering the work for sale or gift, initially to the artist who created the work. If this occurs, a resale to a third party may incur resale royalties. The Resale Royalty Right for Visual Artists, 2009, provides guidance, <http://www.artslaw.com.au/info-sheets/info-sheet/resale-royalty-rights-for-visual-artists>.

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Appendix

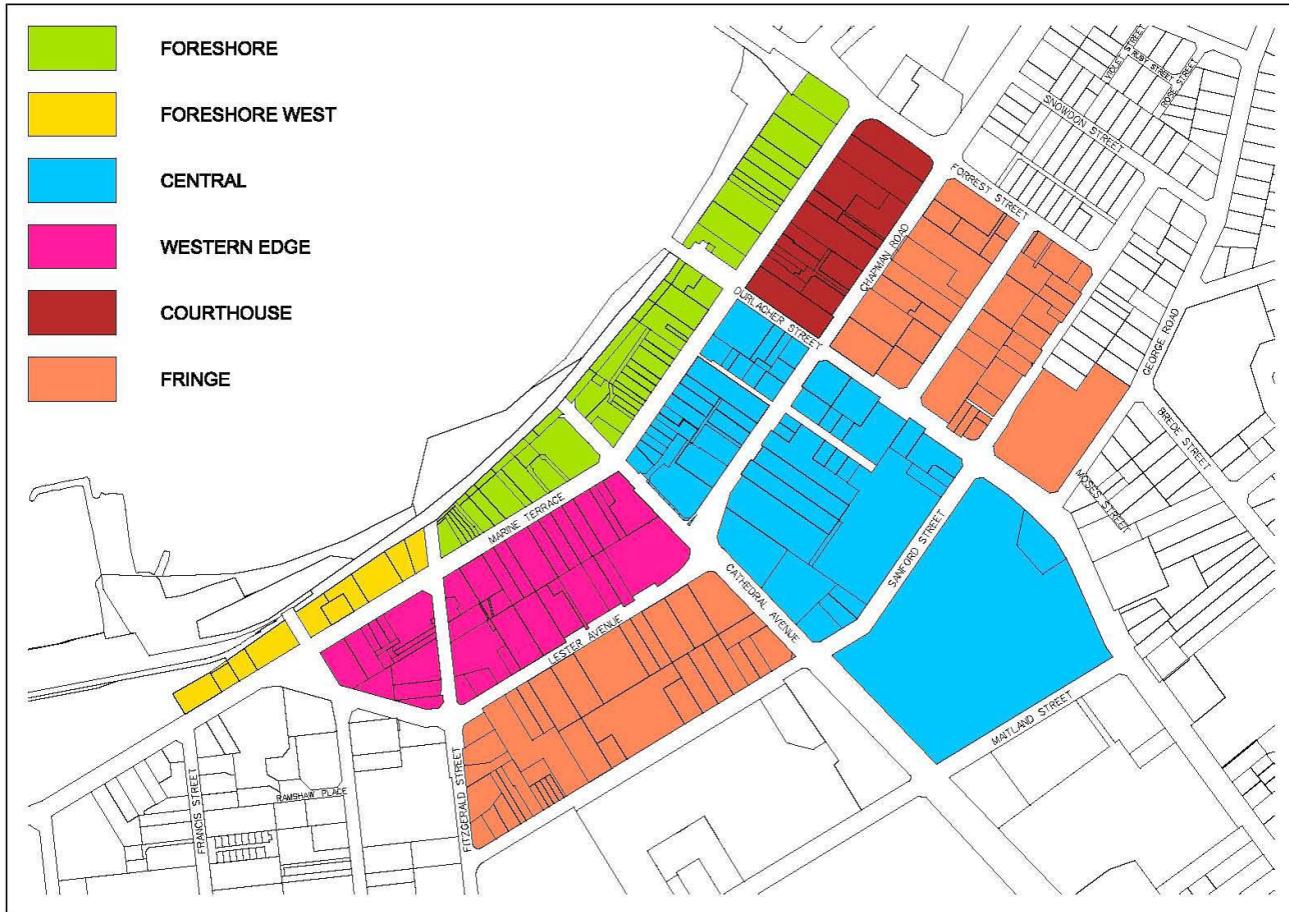
To be read in conjunction with the Public Art Strategy.

Master Plan for Geraldton City Centre Precincts and Mullewa Town

Geraldton location overview

The City of Greater Geraldton has identified, through their City Centre Planning Policy, certain precincts. These are:

- **Foreshore and Foreshore West Precincts** – “The heart of the city centre”. This area is envisaged to be a place where people live as well as come to rest and recreate, use the beach, walk around and meet each other. After shopping in the CBD people can come to these precincts for a coffee and to relax and watch the ocean. At night it comes alive with restaurants, cafés and bars. These precincts should promote the use of the foreshore, as a natural playground for the city centre during the day, and as a valuable nightlife/tourism attraction in the evening.
- **Central Precinct** – “Where the business happens”. The central part of the CBD will retain and enhance its retail and commercial primary feel. It is envisaged to be a mix of businesses, shopping and residents. It is also a place where people can walk out from their work and meet in cafés or have a meeting over lunch. The mall is the focal point of the CBD and should be accessed from a number of inviting arcades and other developments that provide for easy access across town. Increasingly parking should be provided around the CBD to reduce the impacts of cars on the mall, keeping it primarily for pedestrian activities.
- **Western Edge Precinct** – “The cappuccino strip”. The West End is the place where it is envisaged the interesting social life will happen. It is more ‘funky’ and ‘bohemian’ than the CBD and is characterised by boutiques, bookshops, galleries, cafés, restaurants, studio apartments and shopfront businesses. The activities are rooted in the architectural heritage of the area through refurbishment and adaptation of the existing building stock.
- **Courthouse Precinct** – “Civic and historic”. This precinct is an extension of the CBD but with less intensive night-time activities. The civic tone of the precinct is set by the Courthouse and police station. Buildings should respond to and respect the built heritage features of the Courthouse without slavishly copying or creating faux-historic facades. This precinct provides a link to the Marina, Museum and old railway station.
- **Fringe Precinct** – “Transitional”. This precinct should provide the support structure necessary for a more intense and active central CBD. In this way it serves as a linkage between the surrounding areas and a transition into the city centre core.



From the City Centre Planning Policy, 26 June 2012 revision.

Precinct Specific Response

Foreshore and Foreshore West Precincts

The activation of Geraldton's foreshore area has been flagged as important to recreation, events and improving the visitor experience (Geraldton City Vibrancy Strategy 2012). The visual experience along the foreshore is fragmented and is, in places, open and barren; the foreshore area lacks a certain cohesion in the placement, aesthetics and conceptual basis of its artworks. The fact that the foreshore is being redeveloped in sections contributes to this fragmented feel; the commissioning and implementation of an overall landscaping strategy that creates visual nodes and pockets, accommodates existing works and provides for the placement of new works, will unify the foreshore area significantly and allow the existing works to sit comfortably where they are placed.



Art along the foreshore, as well as art that draws people to the foreshore, needs consideration. Public art can be used in a directional sense to focus attention on road and pedestrian access to the foreshore. Artworks of sufficient visual impact to be seen from 250 to 500 meters away could be placed on the foreshore at these locations. Neither of the two main car traffic thoroughfares from the Central Precinct which terminate at Foreshore Drive - Cathedral Ave or Durlacher St - have an eye attracting focal point at their termination point. The artwork Zephyr 11 could have fulfilled this function, but is unfortunately a little too short for visibility from a distance and not placed well at the termination point of Durlacher St. The artwork The Sea Meets the Shore is at the termination, more or less, of Cathedral Ave but, being low in height and of muted colour, lacks sufficient visual impact to be seen from along Cathedral Ave.

Suitable artworks for these sites can be problematic, with harsh wind and sun limiting the materiality of the works. The wind may also be a factor into the amount of surface presented as a "wind sail" in overly broad works. People are generally quite protective of their foreshore area, with concern about artworks blocking views and interfering with amenity. It can be difficult for an artist to produce a concept that meets all these concerns and holds its own against such an expanse of ocean and sky. Tall, thin works with a bold form or colour, or use of night lighting, may be the best response for these sites. Alternatively, artist designed functional artworks such as pavillions, shade structures and strong architecture can fulfil the strong visual role needed along the foreshore. One iconic work at either of these visual nodes would provide a focal point for the foreshore. The Cathedral Avenue termination is the obvious visual link with careful consideration needed around how to deal with the existing artwork, The Sea Meets the Shore, in that space.

Pedestrian access through from Marine Terrace to the foreshore area is to be encouraged in order to best activate the foreshore space. Visual cues for pedestrians are limited along Marine Terrace and the presentation of the back ends of buildings to the foreshore (historically sited to look away from the rail line). A continued temporary/ urban/ mural public artwork programme, as with the Central and Western edge Precincts would help activate the buildings in this area. Currently the Western Edge precinct feeds some pedestrian traffic through to the foreshore through the use of walkways from Marine Terrace. Some of the pedestrian thoroughfares that do move between the west end of Marine Terrace and the foreshore are vibrant and attractive with street art, interesting street furniture and minimal car parking to lessen visual and physical barriers. Continuing the activation of these laneway spaces is crucial to moving people down through to the foreshore area.

There is a risk that the foreshore area can become crowded with artworks: the expanse of the foreshore lends to the belief that there is always room for one more sculpture or installation. The random placement of medium sized sculptures will lead to a busy and visually unappealing space. Outside of the recommendations of this strategy, a landscaping strategy should guide the placement of any further sculptures.

Artist designed hard landscaping features – functional artworks – are an excellent way to provide a high level of public amenity regarding comfort and shelter alongside reinforcing an identity within the Geraldton city centre.



Artist designed street furniture such as seating, bicycle racks and water fountains would help improve visitor comfort, making these parks restful and engaging places to sit and take in an ocean view or other aspects of the city. With the foreshore area being targeted to host events, considerable areas will need to remain free of standalone public art works and installations, with functional public artworks providing a design focus in these areas. The development of a landscape strategy will help define locations for various items of functional artworks. A suite of artist designed seating, shade and wind shelters and motifs for paving, to be repeated throughout the entire foreshore area, would develop consistency and cater for public amenity.

Interactive works for both children and youth can help with the concept of using the foreshore precinct for recreation. Cycle paths, skate and bike circuits and playable public artworks can add considerably to the family friendly feel of the foreshore. It is recommended that a youth focussed interactive artwork be developed at foreshore west and children friendly playable series of sculptures be developed to the central or eastern end of the foreshore, at some distance from the water playground and taking into consideration the placement of any events based infrastructure.

The narrative of “our natural world” is most suitable for the foreshore location with artistic interpretations of the wind, ocean and the sky, rather than literal interpretations of ocean going fauna, are to be encouraged. The foreshore also contains key sites for the “our history narrative” priority theme of a Yamaji heritage trail, with the Yarning Circle location identified at the eastern end of the foreshore area. A youth interactive work would work best with a narrative of “our contemporary cultural life’s” priority theme of street urban art.

Central Precinct

There are multiple entry points into the city centre, with vehicle based approaches to Geraldton’s Central Precinct as suitable places to mark as thresholds. Cathedral Avenue and Chapman Road have been identified in the City Centre Planning Policy as key thoroughfares for entry into the CBD. As Cathedral Ave is such an important road for Geraldton, as it marks the entry from the Brand Highway, an attractive landscaping strategy could also help create a welcoming and interesting journey along this road into Geraldton, with public art marker sites at key intersections such as Cathedral, Sanford and Lester Avenues, Durlacher Street with Sanford Street, and Chapman Road. The Marine Terrace intersections are dominated by the foreshore and as such are not key intersections for these types of works but rather a smaller nodal work that relates to the foreshore itself.

Threshold works should be of sufficient impact to be noticed by drivers – this doesn’t necessarily relate to size, as colour and form can produce bold artwork statements. A maximum height of approximately three metres for standalone public art work will convey a statement that vehicles are entering the Geraldton city centre. Dependent upon placement within road verges, the works may need to comply with Main Road requirements for fragility. If more appropriate, threshold public artworks can also be part of, or attached to, a building. In this way, threshold works need not be identical but should strongly relate to each other visually, either through use of colour or repetition of pattern or form. In addition, because of their size and materiality, threshold works can be expensive and need to not date rapidly - careful selection processes and discussion of artistic concepts can ensure the works have longevity.



The Central Precinct houses the Geraldton Regional Art Gallery with a gallery park alongside, and, as such, is a key site for activation through the placement of temporary or permanent public art installations. The coordination of temporary installations to support aspects of the gallery's annual programming would help to provide a focus for activation within the Central Precinct. Permanent placement of public artwork, including functional items to help with public amenity, may be related to a master plan for the gallery. Any new building or building renovations can plan to include small artistic design features such as door handles, external light fittings and other small artworks to be discovered as part of the architecture.

The Central Precinct would benefit from the provision of functional public artworks such as seating, shade structures, bollards and bicycle racks, making moving around the precinct as a pedestrian comfortable and enjoyable. This leads to increased time spent in the area and increased economic benefits for retailers and commercial small business owners. Retail nodes, hospitality nodes and pocket parks provide opportunities for a cohesive approach to street furniture, particularly seating. The use of repeated, artist designed street furniture helps to reinforce the nature of Geraldton through elements in its urban form. Existing retail nodes, hospitality nodes and pocket parks are obvious locations for items such as seating, lighting, bicycle racks, water fountains, planter boxes and other functional items such as bollards. Geraldton currently has some quirky bike racks and bollards - these make a playful starting point for artist designed functional artworks throughout the City.

The "square" in the middle of the mall, near the clock tower, needs long term consideration with seating, shading and a medium sized artwork making an interesting place for people to rest for a while. A sophisticated, muted and clean aesthetic will be needed so as not to be discordant with the strong visual impact of the clock tower. Likewise, the welcome artwork is a lovely tribute to Geraldton's cultural diversity but has a strongly coloured and fragmented visual presence. It may be possible to relocate this work to a location with a defined civic function such as library or council offices, or redesign the space to tone down or settle the work in a more muted space.

Small discovery works, at less than one metre, and works in the ground plane can be used to inject a sense of fun and surprise as people move through the precinct's spaces. A range of materials such as bronze, mosaic, other cast metal and relief carving into stone or brick, are durable in the face of climate and people's attention.

Some temporary and urban style murals can add to the visual mix and can use a toned down colour palette, play with abstracted forms or be predominantly geometric, leading to a more sophisticated result. Laneway activation, as explored under the Western Edge Precinct is similarly desirable in this precinct, especially in moving pedestrians down to the foreshore area.

Small discovery works can explore aspects of history as a narrative, highlighting architectural heritage, former building use and aspects of social history.



Western Edge Precinct

The Western Edge Precinct has an energy and vibrancy that can be cultivated further through targeted public art strategies. The use of murals and street art to enliven building walls and laneways works wonderfully well and the extension of this practice to other barren facades can only improve this precinct. Traditional, long lived conventional public art works would be out of place in this precinct.

Activation of existing laneways, created through use of public art, offers an intimate space for people to explore. Many local governments encourage private building owners to allow murals to be painted on their buildings and actively commission artists alike to create murals in city and main street laneway locations. Mural programmes are seen as a short to medium term response to site, with many murals being recommissioned after five years. They are relatively inexpensive to commission and can make dramatic changes in the mood of a place. A Geraldton based initiative would be a boost for the city vibrancy project, could generate tourist traffic from younger age brackets and would offer Geraldton artists' skills development opportunities. Such a project offers the Geraldton business, development and artistic communities the opportunity to interact, building strong regional partnerships and adding to community cohesion and tolerance.

Other temporary public art works can similarly add a vitality to this precinct, with light installations, projection works, sculptures in shop fronts or ephemeral works in the street working with painterly street works.

The creation of a free wall, where anyone can paint murals, street art and stencils would help with the artistic expression that makes the Western Edge Precinct special. Building owner permission would be needed for this, with the proviso that the works can be painted over pending redevelopment at some point in the future. This could form the basis for a community cultural development project that actively encouraged student, youth and cross cultural participation. Functional artwork, such as seating and planter boxes would add to amenity in the area.

The narrative of "our contemporary life" with the priority theme of street art is the most appropriate theme for this area.

Courthouse Precinct

The Courthouse Precinct calls for a more traditional approach to public art, with an emphasis on design, geometry and muted colours. The green space outside the courtyard and the small pocket park on the foreshore to the north, can encourage areas for contemplation and relaxation. Further concentration on developing green vegetated spaces and the provision of functional public artworks as seating will enhance this feel. Any development along the foreshore that abuts this precinct should reflect this classic and restrained feel. The provision of public artwork should be secondary to the provision of green and low hedged or semi enclosed spaces; any public artworks need to offer the opportunity to pause and reflect. Laneway activation to encourage pedestrian access through to Museum, Marina and the foreshore area is encouraged, but needs restraint in its implementation; ground plane works may be best here.



The proximity of this precinct to the Museum and the old railway station makes a narrative of "our history" an appropriate one, especially for works that encourage pedestrian traffic through to the foreshore and Batavia Marina.

Fringe Precinct

The commissioning and installation of public art works in the Fringe precinct depends upon how rapidly urban development transitions outwards from the other city precincts. As the Fringe precinct is likely to become part of the Central Precinct, a similar public art treatment is warranted, but at a lower density. As a preliminary approach, the use of functional public artworks such as seating in key shopping areas can extend the look of the Central Precinct a little further out.

A Percent for Art Developer's contribution scheme or incentives towards developer contribution would be the best way to commission and provide works in this region; in this way the provision would keep pace with the development.

Mullewa Town Site Precinct

Mullewa is located around 100 km east of Geraldton and 464km north of Perth. Other localities in the Mullewa district include Tenindewa, Pindar, Tardun, Devils Creek, Wongoondy, Ambania, Nunierra and West Casuarinas.

Mullewa has a history as traditional lands for the Wajarri people. It was established as a pastoral region around 1861. The Mullewa Muster and Rodeo and the Mullewa Agricultural Show are festive events. The Mullewa Wildflower Show capitalises on the proliferation of wild flowers each winter and spring, forming a significant tourist attraction for Australian and international tourists. Various trails explore the wildflower experience, heritage, Monsignor Hawes' architecture and rail history of Mullewa within the town site and surrounds.

Mullewa has a series of community driven mural projects, commissioned in the 1990's; whilst some of these murals are in need of restoration, it indicates a strong level of community commitment to beautifying the Mullewa townscape. Mullewa has an extensive and highly detailed document prepared in 2007; titled the Mullewa Townscape Project: streetscape enhancement concept plan, and was a result of extensive consultation with local government, local artists and other community members. The former Shire of Mullewa has progressed this plan to a large extent and has planning in place to implement some other major components such as a new entry statement.

Mullewa narratives and themes

All of the themes identified for the region have relevance for Mullewa. These include "Our Natural World", with an emphasis on wildflowers; "Our Contemporary Cultural Life", with an emphasis on increasing town centre vibrancy through a mural programme; and "Our Heritage", with the focus on the development of an Aboriginal heritage trail. There are some synergies between some revitalisation strategies being considered by Geraldton for its town centre and some projects earmarked for Mullewa under the Mullewa Townscape Project. It would be prudent for local government to consider economies of scale and regional cooperation when implementing some of the ideas of the Public Art Strategy.



Priority - Restoration of Existing Culturally Significant Murals

Art in the public realm needs to be carefully maintained to ensure the safety and integrity of the artwork. Mullewa has a number of existing murals which were commissioned by the Mullewa Association for Progress in the 1990's and are in need of restoration. If the murals are owned the City of Greater Geraldton, it can remove, relocate, alter or destroy an artwork provided that they give the artist three weeks written notice of intent (or make a reasonable attempt) and complies with the procedures set out in section 195AT of the Copyright Act 1968 (Cwth). In this instance, the reasons for decommissioning may include that the work is at the end of its intended life span; and/or maintenance and repair obligations and costs have become excessive in relation to the value and age of the artwork.

If the intention is to retain and restore the works, the following methodology is recommended:

- Contact the original artist to repaint the mural or ask the artist to recommend someone to paint the mural on his/her behalf. A fee would need to be negotiated for this.
- If this is not possible, or an agreement cannot be reached, allow the original artist the opportunity to visit Mullewa to photograph the work prior to restoration.
- Contact a professional artist to undertake this as a commission. Sight previous work to ensure that the artistic styles align. Again, a fee would need to be negotiated for this.
- The original artist may wish for his/her name to be removed from the attributions if restored by another artist.

Please note, the fee to restore the work may be significantly more than painting a new mural. If restoration is cost prohibitive, consideration can be given to making a photographic reproduction of the original work, placing it in a public building and decommissioning the existing work.

Priority - Expansion and Completion of the Mural Project Under the Vision of the Mullewa Townscape Project

The Mullewa Townscape Project has provided a strong vision for revitalising the Mullewa townsite. The "Open for Business" street gallery concept injects a vibrancy into the streetscape. The opportunity to provide a contemporary feel to these murals, in line with the urban art genre, can help engage local artists.

Many local governments encourage private building owners to allow murals to be painted on their buildings and actively commission artists to create murals in main street locations. Mural programmes are seen as a short to medium term response to site, with many murals being recommissioned after five years. They are relatively inexpensive to commission and can make dramatic changes in the mood of a place.

The Midland based Swan City Youth Service runs a very successful urban art programme focused on youth between 12 to 25 years of age. Funded by the City of Swan, young people have an opportunity to learn mural painting skills, resulting in a number of successful art projects being implemented throughout the City of Swan. There are obvious vandalism amelioration and community cultural development advantages to running such a programme, as well as providing a forum for engaging in education and further training.



A mural initiative would be a boost for the town vibrancy project, could generate tourist traffic and would offer Mullewa artists' skills development opportunities. Such a project offers the Mullewa business, development and artistic communities the opportunity to interact, building strong regional partnerships and adding to community cohesion and tolerance. The promotion of this strategy could be driven and funded by Geraldton with an "outreach" part of the project encompassing Mullewa.

Priority - Wajarri History Trail

Mullewa is rightly proud of its settler history; many existing public art works, trails and interpretive signage are testament to this pride. The Bushland Trail, Town Heritage Trail, Rail Heritage Loop, Wildflower Walk, and Hawes Heritage Trail explore aspects of settler and natural history. However, the Aboriginal history of the region is not as obvious in the public realm. There is strong evidence put forward by the Australian Tourism Council that both Australian based and international tourists want authentic engagement with Aboriginal culture as part of their visitor experience. Significant numbers of tourists already visit Mullewa during wildflower season; to value add to this experience through an exploration of the local Wajarri culture could see visitors stay longer and provide more economic opportunities for Mullewa.

The development of a specific Wajarri trail, to complement the other heritage trails in and around Mullewa, and the consideration to co-labelling existing trail locations in Wajarri language, fits within the existing public realm of Mullewa. There may be some sites that intersect with existing trails, which help people understand the complex cultural history of Australia.

A project currently being undertaken by the City of Greater Geraldton, Geraldton Foreshore: Yamaji historical sites of significance foreshore, will help to identify the locations and significance of some key sites along the foreshore. An expanded version of this project would help identify significant sites, and the reasons for their significance, within the broader City of Geraldton. This project can help provide a methodology for a similar Mullewa based project, that includes extensive consultation with local Wajarri residents and former residents, local history experts and the Western Australian Museum - Geraldton, to help ensure both historical accuracy and the emotional and cultural significance attached to certain places.

Other local governments who have taken this approach have used the research material to give a broad cultural reach, including the development of public art works and interpretive walk and cycle trails, using public art as trail markers. The development of this knowledge into a trail marking key Wajarri sites within and around the Mullewa townsite will see this aspect of Mullewa's social history acknowledged and its importance noted.

Public art works can be used instead of, or in addition to interpretive signage to assist in understanding. Small discovery works can explore aspects of our history as a narrative, highlighting architectural heritage, former building use and aspects of social history. Historical stories, themes and events can be interpreted in imaginative ways rather than literal works or traditional interpretive signage which can be informative but lack the ability to contextualise our response to history in ways that speak of contemporary life and values. Public art works allow a wider and more subtle response by both the artist and the viewer to history and makes room for emotional responses on behalf of the viewer.



Other possibilities for Mullewa include an adventure mountain bike or walk trail along an old railway line to Yalgoo. Again, public art can be used for interpretive purposes and to add dimension to functional seating at rest locations along such a trail.