

Policy

Placemaking and Public Art

Version 1.5

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Placemaking and Public Art

1 Purpose

The purpose of our Placemaking and Public Art Policy is to:

- Understand the unique qualities and attributes of a place and how the community values it. This includes the physical environment, the built form, its history, culture as well as the community's aspirations for the future.
- Acknowledge placemaking as an essential vehicle for the realisation of multiple Council and community goals and for integration as a guiding principle within relevant Council business operations / divisions.
- Include placemaking and public art principles in the design and management of physical improvements within the public realm where appropriate, practicable, and enabled by budget.
- Encourage collaboration with the community to develop placemaking initiatives, public art and engaging activities in public places that improve the quality of life for residents and the experience of visitors.
- Assign Council's Placemaking and Public Art Reference Group as the responsible party for identifying, assessing and guiding implementation of placemaking and public art opportunities in collaboration with relevant project teams.

2 Policy Objective

This Policy sets a commitment to preserve our community values, enhance our quality of life and to strengthen our unique identity through placemaking and public art.

This policy adopts a multi-disciplinary and collaborative approach to planning and design of the public domain across Council and externally. It defines Placemaking and Public Art as both a process and an outcome that requires a high level of leadership, integration and community interaction and engagement.

Our **Placemaking and Public Art Policy** provides an opportunity to deliver holistic outcomes to ensure our communities remain liveable and sustainable, based on the notion of unique and vibrant places, aligning community engagement, planning, design and creativity to deliver long term benefits for places.

We recognise that **Placemaking** is an integrated approach to working with communities on a broad range of issues such as new and existing infrastructure, town and village centre management to community engagement and capacity building. It has a philosophy and methodology which is holistic, multidisciplinary and requires long term commitments to people, places and partnerships. We use it as a tool to achieve sustainable outcomes socially, economically, culturally and environmentally with the overall aim to provide our communities with a compelling sense of place and belonging.

We acknowledge **Public Art** plays an important role in Placemaking as it responds to the historic, cultural, environmental, social and aesthetic character of our communities and places. Public art helps us understand who we are through our shared and diverse stories. It creates a sense of belonging, fosters dialogue, encourages social interaction and revitalises public places and spaces. Public art is also used to increase engagement and participation especially for people who would otherwise not usually connect with the arts.

3 Scope

This policy applies to all and any placemaking and public art projects located, or proposed, in the public domain within the Tweed. This policy also recognises that contemporary public art practice includes a diverse range of styles and practices.

Public art includes permanent, and/or temporary and ephemeral art projects. However, objects such as memorials and plaques (that do not have an artistic element) fall outside the scope of this policy.

4 Values and Principles

Placemaking and Public Art Values

Council acknowledges that enhancing and emphasising the quality of places adds value to the community socially, culturally, economically and environmentally. These include:

- **Social elements:** community and civic leadership, engagement, participation, volunteering, inclusion and wellbeing.
- **Cultural elements:** street life activation, innovation, creative and artistic expression as well as historical and contemporary significance of the place.
- **Economic elements:** entrepreneurship, business growth and sustainability, accessibility and affordability.
- **Physical design elements:** accessibility, connectivity, safety, comfort, attractiveness.
- **Environmental elements:** environmental sustainability, awareness and participation.

Placemaking and Public Art Principles

Our Placemaking and Public Art Policy is built around the following guiding principles that reflect our vision of *'the Tweed being recognised for its desirable lifestyle, strong community, unique character and environment and the opportunities its residents enjoy'*:

Expression Placemaking and Public Art in its many forms plays a vital role in providing a platform for both individual and community creative and cultural expression. Placemaking and Public Art projects are a connector of place and experience, contributing to the development of a distinct identity and reflecting the quintessential character of places across the Tweed.

Engagement Placemaking and Public Art helps to build stronger, more connected communities through reflecting their aspirations. Community involvement and social engagement with Placemaking and Public Art promotes a wide

range of social interaction and inclusion. The process of designing and/or producing Placemaking projects and Public Art will be a catalyst for engagement with communities. Each project is unique and the appropriate level of engagement will be determined on a case by case basis.

Activation Placemaking and Public Art is regarded as a significant contributor to successful open space planning and urban design. Placemaking and Public Art enlivens and animates public spaces and enhances the creation and vibrancy of public places. It creates an ongoing conversation between our past, present and future, between ideas and values.

Creativity The unique skills of artists/creators who contribute to the Tweed are recognised and valued. Placemaking and Public Art celebrates creativity and innovation locally. It also builds the capacity of our creative community and generates employment opportunities.

Integration The commissioning of Placemaking and Public Art projects will be strategically considered within the context of other Council objectives, plans and major projects and which measurably add value to people and place. Placemaking and Public Art is recognised for its ability to bridge across many Council-wide objectives that involves the integration of placemaking and public art practice into a range of urban and community development processes and planning controls.

5 Definitions

Placemaking: Placemaking refers to a collaborative process by which we can shape our public realm in order to maximise shared value. More than just developing good urban design, placemaking facilitates creative patterns of use, paying particular attention to the physical, cultural and social identities that define a place and supports its ongoing evolution.

Strengthening the connection between people and the places they share builds attachment to place which in turn generates stewardship, a sense of a collective community ethos and pride and a sense of place.

Public Art: Public art refers to art in any medium that has been planned and executed with the specific intention of being sited, performed or staged in the public domain. It may be a commissioned work by professional artist/s or a community inspired collaboration between an artist/s, multi-disciplinary teams and members of a community. Commonly, there are three types of public art:

- **Ephemeral:** any art form that is transitory, changing and exists for a brief time in the public domain. Ephemeral works may include art that bring life, fun and interest to public spaces and events such as pop up events, street art, artistic interventions, multimedia, performance, music, new media and technologies.
- **Temporary:** any work that has a limited life such as a project or special event that is less than five years. Temporary works may include art such as light and sound installation, land and environmental art, murals, and kinetic art.
- **Permanent:** any work that is permanently sited in the public domain. Permanent works may include art such as visual markers and entrance gateways, sculptures, architectural and urban design elements, facades, functional forms such as paving, fencing, street and park furniture to sound and light installations.

Integrated design approach: A way of working that helps bring together disciplines, scales, times, and places into a more effective spatial practice. It requires strong leadership and governance, shared responsibility, and an understanding of the role and value of art and design across the life cycle of a project.

Public domain: The collective, communal part of urban and rural areas, with shared access for all. It is the space of movement, recreation, gathering, events contemplation and relaxation. The public domain includes streets, pathways, rights of way, parks, accessible open spaces, plazas, and waterways that are physically and visually accessible regardless of ownership.

Engaging: A building, place or space that draws people in with features that arouse interest.

Responsive: Buildings, places and spaces that react positively to place and local character and context.

Adding value: Leveraging and building on the existing characteristics, qualities and context of a building, place or space to increase social, environmental and economic benefits to the community.

6 Policy Background

Culture and landscape are fundamental to shaping the Tweed, and are intrinsically linked with memory, meaning and identity.

Our Placemaking and Public Art Policy in its broadest sense, relates to both physical and tangible art/design interventions, as well as more intangible creative processes and dialogue. It asks us to build on existing knowledge, make new connections and to seek answers through collaboration and a synthesis of multiple viewpoints to achieve solutions.

Our Policy also advocates that Council adopt an iterative and inclusive process to use art and design as a tool to engage stakeholders in making sure our places remain vibrant, attractive and useable, yet respect and enhance local character. This policy is framed in context within a broader planning framework that includes alignment with:

- The NSW Government Architect's:
 - **'Better Placed'** - a design policy outlining an integrated design-led approach for NSW. These place sensitive standards advocate for integrated design as an essential component and skill that should be utilised in planning and development processes.
 - **Urban Design Guide for Regional NSW** - a guide for creating healthy built environments in regional NSW. The guide addresses the unique conditions that characterise regional NSW through leveraging the historical and cultural assets of places, integrating with the natural environment and landscape, and revitalising main streets and regional town centres.
- The **NSW Cultural Infrastructure Plan 2025+** - a plan that advocates for the use of public art as a driver for creating vibrant places, making sure that it is embedded in long-term land-use planning across local government areas of the state.
- Our **Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027 (CSP) 'Living and Loving the Tweed'** - that translates our community's key priorities and aspirations into long-term strategic goals that guide the future direction of Tweed Shire Council. The plan includes strategies on

how we balance change to maintain the special characteristics of the Tweed that contribute to the area's unique culture, character and identity.

- Our **Cultural Plan 2018-2021** - that is structured around five key themes which reflect the interests and needs expressed by our communities. These include:
 - **Sense of place:** Our culture appreciates Tweed Shire's natural and cultural heritage. We enjoy its beauty and preserve it for future generations.
 - **Enterprisingly creative:** Our culture is a source of inspiration within the Tweed and beyond.
 - **Acknowledging Bundjalung Country:** Council is committed to developing further our relationship with Tweed Shire's Aboriginal community. We will work to foster greater understanding and respect of Aboriginal history, culture, and identity.
 - **Every day live and play:** Tweed is a welcoming, culturally active, and innovative place to live and play. Our culture adapts to change in ways that are inclusive, respectful and fun!
 - **Making things discoverable:** Tweed Shire's existing cultural assets and infrastructure are used in ways that contribute to the cultural wellbeing of the community.

7 Policy

Placemaking and public art in urban design and spatial activation is widely recognised for its ability to enliven spaces, contribute to a positive sense of place and reinforces a range of social, cultural, economic and heritage values particular to the Tweed. Council plays a key role in the development of public spaces and as such hold the key to including placemaking projects and public art in its many forms, whether through direct commissions or in partnership with other tiers of government and/or the private sector, or through community driven initiatives.

Our policy acknowledges the various forms of placemaking and contemporary public art practice: permanent and temporary; stand alone; and projects integrated with developments and events. It recognises that successful placemaking involves the community and Council working together on projects for the benefit of the place, whilst strengthening their connections to the place.

Our policy encourages Council to build the capital and capacity of our workforce to develop skills and draw together many fields of expertise in relation to good design and the importance of great places. It also promotes the inclusion and integration of site specific public artworks within major developments (via planning controls and/or voluntary planning agreements) that make a positive contribution to the civic environment and add to the cultural dimension of the Tweed.

Consequently, our Placemaking and Public Art Policy commits Council to:

- Promoting and presenting artistic expression that is original and innovative.
- Adopting a best practice approach to planning, implementation and delivery of placemaking and public art projects.
- Developing quality placemaking projects and public artworks (ephemeral, temporary or permanent) as an integral part of the urban and rural fabric, animation of, and community life of the Tweed.
- Respecting history and heritage, including by documenting and preserving community investment in placemaking and public art projects through contributions such as images, stories and other forms of contribution.

- Encouraging collaborative processes between artists and design professionals in the creation and commissioning of placemaking, public art and urban design.
- Stimulating sustainable and value driven outcomes in the costing, design, fabrication and installation of 'integrated' public art, urban design and architecture.
- Implementing a regular public art maintenance program that safeguards and assists to identify the expected life of our public art assets.

In addition Council will also consider, where possible:

- Including placemaking and public art outcomes across a range of cross functional Council plans and strategies, encouraging innovative approaches and responses to public places and promoting civic engagement and community interaction. This includes opportunities to enrich public spaces, including large scale capital works projects with innovative site-specific public art. Also explore a range of temporary projects that support placemaking, urban design and city animation and event objectives.
- Promoting the integration of public art into private developments via statutory planning controls.
- Securing adequate resources to build, document and maintain a collection of public artworks through:
 - Council's capital works program and/or operational budgets
 - Private sector contributions
 - Public funding for projects via grants and 'in kind' support to/from the community
 - Document deposit within appropriate Council records and archives.

Placemaking and Public Art Responsibility

- Council's Placemaking and Public Art Reference Group is responsible for identifying, assessing and guiding implementation of placemaking and public art opportunities within Council's influence.
- The Placemaking and Public Art Reference Group will consist of representatives from across Council units and may invite external input from individuals or organisations with relevant expert knowledge on a case by case basis.
- All units of Council shall act on placemaking and public art principles, where appropriate, and shall confer with the Placemaking and Public Art Reference Group to facilitate placemaking and public art delivery.

Placemaking and Public Art Reference Group Role

The Placemaking and Public Art Reference Group will steer delivery of placemaking and public art initiatives. The group serves as the interface between Council and the community - providing advice on placemaking and public art directions, priorities and key initiatives. Their role is to:

- Assess and make recommendations on applications / proposals from the community for placemaking and public art with consideration for issues such as suitability, public safety, finance, and consultation.
- Provide placemaking and public art advice internally and serve as the primary conduit for vetting of ideas, resourcing, prioritisation and coordination of placemaking and public art initiatives.
- Identify, review and implement placemaking and public art opportunities initiated by Council.
- Ensure effective consultation across Council regarding placemaking and public art initiatives.
- Facilitate Council's transition to the integration of placemaking and public art approaches.

- Facilitate the development and delivery of collaborative public-private initiatives, and leverage stakeholders' resources.

Version Control:

Version History		
Version #	Summary of changes made	Date changes made
1.2	Incorporated into new policy template	20/06/2013
1.3	Updated to include new governance process in absence of Public Art Advisory Committee (PAAC) and an overarching Community Cultural Development Advisory Committee (CCDAC)	12/10/2013
1.4	Update has been developed to provide: an integrated approach to placemaking and public art; definitions of key terms; and to align with the Tweed Shire Council Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027 and Cultural Plan 2018-2021.	19/09/2019
1.4	Minor amendments made to Policy. Adopted by Council	20 February 2020
1.5	Minor formatting amendments Reviewed as part of Policies Review and no changes required.	16 June 2022