



Public Art Strategy

Town of Walkerville

Executive Summary

“Increasingly, local governments at the cutting edge are recognising the need to carefully define their role in public art and more broadly cultural development.”

Jacke Ohlin

Public art has a significant role to play in reflecting the Town of Walkerville’s past and shaping its future.

The purpose of this Public Art Strategy is to guide future investment in ephemeral, temporary and permanent works of public art that engage the community, amplify the Town’s unique cultural and natural heritage, and celebrate its diversity.

It outlines the guiding principles for commissioning public art projects that aim to: Beautify and enrich the Town of Walkerville’s public realm; strengthen community cohesion and participation; and, provoke curiosity and discovery to enhance the experience of residents and visitors alike.

In doing so, this strategy is the foundation that will support and scaffold commissioned public art for Walkerville into the future.

Context

The Town of Walkerville recognises the role of public art in a prosperous, engaged and flourishing community.

Public art is a vital expression of a community’s identity, history and aspirations. It reflects and shapes the experience of a place and enhances the quality of the built environment. It brings people together and encourages residents to feel greater pride or ownership of their community. It also attracts visitors, contributing to economic growth.

Walkerville has a history of bold investment in community and public amenities, with generous donations and community philanthropy shaping our beautiful green spaces and iconic public art.

The goal of this Public Art Strategy is to guide future investment in public art in Walkerville.

In developing this strategy, the Township voices its aspiration for public art, supporting future decisions about priority sites, community engagement, commissioning process and funding.

The strategy has been informed by community surveys and consultations, historic texts, conversations with key stakeholders, and strategic planning documentation. It aligns with the 2020-2024 *Living in the Town of Walkerville: a strategic community plan*.



This work respectfully acknowledges the Kaurna people as the Traditional Owners of the Adelaide Plains and pays respect to the Spiritual Ancestors, Elders and Custodians; past, present and emerging.

We also express our respect of Kaurna people’s customs, traditions, culture and our gratitude for their protection and nurturing of this place; their tribal lands and waters.

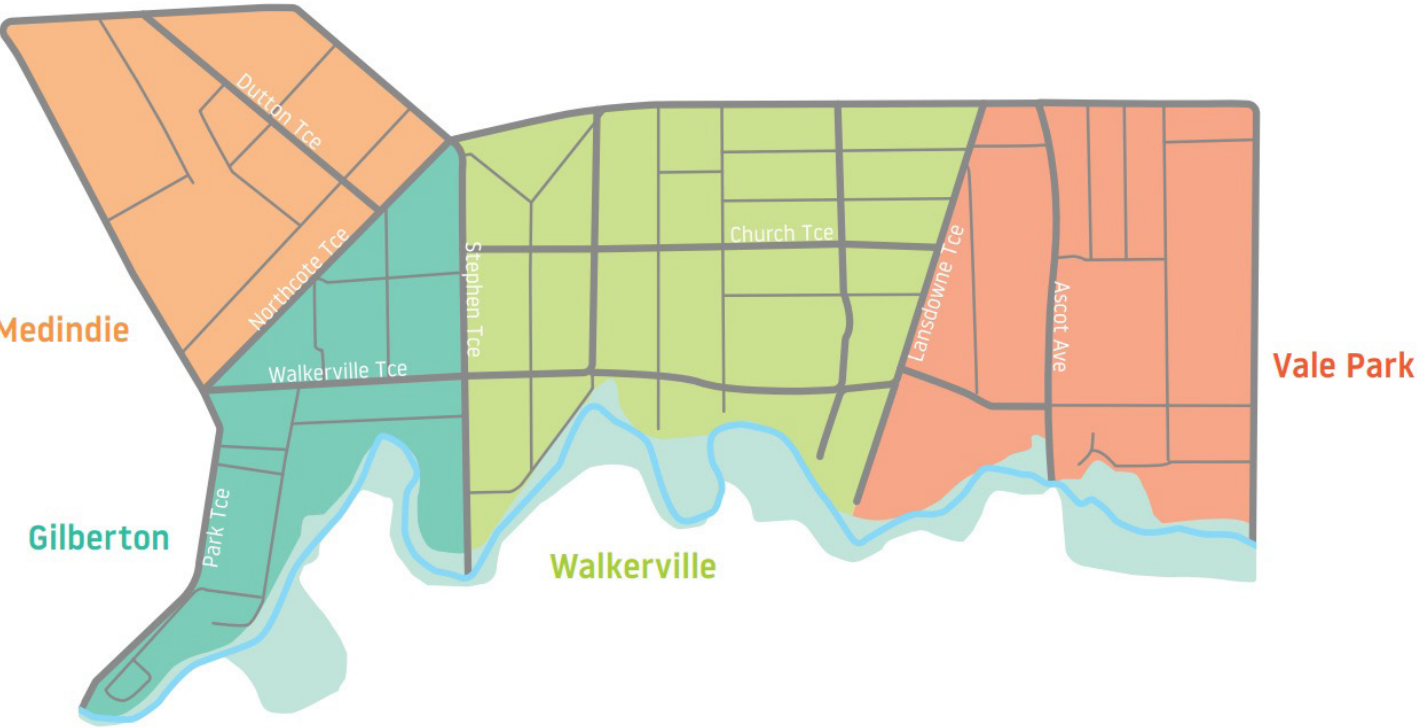
This strategy was written by Guildhouse, commissioned by the Town of Walkerville in April 2020.

Place

The Town of Walkerville is home to almost 8000 residents and is the smallest council in inner metropolitan Adelaide. It is bordered by the city and is connected to other local government areas by the River Torrens network.

The River Torrens and Linear Park hold great significance for residents and visitors, and play a vital role in industry and community life.

The Town is characterised by notable churches, highly-regarded schools, lush green spaces, and historic houses. The village of Walkerville continues to play a role as the ‘beating heart’ of the area, with Walkerville Terrace acting as a drawcard for residents and visitors alike.



Map supplied by the Town of Walkerville



Community

The Town’s generosity and community spirit can be seen in its commitment to social housing, aged care, and the preservation of nature for future generations.

The Township also has a strong history of employing art to enhance the beauty and enjoyment of its public spaces.

For example, James and Diana Ramsay’s 1979 donation commissioned John Dowie to create ‘The Sponge’ fountain that still graces the Civic and Community Centre today. The legacy of artist and educator Mary P Harris can be seen in her contributions to the Mary P Harris Reserve, Howie Reserve and Bundilla Sanctuary sculpture.

Public art has a significant role to play in reflecting the Town of Walkerville’s past and shaping its future.

Enterprise

The Town of Walkerville encompasses the suburbs of Gilberton, Medindie, Walkerville and Vale Park, each of which has distinct characteristics, enterprises and industries.

Original trades such as brickworks, butchery, brewing and agriculture supported the largely residential population. This has expanded to include education, aged care and specialist professional services, which continue to bolster the prosperity of the Town through increasing trade and visitors.

Vision

The Town of Walkerville is a place of discovery and reflection: in which unique works of public art tell distinct stories and create beautiful spaces that bring people together.

Guiding Principles

Decisions regarding public art in the Town of Walkerville should consider the following guiding principles:

Amplify our unique stories

Enrich our beautiful public realm

Include our diverse communities

Inspire discovery of our stories, places and art

Reflect our identities and priorities

Lead artistic excellence and best practice

Sustain our natural environment



Emily Floyd, 'Abstract Labour', 2014. Heide Museum of Modern Art.

Aims

- 1 Beautify and enrich the Town of Walkerville's public realm
- 2 Strengthen community cohesion and participation
- 3 Provoke curiosity and discovery to enhance the experience of residents and visitors alike.



What is culture?

Culture is "a set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual, and emotional features of society or a social group, that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs."

UNESCO 2013

Cultural experiences connect us our sense of self, each other and place.



1 Beautify and enrich the Town of Walkerville’s public realm

“Art is language and public art is public speech.”
Jonanthan Jones, The Guardian.

The Town of Walkerville boasts beautiful green spaces that are treasured by residents and visitors alike.

Through this strategy, future public art commissions will inspire and reward people of all ages, backgrounds and experiences. They will create spaces for contemplation, observation, participation and play. Commissioned art will contribute to a more complex understanding and appreciation of place.

These experiences will contribute to the Town’s identity in new ways, and become emblematic of an inclusive, progressive and vibrant community that engages locals and attracts visitors.



Sharyn Egan, ‘Waabiny Mia - Play House’, 2018, Optus Stadium Playscape, UAP, Perth.

What is Public Art?

Public art is a broad term that refers to a range of artistic works in the public realm.

The intent of public art may be to provoke sentiment, share a story, be decorative, interpretive or commemorative.

What is an installation?

Installation art includes permanent sculptural works, temporary or ephemeral works that exist in a place for a period of time, performative experiences, and digital/ human interactions.

What is integrated art?

Integrated art includes site-specific responses to a particular place that result creative outcomes that have functional purposes, such as lighting, seating and furniture, bike racks, paving, bollards, water features, signage and wayfinding.

Strategies Recommended Activity

Commission site-specific public art

- Consider commissioning enduring sculptural works that reflect the Town’s unique stories.
- Explore the development of an ongoing mural commission project, inviting mural artists to create works (including for unusual and non-traditional sites).

Identify strategic opportunities to leverage infrastructure projects

- Explore opportunities to commission integrated artistic/urban infrastructure for public spaces (such as public seating, wayfinding signage, bollards, lighting, etc).

Establish governance structures to support excellence

- Establish best practice commissioning processes.
- Develop asset management and maintenance policies to ensure the legacy of public art investments.

Anticipated Outcomes

- The public realm is enjoyed and valued by residents and visitors alike.
- Individual public art works are celebrated as a unique reflection of place and community.
- The overall collection of public art works contributes to the Town’s reputation as creative district and bolsters the visitor economy.
- The Walkerville Oval development is strengthened through aesthetic and commercial outcomes.

2 Strengthen community cohesion and participation

“If art in community places isn’t for the community using those places, then who is it for?”

Maggie Baxter

Embedding public art within the Town of Walkerville will engage residents, create new opportunities and stimulate community cohesion and participation.

Through this strategy, future public art commissions will create reasons for community members of all ages, backgrounds and experiences to come together. They will engage people in new and unexpected ways, provide opportunities for them to participate and create, and begin new relationships and dialogues. They will encourage community ownership and pride.



NewActon precinct, Canberra.

What does an artist-led design process look like?

An artist-led design process is when an artist is engaged alongside other experts (such as architects, urban planners, developers or landscape architects) to help inform the concept, form and materials used in a project.

Project Scale

To support public art projects the Town opts to commission directly, the Government of South Australia’s Public Art and Design initiative supports the commissioning of high quality new works of art and design for public places by practicing professional South Australian artists. The fund provides access to seed funding, commission support funding and major commission funding.

What is an artist in residence?

An artist residency usually involves hosting an artist to respond to a site or community to develop work, experiment with new ideas and provoke different ways of thinking.

The outcomes of an Artist Residency are twofold;

- An opportunity for the host organisation to provoke creativity, invigorate thinking and stimulate engagement
- An opportunity for artists to deepen their knowledge, experiment, establish new relationships and ways of working.

Strategies Recommended Activity

Create opportunities for diverse communities to come together

- Explore artist-led design processes that engage with local communities.
- Ensure activities and public art can be experienced by people of all ages and access requirements.
- Explore opportunities for outreach activities, satellite arts events or festivals.

Create opportunities for residents to participate in art-making

- Develop opportunities for local communities to participate in the process of making public art.
- Develop an Artist-in-Residence program to activate and amplify sites of importance.

Strengthen partnerships to broaden the reach and impact of public art and activities

- Consider opportunities for recreation facilities to include tenancies for arts organisations.
- Identify opportunities to extend outcomes of Artist-In-Residence programs through local education providers (including student participation and/or commissions).
- Encourage local businesses to contribute through provision of spaces, materials and/or funds.
- Explore implementation of a matched funding model to encourage private investment.

Anticipated Outcomes

- Members of the community have more opportunities to come together across diverse ages, backgrounds and experiences.
- Individual and community wellbeing is enhanced through active participation in arts activities.
- Families have access to engaging and enjoyable spaces to experience, explore and play.
- Businesses are attracted to the area because of its reputation for creative, interesting work and workplaces.

3 Provoke curiosity and discovery to enhance the experience of residents & visitor alike

The Town of Walkerville is rich with stories of natural history, local legends, innovative industry and Kaurna knowledge. Its future stories are yet to be formed, but public arts experiences can bring them to the fore.

Through this strategy, future public art commissions will create opportunities for people to experience and connect with these stories in new ways – through listening, exploring, participating, playing and creating. They will bring past stories to life, spur the creation of new stories and experiences, and encourage people to be curious about the area and those who live and work within it.

“Public sculptural art offers the widest possible audience and the greatest opportunity (by far) to experience, within the increasingly intense landscape of our cities, the humanising and deeply satisfying impact of art and culture.”

Gene Sherman



APHIDS, Lz Dunn, ‘Flyway’, 2018, performative audiovisual tour, Theatre Garonne Toulouse, France. Photograph Franck Alix.

| Strategies | Recommended Activity |
|---|---|
| Communicate local stories in unexpected ways | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Consider commissioning artists to respond to local histories and iconic sites (such as the Wesleyan Cemetery, Linear Park and Mary P Harris Reserve) using temporary, ephemeral or performance art experiences.Explore partnerships with artists and arts organisations to re-energise the Town’s artistic history using ‘plein air’ and/or land art techniques. |
| Present unique and memorable arts experiences | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Create opportunities for artists to create and document site-specific performance works that engage the community in their creation and/or presentation.Consider establishing a public art trail that enables discovery of community stories across different mediums. |
| Create spaces for reflection and play | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Engage artists to design holistic creative spaces that invite wonder, discovery and play.Develop a program of commissioned integrated art elements that serve and engage visitors.Develop an arts-led cultural program that encourages participation from the broader community. |

Anticipated Outcomes

- The community’s unique cultural stories are documented, shared and experienced in new ways.
- The community has greater awareness of and engagement with key reserves and public spaces.
- The community has greater opportunities to engage with art and culture in unique and memorable new ways.
- The public art program acts as a drawcard for people to visit, linger and engage with local businesses.
- Residents, visitors and businesses are inspired to consider their role in contributing to art and culture in their community.

High priority sites & opportunities for implementation

| Site | Commission Opportunity |
|-----------------------|---|
| Throughout Township | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Public art trail development (including sculpture, audio, performance and participatory art commissions).Integrated art elements – wayfinding, seating, lighting, bike racks etc.Temporary art commission – bio diversity project in collaboration with landscape architects. |
| Mary P Harris Reserve | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Sculptural work commission.Consider temporary works and other integrated art elements to connect with Walkerville Terrace and other priority public spaces.Temporary art commission (participatory performance art). |
| Hamilton Reserve | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Integrated art elements (bespoke seating, lighting).Land art commission. |
| Crawford Reserve | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Extend ephemeral public art offering (Labyrinth) to make point of discovery.Integrated art elements (bespoke seating, lighting). |
| Walkerville Oval | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Sculpture commission.Integrated art elements (including wayfinding, lighting and furniture)Arts tenancy opportunities.Satellite arts/cultural events |

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| Levi House/Park | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Artist in Residence or artist commission (participatory performance art). |
| Alfred Street (and other play spaces) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Artist play space commission. |
| Linear Park | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Artist-In-Residence Program.Public art trail development (including small sculpture, audio, performance and participatory art commissions). |
| Wesleyan Cemetery | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Temporary art commission (participatory performance art). |
| Walkerville Terrace | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Integrated art elements.Commissioned mural project. |



Resources

2019 Community Survey, Town of Walkerville
Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census 2016
John Lewis, 1988, The Walkerville Story
Marjorie Scales, John Walker's Village
2020-2024 Living in the Town of Walkerville: a
strategic community plan.

Public Art in Australia, Artlink Magazine, June 1998
PUBLIC ART making it happen: commissioning
guidelines for local councils, Arts SA, 2000
Arts and Culture Plan South Australia 2019-2024