



PUBLIC ART FRAMEWORK 2025-2035

Prepared March 2025



Acknowledgement

Bass Coast Shire Council acknowledges the Bunurong as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands and waters, and pays respect to their Elders past, present and emerging, for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and Lore.

Bass Coast Shire Council celebrates the opportunity to embrace and empower the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Island Communities in their diversity.

Bass Coast Shire Council will create opportunities for future recognition and respectful partnerships that will honour the Traditional Owners and Custodians, and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

Cover image: Fish Trap by Joe Donahue, Corinella, image courtesy of Bass Coast Shire Council

This page: Alpha by Geoffrey Bartlett, Newhaven Public Art Commission installation, image courtesy of Bass Coast Shire Council

CONTENTS

- | | | | |
|-----|----------------------------------|-----|--------------------------|
| 4. | Messages | 13. | Public Art in Bass Coast |
| 5. | Introduction | 14. | Core Values |
| 6. | Bass Coast Community Vision 2041 | 15. | Goals of Public Artwork |
| 7. | Strategic Vision | 16. | Strategic Objectives |
| 10. | Policy Context | 24. | Lifespan and Maintenance |
| 11. | What is Public Art? | 28. | Conclusion |
| 12. | Acquisition of Artworks | | |
| | Public Art Aquisition Fund | | |
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MESSAGES

It is with great pride that I present the draft Bass Coast Public Art Framework 2025–2035 for community feedback.

Public art has the extraordinary ability to connect people, reflect our stories, celebrate our shared history, and inspire new ideas. In Bass Coast, where natural beauty and vibrant communities meet, public art plays an essential role in shaping not only the places we gather, but also how we understand and celebrate who we are.

This draft Framework builds on many years of investment in creativity and culture across Bass Coast. It recognises the enormous value that public art brings – enriching our streetscapes, deepening community pride, supporting local artists, and strengthening our visitor economy. It also reflects the aspirations of our community, who have told us they want to see more creativity embedded in everyday life.

Having had the privilege of being part of Council’s Arts and Cultural Advisory Committee, I have witnessed first-hand the passion, insight and creativity that our community brings to public art. Sitting around the table with artists, community leaders and passionate locals has deepened my understanding of how art can transform not just spaces, but the way we feel about where we live. It’s an experience I hold close and one that reinforces my belief in the power of public art to build stronger, more connected communities.

This draft Framework champions inclusivity, sustainability, and innovation. It sets out a vision for the next decade and outlines how we can work together to support a thriving and accessible public art program across Bass Coast.

I invite you to read this draft and share your feedback. We can shape a vibrant, creative legacy for Bass Coast and for future generations with your input.



Cr Rochelle Halstead

Bass Coast Shire Council

Mayor

INTRODUCTION

Bass Coast Shire, located along the scenic coastline of south-east Victoria, offers a rich tapestry of natural landscapes, active communities and a growing arts scene. This Framework aims to support public art initiatives that reflect the region's heritage, cultural diversity, and future aspirations while providing a platform for artists to engage with the local community and positively impact our diverse landscape.

The purpose of this document is to provide Council with strategic direction for commissioning and managing public artwork across Bass Coast, as well as articulating key actions to be implemented over the coming decade. The Framework has considered Bass Coast's existing public artworks and commissioning processes and looked at contemporary best-practice to build on this collection.

The Framework has been developed after consultation with a range of stakeholders, both from within Council and across the broader Bass Coast community, including the Arts and Cultural Advisory Committee (ACAC). This acknowledges that the development of successful public artwork integration requires a collaborative and team-based approach encompassing the strengths of Council officers as facilitators, the community as cultural citizens and champions of public artwork in their region, and artists who challenge the trajectory of their practices and aim to leave an important legacy on our unique coastal cultural landscape.

47%

of people surveyed see public artwork 1-2 times each week

89.4%

of people surveyed felt that public art improves the look and feel of public spaces

Bass Coast Community Vision 2041

Vision Statement:

From its flowing hills to its wild unspoiled coastlines, the Bass Coast is a source of celebration for all who live in and visit the region.

Our townships are vibrant, rich with culture and full of life, each with its own distinct character. Drawing on our creativity, innovation and resilience we've created a thriving and diverse economy that supports sustainable agriculture and industry.

We live proudly on Bunurong Country, and build on learnings from our First Peoples and their knowledge. We coexist in harmony with our environment, and are prepared for future challenges and changes.

We are the people of the Bass Coast. Experience our cultures and history, and contribute to our story.

STRATEGIC VISION

To foster a thriving, inclusive, ambitious and sustainable public art program that enhances the unique character of Bass Coast Shire, connects people and celebrates creativity. It acknowledges that public artwork increases community cohesion, creates robust cultural community identities, instils civic pride, contributes to a healthy economy and can drive cultural tourism to make our shire a more inspired place for locals, visitors and investors alike.





*Without art we miss out on
culture, joy and the humanity
that it brings.*

Community Survey respondent.

Policy Context

This Framework should be read in conjunction with other Council policies and strategies, including:

- Council Plan 2021-2025
- Arts and Culture Strategy 2019-2029
- Arts Collection Policy 2024
- Procurement Policy 2023
- Asset Plan 2022
- Economic Development Framework 2030
- Open Space Asset Management Plan 2024-2028
- Access, Equity and Inclusion Plan 2021-2025
- Bass Coast Reconciliation Action Plan
- Bass Coast Towards 2030
- Gender Equity Action Plan 2021
- Healthy Communities Plan 2021-2025
- Phillip Island and San Remo Visitor Economy 2035
- Natural Environment Strategy 2016-2026
- Unlocking Rural Tourism Strategy 2023
- Communications and Engagement Strategy 2023-2026

This Framework has been written in the bridging period between the Council Plan 2021-2025 and the new Council Plan 2025-2029. It also important to note that throughout the course of the Framework there will be two further Council Plans developed, in 2029 and 2033. For this reason, to maintain its currency the Framework references the Community Vision 2041 rather than the Council Plan.

Featured image this page and next: Mural artwork by Dvate, Wonthaggi, for the Bass Coast Street Art Project
Image courtesy of Heath Warwick for Bass Coast Shire Council



WHAT IS PUBLIC ART?

A public artwork is an artistic expression in any medium, planned and executed outside a gallery context and intended specifically for exhibition within public space.

Public spaces are generally open and accessible to all and can be indoors or outdoors. Public art can express community values and cultural identities, enhance our built environment, transform landscapes, heighten our awareness, and allow us to contemplate broad conceptual themes.

Commissioned site-specific public artwork is an artist's response to our time and place and reflects how we see the world. It is an encapsulation of an aspect of our culture and strengthens creative thinking.

Public art can be permanent or temporary, and can take many forms including but not limited to:

- Murals and street art
- Sculptures
- Interactive installations
- Video, audio or light installations (multi-media)
- Temporary installations (e.g., artwork in festivals)
- Performances (e.g., street theatre, dance)





Acquisition of Artworks

BASS COAST SHIRE COUNCIL PUBLIC ART FRAMEWORK 2025-2035

As per Council's Art Collections Policy, when selecting to commission, purchase or receive gifted artwork, one or more of the following criteria should be used to determine the suitability of any art being considered for acquisition:

- Artworks that demonstrate artistic excellence in concept and/or execution.
- Artworks that increase the depth, breadth, and cohesion of the existing Council Art Collection and/or expand on the themes of the Robert Smith Collection, providing greater context and meaning to existing artworks.
- Artworks that increase gender equity in number and value.
- Artworks that promote a greater appreciation of Aboriginal art and culture, principally to develop understanding of the traditional owners of the region.

Public Art Acquisition Fund

Council provides annual funding specifically for the commissioning of public art. It is anticipated that this indexed budget allocation will be spent biennially to facilitate the acquisition of five significant works across the next decade.

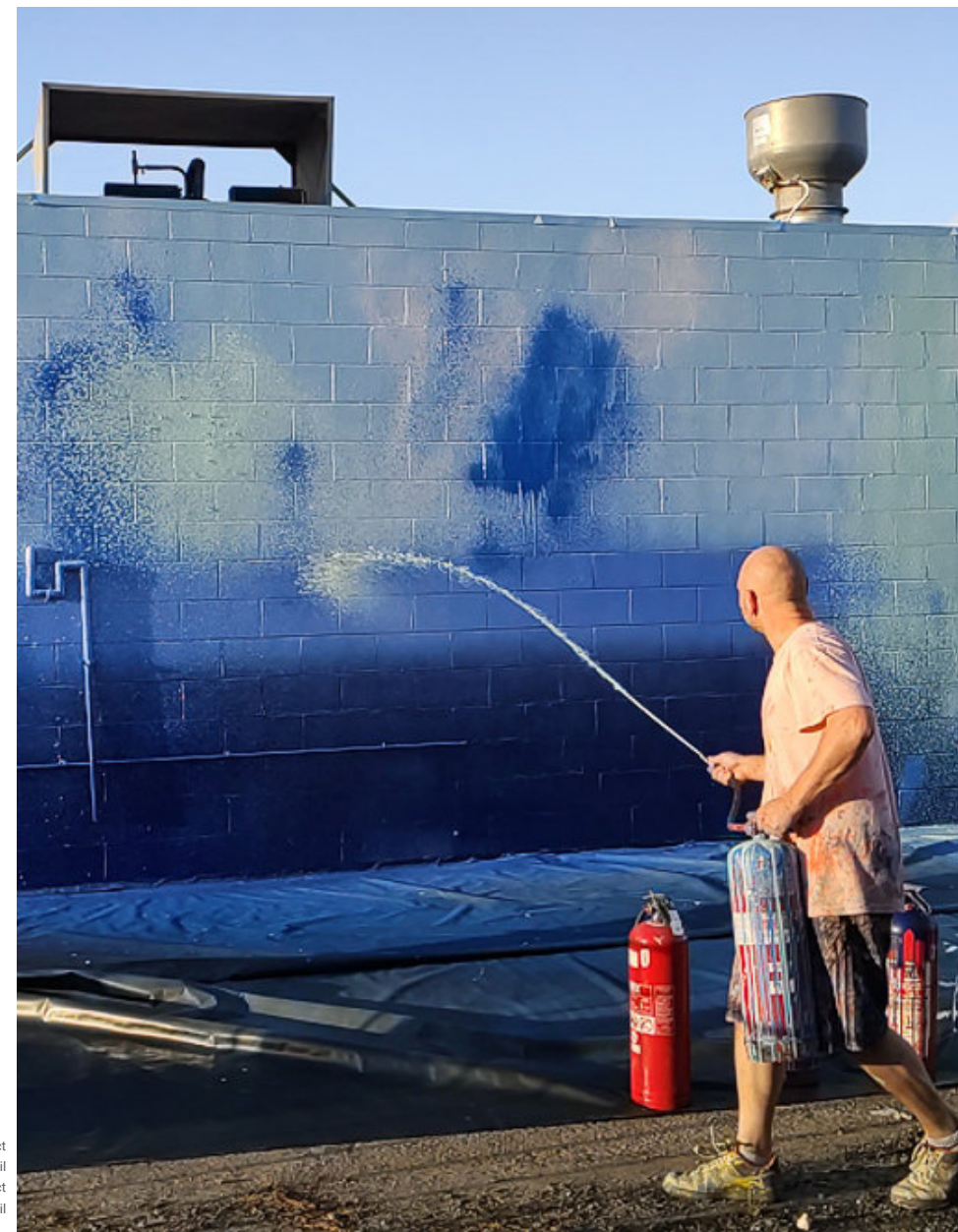
For almost twenty years Council has been commissioning works of art for public spaces across the breadth of the shire (see table on following page). The Public Art Sites and Themes Action Plan 2014-2024 guided Council's annual allocation of \$50,000 per year. This Framework will guide acquisitions for the ten years to 2035.

It is important to note that Council commissions and facilitates public art projects in addition to those works acquired through the Public Art fund. These projects – whether funded by Council or by external organisations where Council has a role in their planning and development – should also use this strategy as their guiding document.

Public Art In Bass Coast

* Denotes public works that were commissioned as a part of the Bass Coast Shire Council Public Art Commissions under the previous Public Art Action Plan.

Artist	Title	Town
Anton Hassell	Harmony Bells*	Cowes
Ash Keating	Mural	Grantville
Bonnie Charles and Sarah Hicks	Sight Lines*	Kilcunda
Buff Diss	Mural	Wonthaggi
Carly Mead	Mural	Wonthaggi
Craig Lockwood	Mural	Wonthaggi
Darren Henderson	Mural	Cowes
Darren Marks	Mural	Wonthaggi
David Kopelman	BMX Bike Rider	Coronet Bay
David Murphy	Bronze Yarns*	Coronet Bay
Dvate	Mural	Wonthaggi
Eirian Chapman	Mural	Cowes
Geoffrey Bartlett	Alpha*	Newhaven
Graham Gilbert	Mural	Cowes
James Voller	Collide*	Kernot
Janice Orchard	Armistice Mural	Grantville
Joe Donahue	Fish Trap*	Corinella
Joe Donahue	Love and Precious Things*	Cape Paterson
Joel Adler	Emergence*	Wonthaggi
Linda Horsbough	Mural	Cowes
Maree Clarke	Murrini Canoe*	Cowes
Marion Quigley	Mural	Cowes
Mary Sullivan - Coordinating Artist	TRAX - Skate Park Public Art	Inverloch
Paul Jesse	Excuse Me Mr Seagull*	San Remo
Rohan Manhal	Mural	Wonthaggi
Shane Cargill and Martin Moore	Seam	Wonthaggi
Shane Cargill and Martin Moore	Shaft	Wonthaggi
Steve Parker	Mural	Cowes
Tom Murray-White	Mural	Wonthaggi
Victoria Nelson	Today and the Future or Past and Present	Grantville
Victoria Nelson	White Whale	Cowes



This page: Mural by Ash Keating, Grantville, for the Bass Coast Street Art Project

Image courtesy of Bass Coast Shire Council

Previous page: Mural artwork by Buff Diss, Wonthaggi, for the Bass Coast Street Art Project

Image courtesy of Bass Coast Shire Council

CORE VALUES

1. **Artistic Merit:** Commissioned artworks are delivered in collaboration with artists to a professional standard that enrich the cultural and natural environments that they are placed within.
2. **Community Engagement:** Actively engage community to ensure public artworks are imbedded with the values, stories, identities and aspirations of the local community.
3. **Inclusivity:** Embrace diverse voices including First Nations culture, historical and contemporary narratives, support and provide opportunities for local artists, and engage underrepresented groups. Ensure that the appropriate Council Plans and Strategies are referenced to address imbalances in opportunities for some because of gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, ethnicity or religion.
4. **Sustainability:** Prioritise environmentally responsible practices in the creation, installation and maintenance of public artworks.
5. **Innovation:** Encourage new and evolving forms of art that reflect the development of the region and showcase contemporary art practices.
6. **Accessibility:** Ensure that public art is accessible to all members of the community, regardless of age, background or ability.
7. **Best Practice:** Ensure that artwork commissioning processes meet best industry practices and that artworks being commissioned are of both a rigorous artistic and financial investment for the Council.

These goals act as a benchmark to assess what qualifies as public artwork and therefore can be commissioned as a part of this Public Art Framework.

1. **Enhance Sense of Place:** Commission public artworks that activate and reflect Bass Coast's local identity, natural beauty and histories. They should stimulate cultural and creative dialogue within enriched communities.
2. **Support Local Artists:** Provide opportunities for local and regionally-based artists to contribute to the creative vibrancy of the municipality and acknowledge their place in creating culturally aware communities.
3. **Foster Cultural and Economic Development:** Develop public artwork commissions as a tool for attracting tourism and regional investment, supporting local businesses and enriching the local community.
4. **Create Inclusive and Engaging Spaces:** Use site-specific public artwork to activate public spaces and ensure that these works encourage social interaction, celebrate diversity and create inspired community connection.

Unless they are to include a specific public art installation, this Framework and its guiding principles do not encompass the commissioning of street signage, seating and other outdoor furniture, playgrounds, pavement and pathway work, memorials or monuments.

GOALS OF PUBLIC ARTWORK



These Strategic Objectives were developed using the Cultural Development Network's planning framework, adopted by the National Local Government Cultural Forum, the Australia Council for the Arts, Creative Victoria, the Australian Local Government Association and now used by many councils around Australia as best practice cultural development planning. These strategic objectives enact the stated Goals of Public Artwork.

BASS COAST SHIRE COUNCIL PUBLIC ART FRAMEWORK 2025-2035

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES



Strategic Objectives	Alignment to Public Art Framework 2025-2035 Goals, Community Vision 2041, Art Collections Policy	Measurable Outcomes	Why? Theory of Change	Potential Intentions and Supportive Activities
1.1 Community Championing of Public Artworks	Public Art Framework 2025-2035 Goals Enhance Sense of Place	Cultural - Sense of belonging to a shared cultural heritage deepened. Environmental - Positive sense of place (built and/or natural environment) enhanced. Governance - Sense of civic pride enhanced.	Knowing that... public art plays a vital role in fostering local identity, distinctiveness, and civic pride. Community engagement at various stages is essential to ensure the artwork's relevance and acceptance. Given our diverse community, spread across multiple townships - each with its own unique character - We will... ensure public artworks reflect community values and strengthen cultural identities. We will prioritise engagement with local communities and undertake a considered consultation process to align public art opportunities with the values, needs, and aspirations of the people of Bass Coast.	- Establish internal Public Art Advisory Group and external Project Reference Group to guide artist briefs and selection. - Prioritise projects with meaningful community engagement in the art-making process. - Develop a distribution plan for the annual commission program. - Explore an art trail master plan.

Strategic Objectives	Alignment to Public Art Framework 2025-2035 Goals, Community Vision 2041, Art Collections Policy	Measurable Outcomes	Why? Theory of Change	Potential Intentions and Supportive Activities
1.2 Community Championing of Public Artworks	Public Art Framework 2025-2035 Goals Create Inclusive and Engaging Spaces	Cultural - Aesthetic enrichment experienced Social - Social connectedness enhanced	Knowing that... public art enhances the aesthetic appeal of public spaces, fosters community gathering, and supports sustained employment and professional growth for artists. We will... develop inclusive and accessible engagement methods to involve diverse community members. We will acknowledge the unique cultural identities of Bass Coast's many communities and townships and distribute public artwork equitably across the Shire, ensuring all communities benefit, regardless of size or economic opportunities.	- Embed community engagement through project participation and/or direct involvement in fabrication. - Develop programs alongside commissions to provide interactive and educational art experiences for children, youth, seniors, and underrepresented groups. - Gather community input through forums and surveys. - Partner with Traditional Owners for First Nations representation. - Collaborate with CALD, First Nations, and intersectional groups to ensure diverse representation. - Engage local schools and community groups in participatory art projects, involving local artists to enrich the creative ecology. - Ensure equitable distribution of artworks across the Shire. - Explore avenues to celebrate new works and deepen public engagement with commissioned pieces.

Strategic Objectives	Alignment to Public Art Framework 2025-2035 Goals, Community Vision 2041, Art Collections Policy	Measurable Outcomes	Why? Theory of Change	Potential Intentions and Supportive Activities
2. Considered Commissioning Approach	Public Art Framework 2025-2035 Goals Foster Cultural and Economic Development	Cultural - New knowledge, ideas and understanding gained. Economic - Local economy supported. Governance - Civic trust inspired.	Knowing that... our annual \$50,000 allocation for public art has remained unchanged for over a decade and is no longer sufficient to procure high-quality works under contemporary best practices We will... commit the budget to a biennial project or use it to leverage external funding to increase available resources. We will continue to refine our commissioning processes, upholding contemporary best practices while ensuring artistic merit, local input, and investment are central to the process.	- Highlight resources, such as NAVA guidelines, to support artists and Council officers in commissioning best-practice public art. - Establish an internal Public Art and Collection Management working group. - Consult with the Arts and Culture Advisory Committee. - Review commissioning guidelines every three years to maintain best practices. - Commission ambitious artworks that enhance their surroundings and contribute to a high-quality, cohesive public art collection. - Assess the impact of the public art strategy on artists, contemporary practices, the community, tourism, and the local economy, adjusting as needed to align with Council's strategic goals.

Strategic Objectives	Alignment to Public Art Framework 2025-2035 Goals, Community Vision 2041, Art Collections Policy	Measurable Outcomes	Why? Theory of Change	Potential Intentions and Supportive Activities
3. Sustainability and Environmental Responsibility	Bass Coast Council Climate Crisis Declaration Climate Crisis Declaration	Environmental - Understanding of ecological issues increased. - Natural world valued. - Motivation for environmental stewardship.	Knowing that... we need to reduce the environmental impact of all activities while leveraging public art's ability to express our values and raise awareness of sustainability. We will... reduce environmental impact by aligning projects with Bass Coast's ecological values, promoting sustainability through thoughtful material choices, fostering creatively charged conversations, and creating sustainable activations that encourage a healthy approach to engaging with and caring for our environment.	- Use eco-friendly and locally sourced materials for public art. - Commission artworks with environmentally responsive themes. - Establish a long-term maintenance fund for public art. - Encourage artists to engage with environmental themes. - Set sustainability standards for materials used in commissioned artworks. - Develop a system for maintaining and conserving public artworks, ensuring longevity while minimising environmental impact. - Incorporate maintenance strategies at the time of commissioning to preserve artistic integrity and ensure ongoing care.

Artwork can draw people into a town to view public art when they might not visit otherwise.

Community Survey respondent.



Strategic Objectives	Alignment to Public Art Framework 2025-2035 Goals, Community Vision 2041, Art Collections Policy	Measurable Outcomes	Why? Theory of Change	Potential Intentions and Supportive Activities
4.1 Cultural and Economic Development	Public Art Framework 2025-2035 Goals Support Local Artists	Cultural - Creatively stimulated. Economic - Practice capacity increased.	Knowing that... public artwork fosters professional development and employment for local artists. We will... use the public art commission program in Bass Coast to support local artists by enhancing their practice, skills, and knowledge. The program will provide opportunities for both local and regional artists to create permanent and temporary artworks, strengthening their practices. When commissioning artists from outside the region for iconic works, we will seek to create opportunities for professional development for local artists.	- Offer professional development for local artists through mentorships, workshops, and commissions. - Expand local artists' engagement with state-wide, interstate, and international artists. - Create a database of local, regional, and national artists available for public art commissions, to be used when advertising opportunities and by stakeholders seeking to commission artwork.

Strategic Objectives	Alignment to Public Art Framework 2025-2035 Goals, Community Vision 2041, Art Collections Policy	Measurable Outcomes	Why? Theory of Change	Potential Intentions and Supportive Activities
4.2 Cultural and Economic Development	Public Art Framework 2025-2035 Goals Foster Cultural and Economic Development	Cultural - New knowledge, ideas and understanding gained. Economic - Local economy supported.	Knowing that... public artwork enhances the visitor economy, supports local businesses, encourages regional investment, and strengthens the cultural sector. Bass Coast Shire attracts large numbers of tourists, primarily drawn by our unique natural environment. These visitors are also cultural citizens—discovering public art enriches their experience and deepens their understanding of the region's culture, fostering a more meaningful connection to the area. This contributes to diversifying and expanding our regional visitor economy. We will... increase regional revenue by strengthening the link between public art and tourism. We will promote public artworks as key cultural attractions that enhance the visitor experience and encourage longer stays, while also driving traffic to local businesses. We will help to establish Bass Coast as a destination that celebrates both natural beauty and vibrant, diverse cultural expression, contributing to sustainable economic growth.	- Partner with tourism bodies to promote Bass Coast's public artworks as a key attraction. - Apply for government and private arts funding to support large-scale installations. - Integrate public art into existing festivals and community events to boost visibility and engagement. - Encourage developers to invest in public artworks that enhance the region's cultural and economic impact. - Seek external funding through grants, sponsorships, and business partnerships to expand public art opportunities. - Support public art commissions driven by third parties, including developers, to maximise economic benefits while aligning with strategic objectives. - Consider development of interactive maps and signage such as integrating site-specific artworks along key visitor routes. E.g. Coast Art Trail or an Urban Art Trail linking towns such as Wonthaggi, Cowes, Inverloch.



LIFESPAN AND MAINTENANCE

Lifespan

Even though communities may form attachments to particular artworks within their towns, public art is not always designed to be permanent. The nature of public art, the way in which it responds to the site where it is located and the circumstances within which it is presented, means that artworks will often be removed and/or replaced as these parameters shift and change.

Given the sense of ownership that communities develop towards public artworks it is important from the outset to articulate the expected lifespan of all pieces commissioned by Council. This lifespan should be included in the commissioning documents and clearly articulated to all stakeholders.

Ten Years +

Sculptures made of durable materials that can endure the elements with minimal maintenance and not degrade substantially over time. The maintenance of these works should be facilitated into Council's scope of works.

Up to Five Years

Sculptures, murals, mosaics, pavement designs, etc that are made of materials that have a limited life span. Over time the cost and time required to maintain or rehabilitate these works would become excessive and outweigh the financial and creative investment in the artwork.

Temporary or Ephemeral

Video and audio installations, street art projects, murals, and billboards, etc that are designed to be temporary, dynamic projects. The community is aware that they can only engage in these works for a short period of time.

End of Life

If artworks are damaged, cease to have public relevance or have simply reached the end of their intended lifespan, Council officers will consider the below options and advise accordingly.

- Relocation to a more suitable site.
- Storing the artwork offsite if art collection space is available.
- Donating the work to a school or other public entity.
- Selling the work where funds can be used to commission new public art projects.
- Safe destruction of the artwork.

In case of the artwork posing a risk to public safety, immediate removal may be necessary.

For more detail on Council's processes for deaccessioning artwork refer to the [Art Collections Policy](#).



Public artworks that have an expected lifespan beyond Temporary or Ephemeral will require the artist/s to provide a maintenance schedule to Council. Council's public art commissioning documents will include this as a requirement.

Artworks with a longer lifespan will become public assets for the purpose of maintenance and upkeep. Council's Visual Art and Asset Management teams will work with the artist/s to ensure that future maintenance needs of the public artworks are properly understood and budgeted for.

Maintenance

Previous image: Collide by James Voller, Kernot, Image courtesy of Bass Coast Shire Council

This page: Detail of artwork by Ash Keating, Grantville for the Bass Coast Street Art Program, image courtesy of David Burrows for Bass Coast Shire Council

Image on final page: Millow! Opening 2023, Curated by Baluk Arts at Berninnet Art Gallery Photograph by Karli Michelle Photography

(Public art) instils an appreciation of art and its rightful place in society. Children will see art and know its validity in society.

Community Survey respondent when asked 'What do you believe is the purpose of public art in our community.'

CONCLUSION

The successful delivery of the Public Art Framework is reliant on a collaborative and integrated approach both internally and externally. Engaged stakeholders will ensure that public art opportunities are developed and delivered in line with best practices and consistent with the Framework's objectives.

Bass Coast Shire Council's Public Art Framework 2025-2035 will ensure that public art remains a dynamic and integral part of the region's identity. It will contribute towards fostering a strong sense of community, celebrating creativity and building a sustainable and inclusive cultural legacy for future generations. By investing in public art, Bass Coast can continue to attract visitors, inspire locals and enhance the liveability and experiences of the region.

PUBLIC ART FRAMEWORK 2025-2035