

Community Development Report

Committee Consideration – 9 June 2020
Council Resolution – 23 June 2020

Table of Contents

Item No.	Page No.
CM04.20 Public Art Budget 2021	2

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Committee	9 June 2002
Council	23 June 2020
Applicant	City of Nedlands
Employee Disclosure under section 5.70 Local Government Act 1995	Nil.
Director	Lorraine Driscoll – Director Corporate and Strategy
Attachments	Nil.

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to ensure that Council is aware of the Public Art Committee's recommendation to Council, that Council approves \$50,000 for expenditure on public art in the 2020/21 budget, for a public artwork that commemorates the work of medical staff during the COVID-19 pandemic. A preferred site for the proposed artwork is yet to be identified by the Committee; and once identified, would entail a Council decision approving the location.

Arts Committee Recommendation to Committee

That Council:

1. receives the information that there are no remaining funds available for public art in the current financial year;
2. includes consideration of \$50,000 in the draft 2020/21 Council budget for expenditure on public art; and
3. approves the acquisition of a public artwork that commemorates the work of medical staff during the COVID-19 pandemic, from the 2020/21 Public Art Budget allocation.

Discussion/Overview

There are no remaining funds available for expenditure on public art in the current financial year. Therefore, on 18 May the Public Art Committee considered the matter of a budget allocation for public art in the upcoming 2020/21 Council budget. The Committee recommended to Council that \$50,000 should be allocated for expenditure on public art in the 2020/21 budget; and that this budget allocation should be spent on a public artwork for the City that commemorates the significant contribution to the community by medical staff during the COVID-19 pandemic. The recommendation was supported unanimously by the Committee.

The Public Art Committee sees the City of Nedlands as an appropriate place to recognise the work of medical professionals during the pandemic, given the City's proximity to major hospitals, public and private; and other medical facilities, including medical research facilities. These include Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital, QEII Hospital, Hollywood Private Hospital, the Perth Children's Hospital, the UWA Centre for Medical Research and the Australia Medical Association.

The Public Art Committee is mindful that the 2020/21 Council budget will be a difficult one because of the economic impact of COVID-19 on the City and broader economy. However, the Committee is also of the view that at this time, public recognition by Council of the work by medical staff would be a profound and important undertaking.

Timing will be critical to the success of this project. Unless a budget allocation is made by Council for public art in the 2020/21 budget, the project cannot be undertaken during the 2020/21 financial year; and to delay the project's start date until the following financial year would significantly diminish the impact of the project. By then, it is likely that other Councils and public art providers will be implementing similar projects and the impact of the City's project on the broader community will necessarily be reduced. Therefore, the Public Art Committee is recommending that Council allocates \$50,000 in the 2020/21 budget for expenditure on public art, with this major artwork being one that recognises the work of medical staff during the pandemic.

Key Relevant Previous Council Decisions:

N/A

Please note that a further Council decision would be required for this project to proceed. If Council approves the budget allocation and purpose of the artwork, a further Council decision will be required to approve the location of the work. At this stage, the Public Art Committee has not yet considered appropriate locations. This work would only be undertaken if Council approves the funds to undertake the project.

Legislation / Policy

The Public Art Committee's Terms of Reference require it to make recommendations to Council on public art projects for the City. The Committee only has delegated authority for budget expenditure of up to \$10,000; therefore, any expenditure over \$10,000 must be approved by Council.

Consultation

The Public Art Committee is composed of the Mayor and 4 other Councillors plus 2 community members of the Committee who have been recently re-appointed to the Committee by Council.

Strategic Implications

How well does it fit with our strategic direction?

The Strategic Community Plan, Nedlands 2028, adopted by Council on 22 May 2018, states in its vision statement that “We will live in a beautiful place”. The work of the Public Art Committee contributes to this vision of a beautiful place.

Who benefits?

The broader community benefits from public artwork as it enhances the amenity of the local area and adds to its prestige.

Does it involve a tolerable risk?

Public artwork can be controversial by its nature; however, an artwork focused on recognizing the work of medical staff is likely to be uncontroversial and to generate broad community support and approval.

Risks are also minimized by the requirement for Council to:

- approve funding for the artwork;
- approve the site for the artwork; and
- approve the broad concept for the work

before the Public Art Committee proceeds with a major public art project.

Do we have the information we need?

The further information Council will need in order to make this decision is the broader context of the Council budget for 2020/21. Impacts of the pandemic are also expected to affect Council’s 2021/22 budget.

Budget/Financial Implications

Current financial year

There are no remaining funds available for public art in the current financial year.

Next financial year

The impact of Council approving this recommendation from the Public Art Committee will be allocation of \$50,000 in the 2020/21 Council budget for expenditure on a public artwork to recognise the work of medical staff during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Can we afford it?

This will be determined by Council in the context of the 2020/21 Council budget.

How does the option impact upon rates?

This will also be determined by Council in the context of the 2020/21 Council budget. Expenditure of \$50,000 represents approximately 0.21% of rates.

Conclusion

There will be many competing priorities for funding in Council's 2020/21 budget. However, the Public Art Committee is of the view that the City of Nedlands is uniquely placed to undertake this project. Our proximity and direct relationship with some of Perth's major medical services gives the project gravitas, in the way that all public art should express and reflect its surroundings. The project will inspire and bring together the community, following a time of hardship and isolation.