

KWOORABUP COMMUNITY PARK PUBLIC ART PLAN



*I feel the need for a work of art
to shroud itself in mystery,
to take on an aspect which has
never been seen,
which disorientates you
and takes you to an absolutely
unforeseen situation.
(J Dubuffet, painter and sculptor)*



Any authentic creation is a gift to the future (Albert Camus)

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on behalf of the Shire of Denmark Kwoorabup Community Park Working Gro



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*Art is a continuous search
the assimilation of past
experience added to new
experiences of form,
content, materials,
techniques, means.....*

(Bruno Munari, painter and sculptor)



1. Background

The Kwoorabup Community Park, following the bank of the tranquil Denmark River, sits as a vital public community space in Denmark. It has a divergent history and land use and for twenty years has been the subject of conversations as to how it can become a community Park. Because of this history and time, the Park is held in strong interest by the Denmark community. The Park is coming more and more to life. The community-created boardwalk and wetlands have been joined by a nature-based adventure playground, a road and toilet block. A Kwoorabup Community Park Concept Plan ('Concept Plan') outlining a number of stages of proposed development within the Park has been adopted by the Denmark Shire Council.

Art can play a highly significant role in the living, breathing journey of the Park. Art can find ways to talk to varying community values. This document suggests how art can contribute to the Park's unfolding story.

2. The Purpose of the Public Art Plan

The KCP Public Art Plan is designed to guide and achieve the Kwoorabup Community Park Working Group's vision for the integration of art within the Park. It is not intended to be prescriptive, but rather establishes a set of 'guiding principles' to underpin art within the Park, identifies opportunities and examples of ways art could be integrated within the Park, and develops recommendations for the management and implementation of art within the Park.

The process of the Plan's development was informed by the currently existing Concept Plan for the site, the topography, location and history of the Park and structures/experiences currently existing and/or confirmed for installation within the Park.



Art intensifies the awareness of being alive, enriches our experience and touches our lives

(Jonier Marin)



3. What is Art and What is it For?

People seek experiences. They seek meaning. They seek authentic engagement with life, with their community and with the place they live. People want to be touched. Art can provide this way of deepening an appreciation or engagement with, or understanding of life, of community, and of a particular place.

Art offers us a chance to be physically, emotionally and spiritually engaged with that which can plummet us into an experience of the mysterious other... be it beauty or angst or pathos. Art is this form-making activity or vehicle which engages us in this experience.

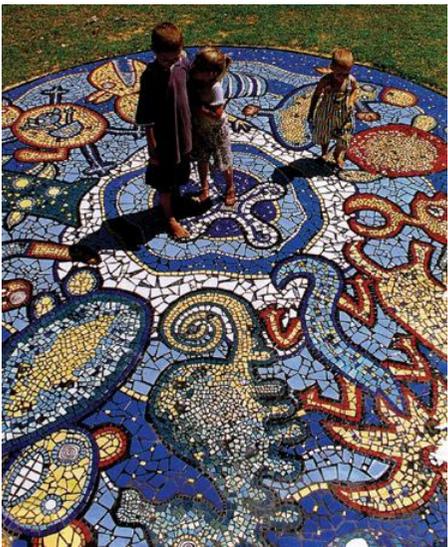
(Terry Farrell, architect of nature-based adventure playground)

Art can offer both members of the local community and visitors a way to engage with, and orient towards, a deeper appreciation of their experience within the Park. Art has an infinite number of ways to communicate this experience.

Public art can be defined as the process of engaging artists' creative ideas in the public realm. Public art is essentially art for everybody and may be part of any publicly accessible space. The objective for public art is to create art which we interact with in our daily lives and which seeks to stimulate a response which may be emotional, intellectual, spiritual or sensory.

Benefits that come from having Public Art include its ability to:

- enhance the environment
- define public spaces and place
- provide a sense of pride, ownership and belonging
- increase cultural awareness
- promote inclusiveness and harmony
- decrease vandalism
- provide opportunities and employment for artists



Public art can be

- permanent, temporary or ephemeral
- based on a theme or created with a conceptually open brief
- site specific or not
- engage one or more of the senses
- large scale or very small and subtle
- traditional or contemporary
- integrated as part of a structure or stand alone
- created by a single artist or a group of artists or as a community project

4. Objectives

The Kwoorabup Community Park's public art aims to:

- Enhance public enjoyment and engagement with the Park
- Increase community understanding and enjoyment of traditional and contemporary arts
- Infuse qualities of creativity, authenticity, imagination, play & artistic vision into daily life
- Contribute to the ongoing development of arts and culture within Denmark
- Become known within and beyond Denmark as a distinctive, site-specific community-based Park

Curatorial Vision

- Focus on artistic practices that straddle the boundaries of art, community and nature
- Commission the creation of works that result from a process of conversation between artists and community and/or artists and the place.



*Sketching with flower.
Painting with clouds.
Writing with water.
Tracing the May wind,
the path of a falling leaf.
Working for a thunderstorm.
Awaiting a glacier.
Bending the wind.
Directing water and light...*
(Nils-Udo)



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(i) Community-Focused

The KCP has always been a community space and this should remain a priority within further development of the Park.

(ii) In Conversation

Art is a global experience. The Park should reflect this. Connecting with the outside world through international artists and visitors offers the Denmark community a chance to have a conversation with the outer world, to talk about their locale and what is special to them and to invite others to make artistic contributions to the Park.

(iii) Nature-Based

The Park is endowed with natural beauty. Specific features include fauna, vegetation and water. The Park is named 'place of the Kwoor' after the Western Brush Wallaby (*Macropus Irma*), named Kwoor by the Noongar, and originally found in wooded areas fringing the river. The Park contains a mix of original and introduced vegetation including three significant oak trees. The Denmark River foreshore hosts a range of bush plants that are used as a traditional resource by Noongar people.

The Park is situated on the bank of the Denmark River, with wetland areas. The river is part of a larger tidal waterway, suggesting the idea of natural 'rhythms'.

In the beginning there was the earth around which the spirits roamed. Some spirits became trees, plants and stones. Others became birds, animals and fish and together they created the living earth and the oceans. Then to complete their work they created the Noongar. The Noongar were given the role of caring for the Boodja (land), just as we care for our mothers, for the land is the sustainer of life and the keeper of the spirit of nature. The spirit of Nature can be seen in all its glory around Kwoorabup and the Nullaki.

(Minang and Bibbulman Elders)



(iv) Respectful: of this place, these stories/histories, this community

The Park should provide a focus for local pride, history and storytelling. Both Indigenous and non-Indigenous 'historical' stories should be allowed to emerge through art, as well as new contemporary stories.

Indigenous Stories

The Noongar, whose language gifts the name *Kwoorabup*, lived around the Denmark River and Nullaki (Wilson Inlet). Minang and Bibbulman territories lie to the east and west of Denmark.

Non-Indigenous Stories

The Park has a history as a Research Station, established in 1912, and is home to three large oak trees planted many decades ago. The Park contains memories which should be nourished and shared.

New Stories

We need new myths; we need them urgently and desperately... Times are changing so fast that we cannot afford to stay set in our ways. We need to become exquisitely skilled engineers of change in our mythologies. (David Feinstein)

The Park extends towards, and joins, the Kwoorabup Walk Trail, rehabilitated wetlands located on the Denmark College of Agriculture's farm, the Old Hospital site, the town-side of the river and the centre of town. The walk trail is a beautiful extension of the Park. Prior art projects have occurred over the last three years along the walk trail, establishing it as a 'living gallery'.

The Hospital

The Park adjoins the Denmark Hospital. Art could be used to further integrate the Hospital within the Park. It suggests the idea of 'healing' as a focus for art within the Park. The Hospital already contains public art which could be further connected with art in the Park.



A space becomes a 'place' through one's own arrival and presence, however temporary. Also through leaving behind traces and signs.

(Cornelia Konrads, sculptor)

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(v) Unique: a 'place' not just a 'space' - embracing distinctiveness

Site specific art is art made specifically *for* a particular place, time and/or community with a respect and love of that place, its rhythms and particularities.

'Aside from their obvious physicality, places also embody human behaviour, interact with the weather, and play on memory. Places are at once ecological, built, social and symbolic. Places contain objects, activities and meanings all combined in a coherent whole. If place activation relies as much on community interaction and participation as it does on a supportive, multi-use urban fabric, then the role of every citizen is as significant as that of our planners. A rich experience of place requires both a 'top-down' and 'bottom up' dedication.'

(Narelle Yabuka, Spirit of Place, Values Vision and Vocation 2008)

Place-making turns a 'space' into a 'place'. It is about the creation of experiences and memories. It is like the difference between designing a house and making a home. Public art can play a critical role in determining a 'sense of place'. A place-making approach to a public area preferences people's *experience* of the place. It gives focus to their connection with, and ongoing creative contribution to, the shared and emerging stories of that place. It shifts the focus of 'ownership' back to the community.

It is important that the KCP is unique, and does not replicate the experiences offered by other similar public spaces in Denmark.



There are environments which can be imagined, which are sometimes suspended in a dream, sometimes stretched between one sense and another, between vision and poetry, between nature and technique. There are environments which live on visions but which are not necessarily linked to sight. They are instead woven into the relationships between the senses, they consist of emotional and perceptive architectures.

(Isabella Bordini)

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(vi) Imaginative and Playful

Play and art come from the same place (Terry Farrell, architect of nature-based adventure playground)

This Public Art Plan embraces the idea that any community experience which occurs as a result of art or artistic process can foster imagination and creativity, whether that member of the community is actively participating or simply walking by.

Artists should be allowed to explore their imagination in creating art for the Park rather than being too firmly directed.

Drawing on the example of the nature-based adventure playground, the Park should continue to consciously create an atmosphere, through the use of art and events, which encourages imagination and playfulness.

(vii) Alive and Evolving

One of the identified issues with art in public spaces is that after a short time the art can 'date' and the area can be static, with no surprises and no ongoing interest for the local or visitor community. Drawing on the foundations of the nature-based adventure playground and community garden, the KCP offers an opportunity to instill the underlying principle of 'keeping it alive', ensuring the Park is always-changing, whilst also capturing moments in time. Whilst art can be a static object such as a permanent sculpture, it can also be temporary, or ephemeral: a 'moment', a 'living act of art', such as a performance, a one-day artwork or a ceremony. Internationally and nationally there is a trend favouring temporary projects.



6. Opportunities for Inclusion of Art

Structures which are currently existing and/or confirmed for installation in the park, and other key sites and opportunities which present possibilities for the inclusion of art include:

- nature-based adventure playground (nature-based artworks, community projects)
- paths and roads (inlays & artistic slow-zones)
- bbq area (shelter design, inlay)
- car-park (bollards)
- gazebo
- 'entrance statements' (finding ways to invite visitors into the Park)
- boardwalk/ponds (artworks along the path or wet areas)
- nw garden area (community garden, natural architecture/sculpture garden)
- hospital (integrating current art, additional artworks, healing garden)
- lighting, drinking fountains, bike racks, seating
- poet's corner

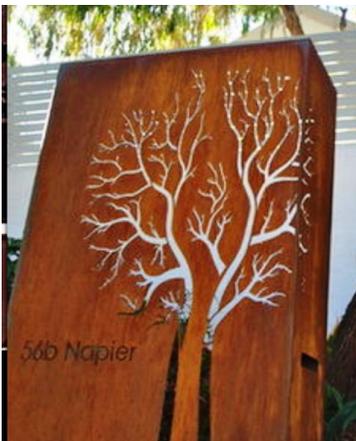
More than Visual

Whilst the Park presents obvious opportunities for the creation of visual, sculptural art, it should not be limited to this. Art involving writing, performance, sound, light and interactive hybrid arts should be considered equally.

Sound/Music

Talking pipes already exist within the nature-based adventure playground. Sound/music could also be considered in a number of ways including

- Sonic installations (wind-harps, simple musical structures, interactive sound walks or ephemeral sculpted sonic landscapes using natural/community sounds and/or natural sounds made audible to the human ear via technology)
- A natural amphitheatre or performance space and ongoing concerts in the park



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7. Inclusion

Public art should be made accessible where possible to all members of the community, irrespective of their abilities. While art in public spaces might be considered primarily a visual experience, it can also be tactile, aural and give off pleasant smells. Where feasible and appropriate to the site and community, consideration should be given to commissioning artworks that can be enjoyed as an interactive experience, irrespective of mobility or ability.

Exclusions to Public Art

Public Art projects should exclude the following:

- Use of business logos
- Directional elements such as supergraphics or signage
- 'Art objects' which are mass produced such as fountains or playground equipment
- Most art reproductions

Pre-existing artworks

Whilst site-specific work (made *for* the place) generally has a stronger capacity to enhance a sense of place and resonate with the environment this should not preclude acquisition of existing work as long as that work is appropriate to a particular location and accessible to the community.

Duration

Artworks can be installed on either a permanent or temporary basis, and may be removed at a later date.



*a rock pile ceases to be a rock
pile the moment a single man
contemplates it, bearing within
him the image of a cathedral
(Antoine de Saint-Exupery)*

8. Recommendations: guides to achieving the vision of art within the Park

(i) Community-Focused

- Opportunities will be provided for community participation in the creation of Park art
- Selected artists will be encouraged to invite the community to view, discuss and assist them with the creation/installation of their work
- Regular community days will be held, especially when new art is installed or created
- Artists' talks, workshops and Park walks will be developed to provide opportunities for the community to gain an understanding and enjoyment of the art
- Creative literature about art within the Park will be developed using local writers
- Community members will be involved in the selection of artworks
- Attention will be given to where community input has already happened eg. boardwalk
- The proposed community garden will be explored as a place for the integration of art
- Opportunities will be developed for mentoring/encouragement of young, student and emerging artists
- Children will be seen as a specific community within the park with particular art projects created including children's direct participation and ensuring some of the art encourages children's active interaction

(ii) In Conversation

- Commissions will include a mix of local, regional, national and international artists
- The development of sister relationships with other local, national and international art-in-nature and/or community park projects (eg Arte Sella, Understory) will be explored
- An artist-in-residence program will be developed utilising Denmark Arts' residential facility to attract regional, national and international artists looking for time and space to conceive and execute new ideas
- Promotion about the Park will include electronic-based literature to attract national and international artists and visitors

*a poem is the cry of its occasion,
part of the place itself and not
about it* (Wallace Stevens)



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(iii) Nature-Based

- Art will converse with the natural environment of the Park rather than the Park providing a 'backdrop' for art
- Art-in-nature projects will be preferenced throughout the Park
- The Kwoor will be incorporated as a symbol of the Park through subtle, innovative art
- The development of a vegetative 'symbol' (such as a banksia cone or oak leaf) will be considered to use in subtle and innovative ways through the Park
- A biennale sculpture-in-the-Park using a site specific model will be considered
- A specific art-in-nature and/or natural plant sculptural area will be considered

(iv) Respectful: of this place, these stories/histories of the place, this community

- Opportunities for integration of Noongar artists, stories and perspectives will be ensured
- A brief 'Noongar history of the area' brochure, possibly incorporating the Kwoorabup Walk Trail and whole river area will be developed
- At least one Noongar artwork will be commissioned within the first two years
- Opportunities for integration of non-Indigenous Park history/stories will be ensured
- A brief 'history of the KCP' brochure will be developed
- A healing garden/art and/or sensory park near the Hospital will be considered
- Ways to address the theme of 'healing' throughout the Park will be explored
- Public art within the Hospital will be integrated with art in the Park through promotional material, and further links between art in the Hospital and Park will be considered
- Consideration will be given to extending the Public Art Plan to incorporate the Old Hospital site, Kwoorabup Walk Trail, and CBD
- The Park will be connected with proximal areas (ie making the park 'cross the road'), ensuring each area, although connected, offers different experiences, so that the visitor/resident can have an experience which guides them through the Old Hospital grounds, CBD, Berridge Park, river and Kwoorabup Walk Trail and back into the Park
- 'Entrance/exits' leading into/out of the Park at various connecting points will be created
- Art in the Park will be extended into the Kwoorabup Walk Trail



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(v) Unique

- Art will be used to help create a sense of 'place' in ways that enhance the engagement of the community with the Park
- Community art will be balanced with art by leading artists
- High quality, innovative art will be preferred in the choice of art
- Site-specific projects within the Park will be preferred in the choice of art
- A brief audit on experiences offered by other public spaces in Denmark will be undertaken to ensure these are not being replicated
- It will be ensured that 'experiences' are spread throughout the Park and situations of spontaneous exchange between people encouraged

(vi) Imaginative and Playful

- Art will be allowed to be playful, wild, imaginative, provocative, innovative and risky
- Artist-initiated activities will be encouraged

(vii) Alive and Evolving

- It will be ensured that permanent public art will be evocative rather than literal and the implications of dating/static art within the Park will be considered
- An ephemeral art program will be implemented which ensures more than 50% of the artworks created for/in the Park are ephemeral
- The art program will be kept alive with a range of scales and art-forms and a mixture of 'objects' and events/'happenings'

Art argues with deepest authority that there is another sky, intimate and boundless, open to all, where the poet can tow a star across the liquid river of night, like a child with a toy boat on a string

Additional Recommendations: More than Visual/Inclusion

- The artist-in-residence program will include multi-disciplinary arts
- Project briefs will be developed which address (i) sound and music (ii) lighting (iii) creative writing
- The possibility of a sensory garden will be explored
- The community garden design will be encouraged to be artistically oriented
- Opportunities for ceremony/events/performances within the Park will be developed





9. Communication, Marketing and Promotion

A Communication and Marketing Strategy will be developed to accompany public art within the Park. This will include ensuring there is a clear understanding about the rationale behind the work and an opportunity to communicate the work to the community. The strategy will comprise:

An **Internal Communication Strategy** (internal to Council) to provide information to staff and Councillors within the organisation on the project. This will include updates and on-site visits and should result in ensuring customer service staff and Councillors have sufficient information to answer public enquiries about the art.

An **External Communication Strategy** to promote new public artwork to the public and local community through the local press, websites and other means. This may include artist interviews and talks, public on-site open days, targeted on-site invitations (eg schools, business and community groups) and the development of print or electronic literature for the public.

Marketing and Promotion Opportunities

Other things that can be done to promote new public artworks include:

- Photographs in Arts Council and Shire publications and reports
- Postcards of the artwork with information regarding the work on the back
- Information such as maps, photos, press releases or artists statements on Council's and other key visitor websites
- Images of public artworks used in tourism publications
- Artist talks with slides including a discussion of the work in relation to the artist's practice
- Public forums on art presenting a range of perspectives on contemporary public art practice

Budget Guide: Public Artworks

\$30,000



Mild Steel, Stainless Steel ring,
bronze horse & bird
Height approx 5000mm



Bronze sculpture, corten steel
bollards
Height approx. 1200mm

\$50,000 - \$75,000



Series of 6 works, cast aluminium
Sizes variable, approx 1000mm
in height

10. Implementation

Process for Selection of Artists

The Kwoorabup Community Park should follow arts industry best practice examples where possible in the selection of artists. Artworks may be directly engaged or called for through advertisement for Expressions of Interest via a design brief. Where possible, a 'KCP Art Selection Panel', existing as a sub-committee and operating under the authority of the KCP Working Group, should consider Expressions of Interest and chose two or three artists to develop more detailed designs for which modest design fees should be paid. The selection panel should comprise members from the KCP Working Group, including the Chairperson, one of the community representatives, the Denmark Arts Council representative and one or two independent professional artists skilled in the area of public art.

Art acquisition or installation is to be done in accordance with the Shire's purchasing policy.

Process for implementing public art projects:

Identify projects, referencing the Public Art Plan and site Concept Plan (KCPWG, Denmark Arts)

Approve project budget (KCPWG)

Prepare artwork brief (Denmark Arts)

Call for artists (Shire)

Review potential artists (Art Selection Panel)

Short-list artists (Art Selection Panel)

Concept development (Artists)

Concept selection and acceptance (Art Selection Panel – referred to KCPWG)

Commission (Shire)

Fabrication/Installation/Handover

It would be beneficial that annual KCP Public Art Action Plans are developed by Denmark Arts Council for consideration by the KCPWG, identifying projects and artists for the next stage of the KCP development.

\$100,000 - \$150,000



3 x cast bronze sculptures,
Height approx 900 – 1000mm

\$250,000



Aluminium
Approx 8m height x 12m long

\$500,000



Stainless steel internally lit
Height 13m

To ensure funding for the creation and ongoing maintenance of a public art program it would be beneficial if Council would consider an annual allocation of resources (eg \$20 000) from the budget towards public art in the Shire (including, but not limited to, the KCP), in addition to actively seeking and securing funding from other sources. A list of possible funding sources will be created by Denmark Arts Council and the Shire. Funding can be accessed through grants, philanthropic trusts, private donors, developer contributions and partnerships with artists/community groups who wish to apply for grants. Budgeting for public art projects will consider maintenance as part of the costs.

11. Review/Update

This plan will be reviewed/updated two yearly, in liaison with the Public Art Action Plan, or at other times when necessary.



***Finally art is a conversation with the world itself.
The working group should take the time to enter this conversation
and place this park in that place.***

(Terry Farrell, architect of nature-based adventure playground)

Funding

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