

CP.33 Art Management

<i>Responsible Department</i>	Development & Community Services
<i>Resolution Number</i>	C.5434
<i>Resolution Date</i>	26/11/2025
<i>Next Scheduled Review</i>	2027/28
<i>Related Shire Documents</i>	Shire of Northam Policy Manual Shire of Northam Record Keeping Plan
<i>Related Legislation</i>	Local Government Act 1995

OBJECTIVE

To provide a clear direction for the development and management of art in the Shire of Northam's control.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all Shire of Northam artworks which includes public artworks, artworks, objects and memorabilia.

Definitions

Acquisition: the process of obtaining valid title to an artwork, object or memorabilia.

Artwork (also known as Work of Art or Art Piece): a physical two or three dimensional object that is professionally determined or popularly considered to fulfil a primarily independent aesthetic function.

Bequests: the process of when personal artwork, objects or memorabilia are left to the collection through the provision of a will or estate plan.

Conservation: any attempt to protect or repair artwork, objects or memorabilia. This can include preventative treatments or the repairing of damage caused by a range of circumstances.

Deaccession: the process by which an artwork, object or item of memorabilia is permanently removed from the collection.

Disposal: The means by which an artwork, object or item of memorabilia are physically removed from the collection.

Donations: when artwork, objects or memorabilia are given voluntarily to the collection.

Memorabilia (also known as memento or keepsake): an object esteemed for its memory in connection to a specific event.

Mural: a painting or other work of art executed directly on a wall.

Object (also known as Artefact): something that is produced or shaped by human craft, such as tools or decorative ornaments, and which has cultural interest.

Public artwork: works of art in any media that are planned and executed with the specific intention of being sited or staged in the physical public domain, usually outside and accessible to all.

POLICY

The Shire of Northam holds the Art Collection for the community. The Shire is responsible for the proper stewardship of this valuable asset and will provide maximum exposure, utilisation and benefits for the community and the Shire.

This policy covers:

- Conservation and Management
 - The Shire will maintain an Art Collection Register, which will contain up to date valuations, condition assessments and display locations.
 - The Shire will seek community and industry expertise to advise on the management of art. This expertise will be harnessed through recognised visual arts, museum, and educational organisations.
 - Shire of Northam Officers will provide a report to Council on the valuation, insurance, conservation and maintenance of the art. This report will make recommendations for budget allocation and conservation.
 - The Shire will ensure that the collection is revalued every five years.
 - Budget allocations for the care and maintenance of the art will be in line with general asset management strategies and will be developed in consultation with these directives.
 - All works on display, in storage, in transit and on loan will be appropriately insured.
 - Public artwork and art on display will be accompanied by appropriate signage that acknowledges the artist and the name of the work.
- Acquisition and Development
 - The Shire of Northam will not be bound to acquire any artwork or accept any donations.

- All acquisitions are to be made by the Chief Executive Officer, or their nominee, based on the advice and recommendation of a group of three elected members.
- Preference will be given to new acquisitions from artists who live or have a strong connection to the Shire of Northam and surrounding districts, or artworks that are relevant to the area through subject matter or materials.
- Consideration will be given to public safety, display, storage, conservation and transport issues of a potential acquisition.
- Artwork acquisition and donation, including public art will be considered based on the following criteria:
 - Excellence – quality of design and execution based on conceptual rationale and innovation;
 - Diversity – range of media catering to a diverse audience;
 - Originality – will not accept reproductions;
 - Feasibility – affordability and long-term cultural value or investment potential;
 - Location – appropriateness of the work to the chosen site including integration with landscaping and architecture;
 - Conservation – durability, robustness and ongoing maintenance requirements;
 - Interpretation – works that reflect the Shire’s history, culture or sense of place;
 - Public safety – ensuring there is no unacceptable level of risk associated with any public art proposal;
 - Useful life – ephemeral or permanent;
 - Interaction – encourages audience participation.
- An annual budget allocation will be assigned to acquire an artwork from the Northam Art Prize in accordance with this Policy.
- Donations and Bequests
 - Every effort should be made to encourage gifts of works to enhance the Shire’s collection consistent with this policy.
 - At the time of acquisition the costs associated with conservation, restoration, preparation, presentation and storage will be estimated and considered as part of the cost of acquiring the work.
- Deaccession and Disposal
 - The Shire of Northam retains the right to dispose of artworks if they are deemed unsuitable at any stage.
 - Artworks may be considered for deaccession if they are in poor condition, damaged beyond repair, duplicate other elements of the collection or do not meet the requirements of this policy.
 - Recommendations for the disposal of any artwork will be the responsibility of Shire of Northam Officers.

- Artworks identified for deaccession will be offered back to the artist or donor before proceeding with alternative methods such as sale or disposal in accordance with section 3.58 of the Local Government Act 1995 – Disposing of Property and Council Policy CP.27 Asset Disposal.
- Loans
 - The Shire of Northam will not accept permanent or indefinite loans, inwards or outwards.
 - All loans will be for a fixed time and will be documented on a loans register.
 - All loans inward or outward will require an Artwork Loan Transfer Form to be completed with the terms and responsibilities to be signed by the party wishing to loan the work to or from the Shire.
- Public Access, Display and Exhibitions
 - The collection will be documented and information made available to the public, including via the Shire of Northam website.
 - The collection will be exposed to as wide an audience as possible, and this may encompass the use of temporary displays in appropriate public places, including Shire buildings and facilities.
 - The possibility of work from the collection being included in travelling exhibitions will be considered subject to appropriate loan agreements being reached.
 - Display of artwork in Shire buildings and facilities is at the discretion of Shire of Northam Officers.

In circumstances where an artist is identified as being in disrepute, and the continued public display of their artwork is considered likely to cause reputational damage to the Shire, Shire Officers may submit a formal recommendation to Council for the removal of the artwork from public display. Such removal may be for a fixed term or an indefinite period, as determined by Council. Shire Officers may further recommend the artwork for deaccession and removal from the collection in accordance with this policy.
- Public Art
 - Artwork commissioned or acquired for the outdoors, such as a sculpture or built form, will be included as part of the Shire of Northam Art Collection.
 - Public art sites should be significant or strategically important public places, with visibility and/or accessibility. Whilst public ownership is preferred, sites on private property may be considered where there is clear public benefit. If the site is in private ownership a Memorandum of Understanding will be drawn up between the Shire of Northam and the private owner. Sites that may be selected should be:
 - Highly visible to the community
 - Places of high pedestrian activity
 - Places of high recreational activity

- Places of civic importance and/or cultural significance.
 - Public art will be acquired either by acquisition, commission or bequest.
 - Public artworks are to be robust in nature, needing minimal maintenance over the first 10 year period, except where a temporary installation work is specifically commissioned.
- Objects and Memorabilia
 - The Shire of Northam Art Collection will encompass relevant heritage objects and memorabilia material, a repository for unique and significant resources relating to the natural and social environment within the Shire of Northam.
 - The function of the collection for objects and memorabilia is to allow interpretation of a regional resource to promote education, enjoyment and community participation.