

Plaques, Memorials and Interpretive Signage Policy

Policy Endorsement:	Council		
Policy Superseded by this Policy:	Plaques, Memorials and Interpretive Signage Policy 2015		
Directorate:	Community Services		
Responsible Officer:	Manager, Community Arts, Culture and Library Services		
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1. POLICY OBJECTIVE (OR PURPOSE)

This policy has been developed to manage all new and existing plaques, memorials and interpretive signs within the City of Greater Dandenong on Council owned or managed land.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- deliver a clear, open, equitable and accountable process for the request, placement and management of plaques, memorials and interpretive signs;
- regulate the placement of memorials, plaques and interpretive signs in public spaces, public facilities and buildings;
- regulate management of existing memorials, plaques interpretive signs; and
- outline how to manage requests for the installation of new memorials commemorative plaques and interpretive signs.

2. BACKGROUND

Council's Plaques, Memorials and Interpretive Signage Policy was first endorsed by Council in June 2011, having subsequently been reviewed with updates being adopted by Council on 9 November 2015.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all proposed plaques, memorials and interpretive signs to be installed within the City of Greater Dandenong, on Council owned or managed land, whether in or on buildings or facilities, on the pavement, in parks, gardens, streets or any other public space. The policy applies to both council-initiated and community-initiated signs, memorials or interpretive signs.

All artwork for proposed plaques, memorials and interpretive signs must be consistent with the guidelines set out in Council's 'Corporate Style Guide'.

All new plaques and memorials will be required to conform to this policy, with the exception of the following:

- general signage for the purposes of either wayfinding, advertising or regulatory outcomes;
- public artworks or temporary roadside memorials;
- war memorials;
- naming of places, roads or facilities; and
- the policy does not cover roadside memorial plaques.

This policy and associated documents sit alongside the Interpretive Sign Program which is delivered by the Place Making and Revitalisation team through the approval processes of their Directorate.

4. DEFINITIONS

Collection: Items which have been formally acquired for / into as being part of the City of Greater Dandenong's Civic and Cultural Heritage Collection. (Public Artworks are excluded from this terminology). The Civic and Cultural Heritage Collection may also be referred to as 'The Collection', 'Collection Items' or 'CC (name of sub collection)'.

Deaccession: The process of deregistering an item or items from the Collection, for stated reasons and conforming to clear policy and procedure.

Interpretive Sign: A freestanding or wall mounted sign that uses text and/or images to provide an interpretation of a culturally or historically significant site, person, object or story. The interpretation or message aims to enhance understanding and enjoyment of a place or explain why a story is important to a place. It is erected to be visible to all viewers and can be constructed of different materials, according to agreed design approaches and styles.

Plaque: A flat tablet of metal, stone or other material which includes text and/or images which commemorates an event or a person and/or provides historical or other information relevant to its location. Such a tablet is fixed to a wall or other surface.

Memorial: An object, monument, garden or civic area named or established in memory of a person, association, anniversary or event.

5. POLICY

Plaques, memorials and interpretive signs are important in celebrating the achievements of the Greater Dandenong City Council and its community. They provide historical and cultural context and serve as records of events, as well as tell important narratives of the city.

Plaques, memorials and interpretive signs can enrich public places and open spaces. However, the placement of plaques, memorials and interpretive signs needs to be carefully considered to ensure that they do not impact negatively on their surrounds.

Plaques, memorials and interpretive signs fall under two categories in this policy, Council initiated and community initiated.

Council Initiated

1. Plaques installed by Council (including State and/or Federally funded projects) on Council owned or managed land and/or facilities to commemorate the opening or refurbishment of a community building or facility or to commemorate an event which might be of historical significance in the future. Installation of a plaque may be associated with an official launch event or opening.
2. Plaques, memorials and interpretive signage installed by Council in conjunction with other bodies to provide historical or heritage information about buildings, facilities or people significant to the history of the municipality.
3. Interpretive signage installed by Council in public open spaces to acknowledge culturally or historically significant sites, people, objects or stories in the municipality.

Community Initiated

1. Plaques, memorials and interpretive signage installed by Council in public open space at the request and cost of community members or organisations wishing to commemorate a person, place or group. Applications for such must be made using the Application Form for a Plaque, Memorial or Interpretive Sign in the City of Greater Dandenong. It should be noted that in such instances, should approval be granted, Council will coordinate all design and installation outcomes to preserve consistency with all other signage in public places. Plaques, memorials and signage may not be installed by community in public spaces outside of this application process.

Any proposal for a plaque, memorial or interpretive sign that is three dimensional, and is a sculptural or artistic work which is out of scope of this policy will be subject to Council's Public Art Policy and may be referred to the Arts Advisory Board for consideration.

Existing plaques and memorials will not be taken as a precedent for future proposals and each request will be considered on its merits in accordance with current policy guidelines. All new plaques, memorials and interpretive signs will require a formal application and will be reviewed by Council.

Eligibility Criteria

Council will review a request for a plaque, memorial or interpretive sign, if it meets the following criteria:

- a) the item support Council's corporate strategies, aims and objectives;
- b) the item reflects local geographical relevance;
- c) the item can demonstrate to be of lasting value to the community for social, cultural, historical, educational or aesthetic reasons and add to the existing community amenity of the proposed location, within the context of the current use of the area;
- d) the item is considered in the context of the number of existing memorials, interpretive signs, public artwork and other objects in the area;
- e) the item commemorates a person or group that has made a significant contribution to the community and who has not already been memorialised;
- f) the item adheres to Council's Risk Management Framework and to relevant Occupational Health & Safety and Environmental Management Policies and Procedures; and
- g) the item meets with any relevant legislative measures.

A commemorative plaque, memorial or interpretive sign will not be considered where there is a religious, ethnic, cultural or political affiliation in memorialising events that might have, or be perceived as having, the effect of maintaining instead of healing divisions. For this reason, applications for culturally specific war memorials relating to international conflicts will not be approved.

Plaques, memorials and interpretive signs that have been placed in any location without authorisation, or which do not meet the general requirements of this policy, may be removed. Attempts will be made to consult with the person(s) responsible for initially installing the plaque or memorial prior to its removal.

Deaccession Criteria

There is recognition that, from time to time, there may be reasons to review the retention of existing plaques, memorials and interpretive signs. Accordingly, Council reserves the right to deaccession and disposal of such items. Council will always approach the deaccessioning of items with caution, with appropriate delay and review mechanisms in its procedures.

The nomination for deaccessioning may occur only where the item/s meets one or more of the following criteria:

- a) the item no longer meets the current eligibility criteria;
- b) the item is in poor condition and is considered of insufficient merit for allocation of conservation resources;
- c) the item is damaged beyond repair or destroyed;
- d) the retention of the item may put people and/or other items at risk;
- e) the item is lost, stolen or mislaid with no likelihood of return; and
- f) A public request is received for removal in consideration of new cultural interpretations or historical revisionism.

Proposals for deaccessions will be prepared by relevant officers and experts (where necessary) with a report provided to the Civic Collection Acquisition and Deaccession Working Group for review. Items reviewed and recommended by the working group for deaccession will be submitted to Director Community Services for approval.

Methods of Disposal

The disposal procedure for an item identified for deaccession will adhere to the following order of options, in accordance with the ICOM Code of Professional Ethics (2013), Section 4.3: Deaccessioning Policies and Procedures. The options for disposal in order of priority are that the item may be:

- relocated;
- stored; or
- destroyed where no other options are appropriate.

Council's Public Art Projects Lead must maintain records of items deaccessioned including their method of disposal.

Ongoing Maintenance

Council will maintain the item as part of its Asset Management program for the life of the asset and any costs relating to this will be at Council's expense. Should significant maintenance be required to prolong the life of the asset such maintenance expenses will be considered within Capital Improvement Program (CIP) budget bids aligned with Council's Asset Management Policy.

6. RESPONSE TO THE OVERARCHING GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2020

This policy has been drafted with consideration to the overarching principles that guide the *Local Government Act 2020*. Such considerations have included, but are not limited to:

- benchmarking similar policies endorsed by other councils;
- the integration of an online application form in support of continuous improvement and accessibility for our municipal community;
- the development of a collaborative framework of application review with contributions from a broad cohort of Council units ensuring that best outcomes can be delivered for the municipal community;

- clearly setting out ownership of responsibilities for internal stakeholders to ensure efficient management of the policy within existing operational resource allocations;
- flexibility to respond to changing circumstances in consideration of new cultural interpretations or historical revisionism;
- transparency in target timelines for application review; and
- consideration of financial viability impacts on existing and future budgets and cost mitigation.

7. CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES ACT 2006 – COMPATIBILITY STATEMENT

The *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* has been considered in the preparation of this policy. As a result, special consideration has been given to ensuring the policy appropriately accommodates cultural rights. This is supported by the engagement of Community Advocacy Officers as part of the internal consultation process to inform and steer outcomes as part of the review process.

8. RESPONSE TO THE GENDER EQUALITY ACT 2020

The *Gender Equality Act 2020* has been considered in the preparation of this policy but is not relevant to its contents. The administration of this policy does not negatively or positively impact any gender groups within the municipality. All applications will be considered with respect to promoting equality, inclusion and access throughout our municipality.

9. CONSIDERATION OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABILITY

Council's Declaration on a Climate and Ecological Emergency, Council's Climate Change Emergency Strategy 2020-2030 and the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020* in relation to the overarching governance principle on climate change and sustainability have been considered in the preparation of this policy but are not directly relevant to its contents. Where practicable sustainable products will be sourced in implementing actions. Furthermore, where practicable, local suppliers will be sought in the process of procuring quotes for delivery of policy outcomes.

10. RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibilities that arise under this policy are:

Director Community Services is responsible for the final approval of all plaques, memorials and interpretive signs.

Directors are responsible for the preliminary approval of plaques, memorials and interpretive signs pertaining to their areas of responsibility.

Manager, Community Arts, Culture and Library Services is responsible for the approval of all artwork relating to plaques, memorials and interpretive signs prior to final sign off by the Director. Furthermore, they will ensure that other managers are made aware as to the existence of the policy so that they may communicate more broadly with their respective teams.

Managers are responsible for monitoring staff under their supervision to ensure that they understand and comply with this policy and the requirements within it.

Public Art Projects Lead is responsible for listing new plaques, memorials and interpretive signs in both Council's Civic and Cultural Heritage Collection Catalogue and Assets Register and for advising relevant internal stakeholders. The Public Arts Project Lead will be available to assist and advise staff in relation to implementing any aspect of this policy.

Civic Collection Acquisition and Deaccession Working Group is comprised of nominated representatives of external independent professional members with a variety of relevant cultural heritage and collection management-related professional skills and backgrounds, Presidents of the Dandenong and Springvale Historical Societies, a Spirit of Enterprise Group representative and Council officers. This group will review proposed items based on acquisition and deaccession criteria outlined in this policy and provide recommendations for consideration. It will meet every six months or more regularly as required.

All staff are responsible for compliance with the policy and the requirements within it should they be involved with any plaques, memorials or interpretive signage.

11. REPORTING, MONITORING AND REVIEW

The policy will be further reviewed and updated in 2025. The success of the policy will be measured continuously through alignment with target timelines for application review. The target timeline to review applications is 70 days, noting that in certain instances applications may be referred to either executive and/or Council for consideration in which case the review timelines may extend accordingly. Upon review of the policy, past applications will be monitored for compliance to test the efficacy of the policy and analyse where improvements can be made.


12. REFERENCES AND RELATED DOCUMENTS

Legislation

- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*
- *Crown Land Reserves Act 1978 (amended)*
- *Gender Equality Act 2021*
- *Geographical Place Names Act 1998*
- *Heritage Act 2017*
- *ICOM Code of Professional Ethics (2013), Section 4.3: Deaccessioning Policies and Procedures*
- *Local Government Act 2020*
- *Planning and Environment Act 1987*

Related Council and Other Policies, Procedures, Strategies, Protocols, Guidelines

- Greater Dandenong City Council Activity Centre Design Frameworks and Interpretive Signs In Activity Centres Design Manual
- Greater Dandenong City Council Application Form for a Plaque, Memorial or Interpretive Signage within the City of Greater Dandenong
- Greater Dandenong City Council Asset Management Policy
- Greater Dandenong City Council Corporate Style Guide

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- Greater Dandenong City Council Civic and Cultural Heritage Collection Policy
 - Greater Dandenong City Council Interpretive Sign Program
 - Greater Dandenong City Council Open Space Strategy
 - Greater Dandenong City Council Plaques, Memorials and Interpretive Signage Guidelines
 - Greater Dandenong City Council Springvale & Noble Park Structure Plans
 - Cultural Heritage Management Plans and Conservation Management Plans for appropriate locations
 - Greater Dandenong Climate Change Emergency Strategy