



CP 4.9 | Commemorative Works

Objective

To guide the process for commemorative works decision making and the management of commemorative works within the City of Perth (the City).

Scope

This policy applies to proposed and existing commemorative works within the City of Perth, including memorials, monuments, plaques, digital commemorations and the naming of reserves and buildings.

Policy statement

Preamble

1. The Burra Charter sets an Australian *“standard of practice for those who provide advice, make decisions about, or undertake works to places of cultural significance, including owners, managers and custodians”*.
2. Memorials, monuments and plaques are places of cultural significance that the City of Perth owns, manages and has custodianship of. This policy guides the decision making for new and existing commemorative works and their management. It is appropriately informed by the above-mentioned Burra Charter.

Definitions

Cultural significance

3. Article 1.2 in the Burra Charter defines cultural significance in the following terms: *“Cultural significance means aesthetic, historical, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations. Cultural significance is embodied in place itself, its fabric, setting, use, associations, meanings, records, related places and related objects. Places may have a range of values for different individuals or groups.”*

Memorial/Monument

4. Memorials and monuments are objects that are built, placed or preserved in situ for the purpose of commemorating a person, community, place or event of public significance. Memorials and monuments may incorporate architectural elements, statuary and monolithic objects, such as stones. While these objects may sometimes employ the services of artists in their design and construction, the intent and purpose of memorials and monuments can be quite distinct from public art.



Plaque

5. A plaque is a memorial tablet of stone, metal or other material inscribed with text and/or images commemorating a person, community, place or event of public significance, and/or presenting information that aids in the interpretation of a site or other object. Plaques may be affixed to a building, an object or placed in the paving.

Digital commemorative works

6. Digital commemorative works are virtual features in the digital landscape that commemorate a person, community, place or event of cultural significance to the community (e.g. Online biographical dictionary of people of cultural significance to a community). They can support the conservation and interpretation of a community's significant places, stories and associated people and events in a static or interactive manner. These works can be flexible and responsive to changes in cultural heritage significance, provide a sustainable alternative to physical permanent commemorative works in the public realm and are accessible globally.
7. Throughout this policy, unless otherwise stated, memorials, monuments, plaques and digital commemorative works will collectively be defined as commemorative works.

COMMEMORATIVE WORKS DECISION MAKING

8. Proposals for new commemorative works or for the relocation, reconstruction or reinterpretation of existing commemorative works are to be submitted to the CEO for assessment and recommendation to Council.
9. Proposals must address the criteria and requirements of this policy and the application process is detailed in commemorative works operational procedures.
10. Approval or decline of commemorative works proposals must be by resolution of Council.

COMMEMORATIVE WORKS PRINCIPLES

11. The principles guiding the City of Perth's approach to commemorative works are as follows:

The City of Perth's commemorative works:

- a. Are permanent material features in the physical landscape corresponding to places of cultural significance and are assets to be conserved in a sustainable and sensitive way.
- b. Are virtual features in the digital landscape that commemorate a person, community, place or event of cultural significance to the community and are assets to be conserved in a sustainable and sensitive way.
- c. Must be managed on the basis of appropriate evidence and give access to an understanding of the cultural significance embodied in the object and the place.
- d. Have an impact upon the use of places in the city and their management should be compatible with the uses of a place and should not be to the detriment of the cultural significance of a place.



- e. Should support the co-existence of the diverse cultural values and shared histories of our community through recognition, respect and encouragement.
- f. Can have differing cultural significance for people and groups in our community, particularly in light of the unfolding history of a place and as the result of new information. Re-contextualising commemorative works and addressing contemporary relevance and cultural sensitivities should be supported.
- g. Should be managed in a way that provides for the participation of communities for whom the place has cultural significance.

CRITERIA AND REQUIREMENTS FOR COMMEMORATIVE WORKS

Cultural significance

12. All decisions concerning the management of new and existing commemorative works should be informed by the collection and presentation of evidence that clearly establishes the cultural significance of the work and its relationship to the site and community.
13. A commemorative work will be considered to possess cultural significance if it can be shown to meet at least one of the following primary criteria (at least one sub-criteria of the primary criteria must be met):
 - a. Historic Significance:
 - The subject of the commemorative work has made an outstanding contribution to changing the course of history of the site or the City of Perth, or has had an impact on the development of Perth.
 - The commemorative work, as a preserved historical object, embodies some aspect of the course or pattern of Western Australia's natural or cultural history.
 - b. Aesthetic Significance:
 - The commemorative work is an outstanding example of artistic achievement, style, design or technical accomplishment.
 - The commemorative work plays a key role in enhancing the aesthetic experience of the sites.
 - c. Scientific or Environmental Significance:
 - The commemorative work provides unique access to key evidence with the potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Western Australia's natural or cultural history.
 - d. Social, Cultural or Spiritual Significance:
 - The commemorative work embodies beliefs, ideas, customs, traditions, associations, practices, places or stories that contribute to a community's sense of ownership and identification with place.



- The commemorative work is the focus of existing or envisaged social, cultural or spiritual practices for the community.
14. New commemorative works can contribute to the conservation of a place of cultural significance through:
- Being themselves the site or focus of commemorative events and activities for the community (e.g. parades, rituals, visitations etc.).
 - Reinstating some dimension of cultural significance for the community at the site that has been lost, destroyed or covered over.
15. Existing commemorative works may themselves be historical features of the landscape with cultural significance as heritage items that require preservation and conservation.
16. It is acknowledged that cultural significance can change as a result of the unfolding history of a place and as the result of new information. Strategies for the reinterpretation of commemorative works to re-contextualise, restore contemporary relevance and address cultural sensitivities should be employed, using appropriate reversible means, to address changes in cultural significance (e.g. memorial lectures, public programs, digital works, placement of additional interpretive plaques).

Subjects

17. The subject for a new commemorative work should be:
- a. An individual, or organisation, that has made an outstanding contribution to changing the course of history of the site or the city of Perth, or has had an impact on the development of Perth.
 - b. An event or achievement that has made an outstanding contribution to changing the course of history of the site or the city of Perth, or has had an impact on the development of Perth.
 - c. A culturally significant event or story that contributes to a community's sense of ownership and identification with a particular site in the city of Perth.
 - d. Reflective of the diverse cultural values and shared histories of our community and support changes in cultural significance with a particular site in the city of Perth.
18. Where the subject of a new or existing commemorative work has been established to be of cultural significance for the State or the Nation, the City of Perth will seek to work in partnership with State and Federal Governments to establish and maintain such items.
19. New commemorative works should not be approved where the subject has already been commemorated elsewhere in the Perth metropolitan area, except when circumstances prove to be truly exceptional.
20. The City of Perth does not accept proposals for temporary physical memorials (e.g. Memorial park and street furniture, memorial trees, memorial plaques for deceased persons and companion animals and therefore this policy cannot be applied to assess such proposals).



Sites

21. Physical permanent commemorative works in the City of Perth are site specific. A strong case must be made for the culturally significant correspondence between the nominated site, subject and planned form of any new memorial proposal.
22. The placement of a new physical permanent commemorative work or the relocation of an existing physical commemorative work in a public place in the City of Perth must not diminish the cultural significance of the place for the broader community and must not impact negatively on the existing uses of the place by the broader community.
23. Proposals for new physical permanent commemorative works and relocation of existing physical commemorative works must be consistent with Council approved plans for the proposed site.
24. New digital commemorative works that are owned and managed by the City of Perth must be developed, maintained and archived in a sustainable and sensitive way, ensuring that it is accessible to the community in perpetuity.

Design, construction and maintenance

25. Aspects relating to the design, fabrication, installation and commissioning of commemorative works must be developed in consultation with the City. Proposals for new commemorative works or for the relocation, reconstruction or reinterpretation of existing commemorative works will need to:
 - a. Address specific design, construction and maintenance requirements.
 - b. Meet all the requirements of the City of Perth Policy 4.8 - Public Art, for acquisition and accession into the City's Public Art Collection.

Community engagement

26. Given the cultural significance of commemorative works, the City of Perth requires that appropriate community consultation is undertaken by the applicant to ensure that relevant community interests are represented, and community participation is facilitated to inform decision making.

Funding of commemorative works

27. All costs associated with all new commemorative works are to be financed by the applicants, including costs associated with community consultation, the assessment and evaluation of the proposal, required site investigation works, relevant permits and approvals, installation and interpretation and acknowledgement labels.
28. The City of Perth may, at its discretion, choose to partner with applicants, offering support for a new commemorative works project or the relocation, reconstruction or reinterpretation of an existing physical commemorative work, where the broad community benefit of such a partnership has been established, and the City of Perth has resources available.



DONOR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

29. Where approved by the City of Perth, acknowledgement of benefactors on the site of a commemorative work will be discrete and will not compete with the subject of the memorial.
30. Logos and donor acknowledgements, if approved by the City of Perth, will cover no more than 10% of the total text or surface of any commemorative work.

PROVISION OF PLAQUES AT OFFICIAL OPENINGS

31. When plaques are provided to mark the official opening of a Council property or some other related activity, members of the Council are to be given the choice as to how they desire their name to appear.
32. Consideration should be given to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land, the Whadjuk Nyoongar people of Western Australia, and the dual naming (in Nyoongar and English) of place on these plaques. Consideration should also be given to the shared histories of cultural significance to the community, that relate to the site on which the opening of a Council property or related activity is taking place, to appear on such plaques.

NAMING OF RESERVES AND BUILDINGS

33. The City of Perth supports a consistent approach to the naming of City reserves and buildings under the Council's jurisdiction. The naming of all reserves and buildings will be in accordance with the Geographic Names Committee Policies and Standards for Geographical Naming in Western Australia. Consideration should be given to the dual naming (in Nyoongar and English) of places, reserves and buildings.

OWNERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

34. Unless otherwise established through a formal agreement in writing, all commemorative works approved for placement within the public realm of the City of Perth are deemed to be owned and under the unconditional control of the City of Perth and will be managed in accordance with the City's relevant policies and procedures.
35. As commemorative works are places of cultural significance they should be conserved indefinitely in keeping with the articles of the Burra Charter.
36. Memorials, monuments, selected plaques and digital commemorative works approved by the City of Perth are managed and maintained as items accessioned in the City's Public Art Collection.
37. Plaques not identified as part of point 36 are documented in the City of Perth's Asset register for plaques and will be managed and maintained by the City of Perth.



Document control

Policy context

Legislation, standards & external guidelines	Local Government Act 1995 s2.7(2)(b)
Policies and procedures	CP 4.8 Public Art CP 4.7 Cultural Collections
Strategies, plans and frameworks	Temporary Memorial Plan 2019

Document custodian

Alliance	Community Development	Service unit	City Culture
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Review management

Next review due	August 2026	Document management ref.	EDRMS-1336483316-826
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Document management

Version	Adopted by	Adoption date	Synopsis of changes
1.0	Ordinary Council Meeting	24 June 2003	Council policy 1.6 – Memorials, Monuments and Plaques adopted
2.0	Ordinary Council Meeting	16 December 2008	Council policy amended – Minor administrative changes
3.0	Ordinary Council Meeting	15 December 2015	Council policy amended – revised title 1.6 – Commemorative Works
4.0	Ordinary Council Meeting	27 July 2021	Adopted Council policy supersedes revoked Council policies 1.6 – Commemorative Works, 1.7 – Naming of Reserves and Buildings and 1.8 – Provision of Plaques at Official Openings
5.0	Ordinary Council Meeting	29 August 2023	Council policy amended – Minor administrative changes