

# public art guidelines



For Landcom Projects





“Art is an expression of the creative spirit, of our endless capacity to see the world with wit and imagination, to be innovative with materials and technologies, and to provide an engaging commentary on the times and places in which we live.”

Marla Guppy, Cultural Planner

*Cover and inside cover:* At one of the busiest intersections at The Ponds, *Float* by Susan Milne and Greg Stonehouse is a creative commentary about the culture of water in the urban environment. The artists believe that, “With our awareness of climate change, the meaning of water has been transformed. Water is now a precious resource. The umbrellas open upside down like flowers to the sky. Their inverted form transforms their function from rain shelter to water collector. At night the umbrellas glow with soft colours reflecting the seasons. When it rains, the umbrellas respond with a light dance celebrating the return of water to the landscape”.

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# 1.0

# about the guidelines

“Integrated urban art, diverse and thought provoking, is the public expression of generous communities...It helps make public space a more personal experience.”

William Kelly, Artist and Urban Planner

## 1.1 The purpose of this document

The purpose of this document is to support inspiring public art in Landcom developments. It outlines the potential benefits of public art in new development, clarifies what Landcom is aiming to achieve with public art, and outlines a best-practice implementation process for our projects.

Public art and design can be a memorable and energetic part of the public domain. Good art can create a destination that is revisited and enjoyed, increasing community use of public spaces and places. In turn this can provide opportunities for community members to use open space actively, meet others and participate in everyday community interactions.

Public art can be distinctive, making a strong visual statement that contributes to the cultural identity of a new locality. It has the capacity to respond to the local environment, reflect community heritage and comment on contemporary issues. The integration of art, urban design and landscape can create places of great beauty and relevance to local people.

Participation in creative projects can support connections between individuals and groups encouraging a dialogue about community life. Communities are often proud of their achievements and have a strong sense of ownership of successful artworks.

## 1.2 Who these guidelines are for and how they should be used

Landcom has prepared these guidelines to provide a greater understanding of the role that public art might play in its developments and to increase the skill level of staff and others in supporting successful public art projects.

The guidelines are written primarily for Landcom development staff, our project managers and our development partners, to help them plan for art in Landcom and partner projects.

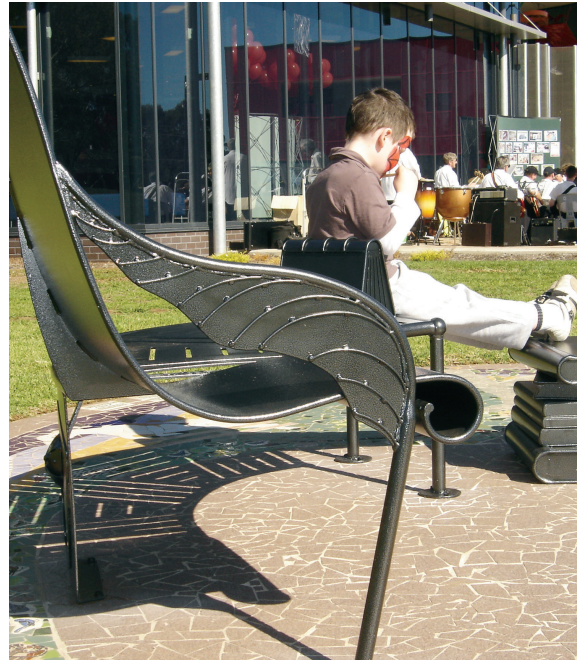
As well as providing guidance to development teams, we expect the document will be useful in explaining Landcom’s commitment to public art and the values behind our policy to other stakeholders, including local government.

This is a working document and we will test the guidelines through our projects. We also welcome feedback at any time from those who are using the guidelines. The policy and guidelines will be regularly reviewed to ensure they remain current and useful.

## 1.3 Objectives of the guidelines

*The objectives of these guidelines are to:*

- Develop an understanding of public art and how it can be used to benefit the neighbourhoods that we are developing
- Describe Landcom's commitment to public art to our staff, development partners, local government and other stakeholders
- Assist development teams to incorporate art in their projects.



A collaboration between artist Marian Abboud and art student Laura Crichton from Elizabeth Macarthur High School resulted in a dramatic artwork on the façade of the new Narellan Library. The library forecourt seating designed by Art Is An Option explores the heritage of the written word.

# 2.0 Landcom public art policy

## Definition

The term **public art** is used to describe creative work that is part of the public experience of built and natural environments. It can include sculpture, environmental art, the integration of

art and architectural design, and temporary or ephemeral works such as installations, lighting works, new media and outdoor performance.

## Policy Statement

Landcom has a commitment to providing high quality, relevant public art in our developments. In doing so Landcom recognises the role public

art can play in developing community identity and a strong sense of place.

## Public Art Principles

*Landcom supports and seeks to develop:*

1. Art that contributes to cultural identity and creates a distinctive sense of place.
2. Creative projects that help to build stronger, more connected communities.
3. Art that can be enjoyed, and experienced by people of different ages and cultural backgrounds.
4. Art that responds to themes of people and place – both past and present.
5. Art that relates well to the built and natural environment.
6. Art that exemplifies artistic excellence and integrity.
7. Art that responds to the challenge of climate change through sustainable design and fabrication.
8. Art that is appropriate and safe in public contexts and is easily maintained.

## Scope of the Policy

*This policy applies to:*

- New artworks in Landcom developments.
- Collaborative projects with partners, including developers and government.
- Management of existing artworks
- Acquisitions.

This policy is supported by the guidelines in this document.

# 3.0

## about public art

About public art, its benefits and the principles we support



*Storm Waters* by Jennifer Turpin and Michaelie Crawford at Victoria Park in Zetland. This environmental stormwater sculpture is an integral part of the Water Sensitive Urban Design of the site. Harvested stormwater is continually recycled and treated as it cascades over two sets of stairs embedded into the grassed embankments of the park. The sculpture reflects the ecological history of the site which sits above a vast aquifer and was once entirely swamp.

## 3.1 What is public art?

The term public art is used to describe creative work that is part of the public experience of built and natural environments.

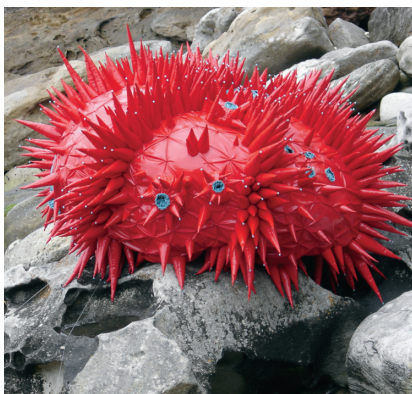
It can include sculpture, environmental art, the integration of art and architectural design, and more temporary or ephemeral works such as installations, lighting works, new media and outdoor performance.

Where there is artist involvement, customised design is also included in the broader definition of public art and may include artist designed street furniture, decorative paving, lighting treatments, signage, and glasswork.

If the project has a community art focus, community members may work with the artists on themes, text, design and fabrication.

Public artworks are usually site specific and may celebrate the distinctiveness of the environment, local heritage, cultural identity, the energy of urban spaces or other themes relevant to people and place.

Artworks may be of a significant scale and define a locality or be intimately integrated into urban elements.



Temporary exhibitions can showcase an exciting range of work and provide interesting site opportunities. Margarita Sampson's *Big Mama and the Kittens* on the rocks of Bondi beach was a popular work in the 2006 Sculpture by the Sea exhibition.

### Where is public art located?

Public art projects can be located in a wide range of public and community environments including:

- New residential areas
- Civic and community buildings
- Health centres, medical centres and hospitals
- Commercial developments and business parks
- Schools, childcare centres and other education facilities
- Transport facilities
- Natural environments including riparian areas and bushland
- Open space, parks, play spaces and sporting areas
- Town centres
- Shopping centres and retail developments
- Existing neighbourhoods.



*Off My Noodle* by Dani Marti in the Newcastle Hunter Street Mall was designed to renew interest in a forgotten corner of the mall. Made of 12 km of pool noodles woven around a roofing frame, the temporary artwork generated interest and amusement from pedestrians and city workers.



## 3.2 How can public art benefit communities?

Developers are very well placed to include public art in their projects and there are many examples of developments that link art, architecture, landscape and urban design. While some public art is required as a condition of development approval, increasingly developers are recognising the value of creative projects in building stronger communities. The benefits of public art can include:

### Creating a strong cultural identity

A central task of good development is the creation of neighbourhoods in which people feel connected. A cultural identity that reflects positive community values and aspirations in the urban environment helps strengthen connectivity. In this way people feel 'at home' in their neighbourhood and enjoy the way it looks. They appreciate the things that make it different from other areas. Well-designed public art can make a strong contribution to cultural identity. Original art that responds to local themes can create a sense of place in a new area encouraging the community to enjoy the elements that make their suburb distinctive.

### Creating a sense of arrival

Public art can also make arriving in a new urban area a memorable experience. An interesting project will often create a strong sense of destination, locating the visitor in the city landscape and welcoming locals back to their neighbourhood. The visual cues that art can provide also humanise the environment

reminding us of the links between the built environment and everyday life.

### Animating public environments

Creating lively public environments that are enjoyed and used by all has important social benefits. People are more likely to use parks, paths and plazas if they are safe and attractive. Public space is a natural arena for public art so much so that new environments are often designed with artworks as an integrated part of the project. Good public art can provide a focal point for community spaces, develop community themes and create an opportunity for play, interaction and 'people watching'. In a more formal context public art can also explore important civic themes such as national identity, peace and conflict, remembrance and other reflective subjects.

### Celebrating creativity and innovation

"Art is an expression of the creative spirit, of our endless capacity to see the world with wit and imagination, to be innovative with materials and technologies and to provide an engaging commentary on the times and places in which we live" (M. Guppy). Creativity is also a powerful tool for community life and may be used to address community issues in a flexible and inclusive way. Successful public art is not only a reminder of the value of creative thinking but affirms its place in everyday life.



*The Gecko* is one of four stone sculptures by Ishi Buki at Worrell Park near Wyoming. The reptile theme of the neighbourhood park is a nod to the heritage of the site, the former home of Eric Worrell's Australian Reptile Park.



Children from Narellan Public School worked with mosaic artist Cynthia Turner to create images of play in the paving at Narellan Library. Projects that involve young people in the creative process build a sense of pride and stewardship.

### Celebrating community cultures

Australian communities are culturally diverse. It is not unusual to have many cultural backgrounds represented in an urban neighbourhood. This diversity gives energy and colour to community life. Public art can celebrate cultural diversity, affirm cultural difference and acknowledge its value in creating vibrant places. The form such work takes may be subtle and engaging, using textures, patterning and symbols rather than traditional signs such as flags. Ensuring that artists from different cultural backgrounds are included in project planning is also important.

### Exploring local heritage

Recognising the heritage of an area is an important part of managing urban growth. New residents are often eager to understand how their locality has developed and local history provides continuity with the past. Public art projects play an important role in interpreting the history of new urban areas. Art has the capacity to integrate imagery, text, oral history, found objects and other material to explore historical events and meanings.

### Responding to Aboriginal heritage

Public art has the capacity to acknowledge and provide a meaningful commentary on Aboriginal heritage and in many cases on the living culture of local Aboriginal communities. This may involve artwork that responds to an important landscape such as a creekline, explores current or historic Aboriginal connection to place or uses tribal or contemporary imagery. Modern or non-traditional work is also valuable. The engagement of Aboriginal artists will be central to this and in many projects

the opportunity to work with an Aboriginal artist will promote greater cultural understanding in the community as a whole.

### Engaging local communities

Creative projects can provide both formal and spontaneous opportunities for community involvement. Working with an artist to develop material, themes and subject matter for an artwork may be possible. The project may provide structured opportunities for hands on involvement in the design and fabrication process. Community members may take part in an art advisory group that plays a part in choosing the artist or directing the project. In some projects extensive involvement by a particular group such as young people may be planned. Well-planned involvement in a successful public art or community art project can leave participants with a sense of achievement and an ongoing pride in the completed work. The opportunity to meet and work with other community members can strengthen social ties and build community connectivity, and the potential for creative work to be energising and liberating on a personal level cannot be underestimated.

### Supporting creative industries

Public art projects provide employment for a range of creative workers and industries. These can include foundries, graphic designers, engineering firms, laser-cutters, lighting designers, glass manufacturers, metal workers, paving manufacturers, tilers, photographic and digital imagery firms to name just a few. In many instances an exciting artwork will increase the profile of the fabricator as well as the artist. Public art that is produced locally will benefit the local economy.



An elegant partnership between art and engineering, Milne Stonehouse's *Bridge of Oars* spans the Parramatta River providing pedestrian access to Parramatta's northern residential areas.

## 3.3 Public art principles

*Landcom supports and seeks to develop:*

1. **Art that contributes to cultural identity and creates a distinctive sense of place.** In practice this means that
  - Artworks are appropriate to a community context
  - Artworks are sited carefully and respond creatively to the local area
2. **Creative projects that help to build stronger, more connected communities.** This means that
  - Public art is used to support the amenity of public environments, help orient people and create opportunities for social exchange
  - Opportunities for community involvement in the development of art projects and the creative process itself are provided where appropriate
  - Creative approaches to community well-being and links with community services through art projects are supported
3. **Art that can be enjoyed, and experienced by people of different ages and backgrounds.** This means that
  - Art projects in neighbourhoods are developed with a community audience in mind
  - Public art that engages and involves people of different ages, including young people, is developed
  - Opportunities to explore cultural diversity are developed
  - Artists from different cultural backgrounds including Aboriginal, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and locally based artists are considered for projects
4. **Art that responds to themes of people and place – both past and present.** This means that
  - Projects respond to the social history of the locality
  - Art is sensitive to cultural change and the experience of settlement



The meeting place poles (no name) by local Indigenous artist Mini Heath at Koala Bay in Tanilba Bay, Port Stephens. The sculptures are part of a series of artworks reflecting the cultural history of the site.

**5. Art that relates well to the built and natural environment.** This means that

- Opportunities for early collaboration with architecture and design teams are maximised
- Quality integration of art, landscape and built form is achieved
- Art is responsive to climate and environmental issues

**6. Public art that exemplifies artistic excellence and integrity.** This means that

- Artworks showcase excellence in Australian art and design
- Works are original in concept and execution
- The integrity of the artist as creator is respected in the way the work is treated and represented by Landcom.

**7. Art that responds to the challenge of climate change through sustainable design and fabrication.** This means that

- Artworks are constructed using sustainable materials and processes
- Water features use only recycled or rainwater
- Carbon offsets are considered for fabrication processes which result in unacceptable green house emissions during production
- Opportunities for creative projects to engage the community around climate change are supported

**8. Art that is appropriate and safe in public contexts and easily maintained.** This means that

- Artworks are designed to be structurally sound under an anticipated range of uses and conditions
- Art in special contexts such as play areas or road reserves meets local government or other applicable standards
- Permanent artworks are designed to be durable and able to be maintained
- Plans, designs and specifications allowing repairs and replacements are provided with the completed artwork



*Convict Barracks Frame* in Scott Street Newcastle commissioned by Newcastle City Council. This large steel sculpture represents the structure of the first convict industrial settlement site discovered in Newcastle.



*Factory* by Suzie Bleach and Andrew Townsend is one of a series of artworks on the site of the original Mashman Pottery factory in Willoughby. The artists used glazes, design elements and techniques to celebrate the remarkable heritage of one of Australia's most significant ceramic industries.

# 4.0

## putting public art into practice



Artist Penny Bovell and writer Deborah Robertson created poetry in the pavement in Subi Centro, one of Perth's most successful urban renewal areas. Integrated urban art has been an important part of the design of the precinct.

# putting public art into practice

The following steps outline an implementation process that could be applied to projects of various sizes and levels of involvement. It is intended as a guide only. The actual steps will depend on the specifics of each project.

## 1. Engaging a public art coordinator

Art projects need close coordination and management if they are to be a successful part of a larger development process. Where there is not a staff member available for project management or a person on the development team with public art experience, a public art coordinator may be engaged.

A public art reference group or working party may also be convened to provide specialised input and advice at this point or earlier in the project. The group may provide community or art-based feedback, advocate on behalf of the project, oversee the work of the project coordinator and offer structured commentary on the creative process. A skilled committee may be asked to adjudicate in the case of a competition or to sign-off on concepts and designs.

### Action area

- Engagement of public art coordinator

## 2. Defining the role public art will play in a locality

Art in development is aligned to the planning and construction of new residential, commercial and community areas and the design and provision of open space. The early thinking processes that determine the character, location and scope of development are also useful for determining the scope and intent of art projects. The role the artwork will play in the new environment, its potential audience, and its capacity to address specific themes should all form part of initial discussions.

### Action areas

- Landcom and/or partner staff, Council officers, community members, design consultants and other interested parties meet to discuss opportunities and resolve any early issues arising from the development of a public art project
- Examples of other projects and the work of suitable artists may be reviewed
- The services of an experienced art consultant may be engaged at this point or earlier



Artist designed seating enlivens community environments and provides an opportunity to capture themes and designs relevant to local cultures. From left to right, Cynthia Turner's mosaic seating at Waverly Library evokes the ocean currents. Playspace seats by Art Is An Option at The Ponds depict the local Barking Owl. The palm frond seat by Simon Zablotzky in Newcastle East integrates art and function in an urban context.

### 3. Preparing an arts strategy

Prior to engaging an artist an arts strategy should be developed for the site or locality. This will allow early ideas to be clarified and will result in a document that can easily be circulated to stakeholders. It may also be used as a background document for the artist's brief. The strategy will include:

- Project description including the intent, art form and medium, scale, budget and other information that allows a working understanding of the final outcome
- Context or location for the artwork including its relationship to architecture or landscape work in the case of an integrated project
- Strategies for community involvement including target groups, local stakeholders and community organisations
- Themes or community issues the art project could address
- Examples of work by preferred or short-listed artists
- Identified stages for implementing the project
- An outline of how the project will address maintenance and public safety issues

#### Action area

- Development of public art strategy

### 4. Allocating a project budget

Good public art depends on a sufficient budget allocation. Although public art projects are often conceived before funding is finalised it is now common to develop artworks in response to a known budget allocation. Once the public art allocation is identified it should be identified as a stand-alone line item in the project budget. It is important that the budget allows for the full range of products and services involved in producing public art including:

- Project coordination
- Artist fees for concept development, design development, documentation and fabrication if the artist is also the maker
- Engineering advice and drawings and other technical inputs
- Development Application fees if applicable
- Fabrication if this is to be done by another firm
- Site preparation and installation
- Preparation of a maintenance manual

#### Action areas

- Development of project budget
- Develop the budget based on an informed understanding of the scale and form of artwork required



As part of an overall public art strategy, Sydney Wharf Pty Ltd engaged artist Braddon Snape to develop a creative response to the particular history and unique setting of the Pyrmont site. Snape describes *The SubWharfyn* as "a synthesis of my aesthetic, poetic, intellectual and practical response to the Sydney Wharf project and the surrounding locale".



Revitalised city environments can allow work of significant scope and scale. Virginia King's *Reed Vessel* at Melbourne's Docklands is a layered commentary about the ecological heritage of the site and the complex human experience of migration.

## 5. Preparing an artist's brief

When there is clarity about the scope and directions of the public art program the cultural planner or art consultant will prepare a detailed artist's brief. The brief should include the following items:

- A description of the project including information about the intended audience, relevant neighbourhood or community context
- Details and images of the site with opportunities and constraints
- A thematic framework if the artist is required to respond to specific themes or subjects
- A preliminary project budget
- Preferred materials, fabrication and installation requirements if this is relevant
- Artist selection criteria
- Project management information
- Timeframes

### Action area

- Preparation of Artist's Brief

## 6. Engaging an artist

Selecting the right artist to work on a public art project is central to a successful outcome. It is important to be familiar with a range of possible artists. Databases are often available from local government and arts organisations. Most artists have images of their work available for prospective clients to look at. There are a number of ways an artist can be engaged to undertake public art:

- The art project may be advertised through the local or national media and selected applicants invited to an interview process
- A group of short-listed artists may be paid to develop concepts and a selection made
- An artist who has particular expertise in the required context or medium may be offered the commission
- An artist with experience in working with communities, young people or specific cultural groups may be engaged directly

### Action area

- Interview and/or selection of artist



Thoughtful commissioning can result in a depth of cultural meaning in civic buildings. Floor rugs were designed by Pantjiti McKenzie for Ernabella Arts Inc. as part of the renovation and new construction project for the State Library of South Australia in Adelaide.



## 7. Preparing an artist's contract

There are a number of ways the contractual arrangements with the artist can be handled. The developer may choose to contract the artist directly. Alternately the artist may be engaged through the art coordinator. In either case it is important that the artist is clear about the individual or organisation that will manage his/her work. In some cases engagement through an art coordinator or arts consultancy allows the day-to-day management, quick responses and informal interactions that enable creative work to flourish.

An appropriate contract must always be put in place. This should cover the following:

- The project brief
- Fees and budgets
- Insurance
- Timeframes
- Copyright
- Disputes management
- Reporting and other issues

### Action area

- Preparation of Artist's Contract

## 8. Confirmation of directions with Council

In NSW a development application (DA) is often required if a major public artwork is to be undertaken. Early discussions with local government facilitate this process. Prior to the submission of the arts strategy and concept designs with a DA, it is usual for the art coordinator and the developer to meet with Council officers to present ideas and directions and confirm the approach. Any amendments required by Council are made. A final arts strategy is submitted with the DA.

Where a DA is not required a presentation of the arts strategy or brief to Council staff or to relevant stakeholders may happen at this point.

### Action areas

- Council briefing
- Preparation of Development Application



Narellan Library detail by Marian Abboud with Laura Crichton.

## 9. Design development

Understanding how the completed work will look on site and how it will function is an important part of accepting the concept and approving the artwork. It is usual to require the artist to present a detailed design prior to the work being fabricated or crafted. The process can be informal with the artist given every opportunity to explain the work, show textures, colours and materials, and provide details of special design effects or lighting strategies. The artist may prepare models, images and drawings to make this process easier. The client may discuss their response and raise any concerns or issues in relation to the function, costs, public safety, maintenance or other matters. Even if there have been ongoing presentations, discussions and feedback through the design development phase it is important to organise a formal sign off of the final design prior to the fabrication phase of the project.

### Action areas

- Sign off on artist's concept design
- Sign off on final documentation

## 10. Fabrication

Art making is a customised process and there are many methods and approaches to fabricating the final artwork. In some instances the artist may build or construct the work in the studio for transportation and installation on site. Some work may be crafted in situ. Other art may be fabricated by a specialist to construction drawings prepared by an engineer under the artist's supervision. The fabrication of large works is a complicated process to undertake and to coordinate. Clear decisions about lines of accountability, coordination responsibilities, communications and contractual obligations need to be resolved prior to fabrication commencing.

### Action areas

- Fabrication quotes obtained and approved by the developer
- Fabricators contracted to undertake work by the artist, the developer or other agreed agent
- Demonstrations and approvals of work in progress as required



Owl seats at The Ponds by Art Is An Option.

## 11. Approval of the completed artwork

After the artwork is installed or completed Landcom and/or its partner should inspect and sign off on the work prior to the final payment being made to the artist. Any issues should be addressed promptly. Council may also wish to inspect the completed artwork as part of the sign off of the development. In the case of artwork that is a condition of the development approval process, council usually requires that the artwork is completed and installed prior to the site being used or occupied.

### Action areas

- Installation of artwork
- Final approval by Landcom and/or partner
- Final approval by Council if required
- Project launch and publicity if required

## 12. Maintenance protocols

Permanent public art should be robust but like other public structures it will be subject to wear and tear. Art requires the same attention to maintenance and repair as other elements in architectural contexts or public environments. Appropriate cleaning and repair, replacement of elements that are loosened or damaged, repair of vandalised surfaces or structures are all part of this process. Where the work will become the property of local government, a council will usually require a maintenance plan to be submitted detailing appropriate procedures and treatments for both cyclical maintenance as well as events such as vandalism or unintentional damage. The involvement of the artist in both repair and maintenance should be specified, along with timeframes for both routine and emergency work as required.

### Action areas

- Preparation of maintenance manual
- Scheduled and reactive maintenance and repairs



The ability of the artist to explore development and change is reflected in two very different artworks. Jane Cavanaugh's *Land Titles* addresses the patterns of land use and ownership at William Harvey Reserve, Rouse Hill. Regina Walter's *Bonnyrigg Marker* celebrates the extraordinary cultural diversity of this Sydney suburb and is at the entry to the bus transitway.

### 13. Decommissioning

Artworks may have a defined period in which they can be expected to remain in good condition. This is dependant on environmental factors, materials and fabrication processes. A bronze sculpture may look good for hundreds of years while an area of decorative paving in a high traffic area may be badly worn after a decade or two. Circumstances also arise where redevelopment of a site or changed uses render an artwork inappropriate and require its removal. Where this is the case Landcom may require a plan prepared in consultation with the

artist to confirm the appropriate steps. Disposal of the work or relocation to another area may be required with the artist's consent. Landcom may also request the commissioning of a new work.

#### Action areas

- Preparation of a decommission plan
- Removal and or relocation of the artwork



The snake's head by Ishi Buki at Worrell Park is at the head of the pathway that slithers though the neighbourhood park. Eric Worrell was one of Australia's leading naturalists and a pioneer of snake and spider anti-venom production. This site was the former home of The Australian Reptile Park which he founded in 1948.

# contacts



*Digital Litter* by Marcus Tatton was the 2008 winner of the Landcom Acquisitive Sculpture Prize, an exhibition curated by the University of Western Sydney. The work is located in The Ponds Parkland and references the detritus of binary characters lost in cyberspace. The rusting steel evokes a sense of the obsolete machinery of prior agricultural land uses.

# Contacts

For more information about public art in Landcom projects and other resources, contact:

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Justin Sayarath's *Bird Flight* marks the entry to a neighbourhood park at The Ponds. Public art need not be grand in scale and small artworks can give character to everyday places.

“The most defining characteristic of great places... community spirit ultimately depends on the interaction, over time, of new neighbours in the settings we create for them.”

Jo Russell Clarke, Landscape Architect

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