

1.8 CITY-WIDE ART PROGRAMS

City-wide arts and cultural programs have delivered installations (permanent and temporary), events and celebrations, and interactive landscapes into public spaces, with subjects and locations that engage passers-by and prompt spontaneous interaction.

An Arts Strategy has been adopted that sets out Council's commitment to creating an environment in which arts activities can flourish, prosper and reach all aspects of city life. Its aims are many-fold: raising the visible profile of Indigenous art and culture; examining regional, national and international perspectives; engaging communities and cultural development; interpreting heritage and history; and providing strategies to link funding with projects and events that contribute to the creative vitality of the city. Council currently commits around four per cent of its total operating expenditure on the arts.

There are many ways in which art can be reflected in the fabric of the city and its social and physical environments. Developing art for specific locations attracts or conveys a human dimension or level of interpretation to streetscapes and other public spaces. Arts activities build social connections, strengthen social inclusion and foster community development, noting the particular needs for marginal and high needs groups. Other opportunities include linking Council's cultural venues to opportunities for national touring circuits in the performing arts and contributing to initiatives in cultural tourism. Encouraging children's participation in the arts helps to build stronger, more diverse and tolerant young communities.

Creative collaborations between the different design disciplines, the community and/or cultural groups has therefore effectively become standard practice in bringing urban art to the public landscape.

***Yarra arraY** - a major biennial exhibition of outdoor sculpture - focused on temporary works in Birrarung Marr. It gathered together groups of emerging to mid-career, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, artists whose work explores what is under the 'skin' of the city: invisible, unspoken, ignored, imagined or unloved. Other recent installations include collective works that particularly express the concerns, conditions and aspirations of Indigenous Australians.*

