

Arts and Cultural Development

**Nillumbik Shire Council
Visual and Civic Art Collection
Policy
2023-2026**

May 2024

Acknowledgement of Country

Nillumbik Shire Council respectfully acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Owners of the Country on which Nillumbik is located, and we value the significance of the Wurundjeri people's history as essential to the unique character of the Shire. We pay tribute to all First Nations People living in Nillumbik, give respect to Elders past, present and future, and extend that respect to all First Nations People.

We respect the enduring strength of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and acknowledge the ongoing impacts of past trauma and injustices from European invasion, massacres and genocide committed against First Nations People. We acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded.

Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people hold a deep and ongoing connection to this place. We value the distinctive place of our First Nations People in both Nillumbik and Australia's identity; from their cultural heritage and care of the land and waterways, to their ongoing contributions in many fields including academia, agriculture, art, economics, law, sport and politics.



Inclusion statement

Nillumbik Shire Council is committed to creating a fair, equitable and inclusive community where human rights are respected, participation is facilitated, barriers are addressed and diversity is celebrated. We support the rights of all people regardless of age, gender, ability or background. We value the diverse and changing nature of our community and understand that some groups and individuals experience more barriers than others.

Contents

Section	Page
1. Introduction	04
1.1. Purpose	04
1.2. Visual and Civic Art Definition	04
1.3. Context	04
1.4. Scope	04
2. Policy Framework	05
2.1. Policy Statement	05
2.2. Objectives	05
2.3. Principles	05
2.4 Strategic Alignment	06
3. Areas of Application	06
3.1 Acquisitions	06
3.2. De-Accessions	08
3.3. Loans	08
3.4. Collection Management	09
4. Roles and Responsibilities	09
5. Access, Equity and Inclusion Impacts	10
6. Related External Legislation and/or Regulations	10
7. Related Council Policies, Procedures, and/or Guidelines	12
8. Definitions	13

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose

Nillumbik Shire Council Visual and Civic Art Collection Policy 2023-26 outlines the processes for the management of the Nillumbik Shire Art Collection, and its continued growth through new acquisitions of artworks that align with the collection acquisition criteria.

1.2 Visual and Civic Art Definition

The Nillumbik Shire Visual and Civic Art Collection includes the Visual Art, Public Art and a Civic Collections. Visual Art in the Nillumbik Art Collection includes contemporary and modernist artworks in mediums such as sculpture, painting, drawing, moving image, photography, ceramics, artist books, textiles and installation. The Civic collection includes items that are significant to the municipality and its administration.

1.3 Context

Nillumbik is rich in artistic traditions, from the early Australian Impressionists to the establishment of artist communities of Montsalvat and Dunmoochin. Such legacies have continued with the strength of today's local arts practices with professional contemporary artists representing Nillumbik at local, regional and international levels, acknowledging that the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung peoples have been practicing art and culture here for generations.

Nillumbik Shire Council values the interpretation of the Shire's local culture and heritage as expressed through the arts. The Council is committed to making art experiences accessible and inclusive. As such, Council actively collects contemporary artworks that speak to Nillumbik's culture, together with works that reflect our artistic heritage. Nillumbik Shire Council is the custodian of the Nillumbik Shire Art Collection on behalf of the community of the Shire.

1.4 Scope

The *Nillumbik Shire Council Visual and Civic Art Collection Policy 2023-2026* and the *Nillumbik Shire Visual and Civic Art Collection Guidelines 2023-2026* apply to all items housed in the Nillumbik Shire Art Collection ("the collection"). The collection has three categories: visual art, public art, and objects of civic significance. The guidelines provide the framework for collection management, including, but not limited to, acquisitions and de-accessioning, public access, safe handling, maintenance and conservation of all collection items.

All items housed within the collection must meet/align with criteria and the acquisition process as set out in the policy and guidelines.

This policy applies to:

- The acquisition and deaccessioning of artworks and objects to/from the collection
- Acquisition of significant heritage items and civic objects that reflect Nillumbik's social and cultural history
- Donations and bequests of artworks/objects to the collection via the Commonwealth Cultural Gifts Program;
- The biennial acquisitive Nillumbik Prize for Contemporary Art;
- Public access to the collection/s via display, exhibitions and public programs

2. Policy Framework

2.1 Policy Statement

Council is committed to the best practice management of the collection as the custodian of this artistic and cultural asset for the Nillumbik community. The collection is a tangible acknowledgement of Nillumbik's long tradition of artistic values and rich cultural heritage, and supports the development and growth of creative and cultural industries through new acquisitions and displays. Nillumbik is committed to supporting creativity in the Shire and making the experience of the arts accessible and inclusive.

2.2 Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Provide clear guidelines to Council to allow consistency and control over collection activities.
- Demonstrate accountability to ratepayers and residents in the professional management of Nillumbik Shire Council's collection.
- Demonstrate the application of best practice in art collection activities.
- Support the strategic growth of the art collection by addressing priority acquisition areas that supports local creative community and as identified in the Collection Significance Assessment Report (2022).
- Demonstrate the consideration of sustainability in art collection activities with respect to social, economic and environmental factors.
- To facilitate arts as an everyday experience through the acquisition of artworks into the Council Art Collection for public display, as well as other exhibition displays.

2.3 Principles

- Responsibility and accountability: The Nillumbik Shire Council Visual and Civic Art Collection is a public collection. Accordingly, it will be managed professionally in line with best practice curatorial industry standards. Acquisitions to the collection will be reviewed according to strict selection criteria.

- Respect: we actively listen and encourage all views, respecting our peers, our community and the environment.
- Equity and inclusion: Inclusion and diversity in cultural expression and artistic practice is a priority for the Art collection. Council is committed to making art experiences accessible and inclusive.
- Adaptability: we are responsive, agile and creative.
- Community: we build strong relationships that benefit our community and supports local arts practices

2.4 Strategic Alignment

- **Council Plan 2021-2025**

Strategic objective Place and Space: reinforcing character and encouraging social connections, celebrating and prioritising the Heritage, Arts and Culture, Places and Spaces by focusing on the diversity of experiences that have shaped our history.

- **Nillumbik Arts and Culture Strategy 2022-2026**

Goal 1: An Interconnected and Creative Community, Goal 2: A Visible and Supported Creative Community, Goal 3: Diverse and Resilient Creative Community, Goal 4: A Distinctively Nillumbik Creative Community.

3. Areas of Application

3.1 Acquisitions

Acquisitions to the collection can include purchases, commissions, donations, gifts or bequests.

Artworks eligible to be housed within the collection must meet all of the *Core acquisition criteria*, and one or more of the *Collection category criteria* relevant to either visual art, public art or the civic collection.

Core acquisition criteria

- Broadens the representation of art forms and artists in the collection, or aligns with and enhances similar works in the collection.
- A high calibre work of verifiable legal origin and provenance.
- A durable work in sound condition. If the work is not in good condition but it is significant for the collection, then its conservation has been budgeted and can be covered.
- Council has an ability to resource conservation, framing, presentation and storage of the artwork, or specific conditions that relate to the artwork.
- Council has the capacity to display the work in Council buildings or in public spaces without hindering public access or safety, nor breaching the artist's moral rights
- Does not breach principles and protocols that protect Indigenous cultural heritage.
- Is an unconditional acquisition.

Collection category criteria

Visual art collection

- An artwork that contributes to contemporary art practice and theory.
- An artwork that shows a verifiable connection with the Shire of Nillumbik.
- An artwork that consolidates and expands the range of art forms or artists represented in the collection.
- Is an original artwork or limited edition, signed and numbered by the artist (or of verifiable provenance).
- Aligns with priority acquisition areas as referenced in the *2022 Collection Significance Assessment Report*.

Public art collection

- A public artwork that contributes to contemporary art practice and theory.
- A public artwork that contributes to the unique cultural identity and history of the Shire of Nillumbik.
- A public artwork that creates a sense of place.
- A public artwork that contributes to cultural tourism.

Civic collection

- Memorabilia objects of significance, identifiably associated with the cultural and/or social history of the Shire of Nillumbik.
- Memorials and monuments created as artworks of excellence, for the purpose of commemorating an event or person.
- Memorabilia objects relating to the ongoing values and cultural policies of Nillumbik Shire Council.

Exclusions from Acquisition:

- Generic, decorative civic features, community art installations, other visual or public artworks, craft and memorabilia commissioned or purchased separate to the acquisition processes set out in the policy and guidelines, such works or items will not be housed in the collection. Accordingly, those works or items will remain the responsibility of the relevant installing and/or commissioning unit of Council.
- Certificates and other objects of appreciation and memorabilia gifted from community to Council are outside the scope of the collection and should be dealt with by the relevant business unit of Council.
- Street and office decorations.
- Artworks will not be accepted from current employees or Councillors of Nillumbik Shire Council, nor members of the Arts Advisory Committee.

Acquisition Process

1. Acquisition proposals, including donations through the Cultural Gifts Program, can be suggested through the designated Council Arts Officer
2. Acquisitions are proposed by the designated Council Arts Officer, with possible advice sought from industry professionals.

3. The designated Council Arts Officer presents the acquisition to the Arts and Cultural Advisory Committee for consideration, enabling specialist community participation in the development of the Art Collection.
4. The designated Council Arts Officer will complete an Acquisition Recommendation Report, which is to be endorsed by members of the Arts and Cultural Advisory Committee, to document this stakeholder involvement in the acquisition process.

Biennial Acquisitive Nillumbik Prize for Contemporary Art

The Nillumbik Prize for Contemporary Art is an acquisitive biennial award with an open prize (acquisitive) and a local prize (acquisitive).

The acquisitive nature of the prize will contribute to the Collection as an additional acquisition source. The Nillumbik Prize for Contemporary Art is judged by a panel of independent industry experts, followed by endorsement from the Arts and Cultural Advisory Committee. The formal acknowledgement process via delegated authority remains.

3.2 De-accessioning

Artworks may be de-accessioned from the collection as part of responsible collection management, on identification by the designated Council Arts Officer, and on recommendation by the Arts and Cultural Advisory Committee.

Note: Gifts made under the Cultural Gifts Program will not be returned to the donor if the donor has already received the benefit of tax deduction for the gift.

De-accessioning criteria

De-accessioning will follow the same approval requirements as for acquisitions and in compliance with following criteria:

- An item lost or stolen without possibility of recovery, or,
- An item that has suffered excessive or irreparable damage or deterioration, or,
- A change of circumstances has occurred in respect of an item, namely:
 - The site of a public artwork being no longer owned by Council, or is to be redeveloped for other purposes, and the artwork is unable to be relocated;
 - An artwork being unable to be adequately stored and/or restored or protected by Council; or,
 - An artwork being determined by the designated Council Arts Officer and on recommendation by the Arts Advisory Committee to be no longer relevant to the collection and/or falls outside the scope of this policy, subject to a probationary period of five years.

3.3 Loans

Council may agree to allow items from the Collection to be loaned out to external public galleries and institutions that are members of the Public Galleries Association Victoria (PGAV) for curated exhibitions. Loan applications will be assessed by the designated Council Arts Officer and decisions will be based on conditions ensuring the safety, security and appropriate display of the item(s) on loan. Refer to the *Art Collection Internal Operations Guidelines 2023-2026* for the list of conditions required for outward and inward loans.

3.4 Collection Management

Collection Management will adhere to industry best practices to ensure the Collections preservation and accessibility. Key components of collection management include:

- **Preventive Actions:** Proactive measures will be taken to prevent deterioration and damage, including maintaining suitable environmental conditions and implementing security measures.
- **Conservation Schedule and Operations:** A continuous conservation schedule will address routine cleaning, maintenance, and restoration efforts. Specialised conservation operations will address issues related to the physical condition, stability, and preservation of individual artworks.
- **Revaluation:** The Collection will be revalued every three years or on the recommendation of Council's Risk Advisor to inform decision-making on acquisitions and de-accessioning.
- **Display and Accessibility:** The collection is intended to be accessible to the community and to enhance awareness, understanding and appreciation of art through exhibition and display at publically accessible spaces in Council buildings. Not all artworks in the collection are appropriate for long-term display.
- **Public Engagement:** Consideration will be given to public engagements, including special events, community engagement initiatives, and educational programs.
- **Documentation and Cataloguing:** Comprehensive documentation and cataloguing will ensure accurate records of each artwork, including provenance, condition reports, and conservation work.
- **Research:** Academic and curatorial research into Collection items will be encouraged

4. Roles and responsibilities

- The collection is overseen by the designated Council Arts Officer.
- The Arts Advisory Committee provides a formal mechanism for Council to consult with key stakeholders and seek specialist advice in accordance with its Terms of Reference.
- The Designated Council Arts Officer will use the Collection Management System (CMS) to generate the information required by the Assets and Property unit of Council for Council's asset register.

5. Access, equity and inclusion impacts

The designated Council Arts Officer will actively consider how community members of various ages, abilities, cultural and gender identities, sexual orientation, religions, locations and social economic backgrounds might access policies, programs or services differently and if there are any barriers which may hinder these groups from accessing these policies, programs or services. The Officer will ensure practices are consistent and compatible with the [Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006](#) and the [Gender Equality Act 2020](#).

The designated Council Arts Officer will act to increase the inclusiveness of the collection and its accessibility. An important first step is to review existing data on artists represented in the collection and to expand the demographic data collected to include gender, pronouns, language groups etc. This will improve understanding of priority areas for representation within the collection and help to guide both displays and acquisitions. As part of this process, the designated Council Arts Officer will benchmark with other councils to ascertain what and how demographic data is collected, displayed and best practices. Labels, other collateral and published texts will be reviewed to improve representation and accessibility, for example by the inclusion of pronouns, language groups for First Nations artists and clear language.

The designated Council Arts Officer will address barriers to participation. In working with artists or donors, the Officer will provide assistance with paperwork and processes to increase accessibility. The Officer will be understanding of carer and family commitments when creating appointments and project timelines. The Officer will work to make the collection and processes increasingly accessible for CALD artists and communities. Financial barriers are also a key concern, and the designated Council Arts Officer will continue to review project budgets to ensure pay rates meet industry standards, and also explore ways in which to provide further assistance for artists.

6. Related external legislation and/or regulations

[Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006](#)

Sets out the protected rights of all people in Victoria as well as the corresponding obligations on the Victorian Government.

[First Peoples: A Roadmap for Enhancing Indigenous Engagement in Museums and Galleries 2018.](#)

The Australian Museums and Galleries Association 10-Year Indigenous Roadmap is committed to improving Indigenous engagement and employment. The Roadmap was developed for the museums and galleries sector, in consultation with the sector. It is built on 5 Key Elements for Change that highlight where and how the sector needs to improve. They are: Reimagining Representation, Embedding Indigenous values in museum and gallery practices, Increasing Indigenous opportunities, Two Way caretaking of cultural material, and Connection with Indigenous communities.

[Gender Equity Act 2020](#)

The Act commenced on 31 March 2021. It promotes gender equality by:

- Requiring the Victorian public sector, local councils and universities to take positive action towards achieving workplace gender equality.
- Requiring these organisations to consider and promote gender equality in their policies, programs and services.
- Establishing the Public Sector Gender Equality Commissioner to provide education, support implementation and enforce compliance.

[National Association for the Visual Arts, Code of Practice for Visual Arts, Craft and Design 2022.](#)

This Code of Practice sets out equitable, ethical and self-reflective standards for the professional Australian contemporary arts sector. The Code covers good practice approaches to working relationships, ethical standards of access and inclusion, and payment rates in the arts.

[National Association for the Visual Arts, Love your local: How visual artists, makers and designers can engage with local government, 2023.](#)

A toolkit to assist artists and designers engage with Local Government Authorities (LGAs). It discusses how artists can look to achieve creative and professional development goals, while also delivering on council policy goals.

[National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries, second edition, 2023.](#)

The National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries is a guiding document that outlines best practice in the museum and gallery sector.

7. Related Council policies, procedures and/or guidelines

- [Access, Equity and Inclusion Policy 2022-2025](#)
Public Art projects must comply with this policy due to their location in spaces accessible to the general public.
- [Arts and Cultural Advisory Committee Terms of Reference endorsed by Council 23 May 2023](#)
Public Art projects are developed in continuous consultation with Arts and Cultural Advisory Committees, providing a formal mechanism for Council to consult with key stakeholders and seek specialist advice.
- [Arts and Culture Strategy 2022-2026](#)
The PAC Policy aligns with Council's Arts and Culture Strategy.
- Art Guidelines 2023-2026
This document contains a set of internal operation guidelines to effectively implement the Art Policy.
- Art Policy 2023-2026
The Art Policy and the Public Art Policy share most of their core elements and they complement each other.
- [Council Plan 2021-2025](#)
The PAC Policy aligns with Council's principles.
- [Climate action Plan 2022-2032](#)
- [Customer First Strategy 2023-2026](#)
The ultimate beneficiary of the PAC is the public, including interactions with the community throughout extensive consultation.
- [Gender Equity Action Plan 2022-2025](#)
This plan is a reference to any public art selection process
- [Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025](#)
- [Procurement Policy 2021-2025](#)
A majority of processes that involve hiring services or products are aligned with Procurement Policy.
- Public Art Guidelines 2023-2026
This document contains a set of internal operation guidelines to effectively implement the Public Art Policy.

8. Definitions

Reference term	Definition
Acquisition	The process of ownership or custodianship of an asset, either by way of purchase, commission, donation, gift or bequest.
Civic objects	Objects of significance relating to the social and cultural history of the Shire of Nillumbik and of Council.
the Collection	All items housed in the Nillumbik Shire Art Collection. The collection has three categories: visual art, public art, and objects of civic significance.
Commonwealth Cultural Gifts program	A federal initiative that offers tax incentives to encourage people to donate cultural items to public art galleries, museums, libraries and archives in Australia.
Contemporary arts	Art of today, produced in the late-twentieth or by artists living in the twenty-first century comprising any arts discipline or form, including visual, literary and performing arts among others.
Creative Industries	Industries with a principal purpose relating to cultural, artistic and heritage goods and services.
Cultural heritage	Community expression of a way of living through artistic and cultural knowledge and customs passed from generation to generation.
Designated Council Arts Officer	Curator or designated member of the Council's Arts and Culture Development Team
De-accession	To dispose of a collection item, either by way of return, re-sale or donation.
Moral rights	The right of an artist to protect the integrity and ownership of their work.
Provenance	A record of ownership of a work of art.
Public arts	Any art/media intended for presentation in the public domain and accessible by all.
Sustainability	Activities that meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.
Visual arts	Arts that are appreciated through sight, such as painting, sculpture, film. Other art forms include ceramics, drawing, printmaking, design, crafts, photography and new media.