

# Mural guide

*When we lift each other, we can fly*, 2015,  
Hayley Welsh and Butler Primary School students,  
Butler Community Centre

## What is a mural?

The word mural originates from the Latin word “murus” meaning “wall”. A mural, by definition, is any piece of graphic artwork that is painted or applied directly to a wall, ceiling, or other permanent substrate.

## What is the purpose of murals?

The aim of murals is visual communication and, of course, to beautify and individualise places.

During the Mexican Muralism (including artists like Diego Rivera, Jose Clemente Orozco and David Alfaro Siqueiros), murals pushed those boundaries and gained a powerful new momentum in the communication of social and political messaging.

The City of Wanneroo likes to see murals that:

- are of high artistic quality and aesthetically pleasing
- include local artists and/or community
- celebrate local stories, history, people and places
- are treated so that they are robust in regards to vandalism.



*Together as One, 2023, James Giddy, Butler College, McCormack Blvd, Butler*

## What do you need to consider before mural making?

### Lifespan and ongoing maintenance

It's important to note, before embarking on commissioning a mural, that murals are regarded as temporary artworks and have a short life span estimated between five to a maximum of twelve years.

It's important to consider ongoing maintenance, whether the artist is local and wants a fee for touch-ups or whether they approve of someone else being contracted to do so. Also, if the mural gets chipped, damaged or covered in graffiti, is there ongoing budget for this maintenance?

## Extra costs

Please be aware that there are most likely extra costs involved in wall preparation beforehand and after the artwork is installed, including the application of an anti-graffiti/UV coating.

Wall preparation could be rendering the wall followed by at least two coats of an exterior undercoat. Allowing a decent amount of drying time between coats also adds to the life of the artwork and its durability.

## Temperature and paint quality

Murals should be painted when the temperature is **between 16 and 26 degrees Celsius** to gain the maximum in paint adhesion to the wall. This will give your artwork better longevity in the outside environment.

High quality exterior paints should be used and will give the best results.

## Safety of the artist

Consider the safety of the artist(s). If they require a ladder, scaffold or an elevated work platform (EWP), they may need a ticket for working at heights. If working in a busy traffic area, traffic management or a spotter may be needed to keep everyone safe and manage the queries from interested members of the public. If the area has a reputation for anti-social activity, the artist should not be left working alone.

## Copyright

It is important to know that the artist retains the copyright of the artwork and permission should be sought for reproduction of the image, particularly for merchandise and publications.

In any publicity or articles, the artwork should always be attributed to the artist.



*Layers of Country*, 2020, JD Penangke, Wellington Dam Viewing Platform, Collie

# What's involved in the mural commissioning process?

## Location

Identify a possible location. Consider that West or North facing walls in Perth may weather sooner than others. If the site is open to foot or vehicular traffic, it is less likely to be targeted by vandals than a site that is shaded by trees and bushes. Check sightlines to see that it is easily visible.

What is the surface? A mural can be applied to brick, metal, render or gyprock. Murals can also be painted on tin or on marine quality plyboard, painted indoors and then installed on site.

## Permission

Chat to the building owner and let the neighbours know what you are considering. Speak with the City's Arts Development Officer (ADO) for advice.

If it is a City of Wanneroo site, the design will need approval from the Director Community & Place. The Arts Development Officer will assist in facilitating this.

## Prepare a budget

Apply for funding or sponsorship and develop your budget.

Artist's rates of pay are available in the National Association for Visual Arts **Code of Practice for Visual Arts, Craft and Design** on their website. The artist's cost will depend on the experience of the artist as well as the size of the mural.

A community group which is incorporated can apply for the City's Community Funding. Please contact the Community Funding Officer on 9405 5338. Healthway, Lotterywest and the Department of Local Government, Sports & Cultural Industries may provide funding for public art mural projects. Or if you are a community group you could try philanthropic avenues.

## Finding an artist

Research and find an artist you'd like to work with. Most artists sign their work and might also include contact details or their website. Look at their previous murals. If you see a mural you are drawn to, it may be an artist you would like to use.

Either contact an artist directly or make an open call out and ask for Expressions of Interest (EOI). If you create an artist brief for the job, it will make your expectations clear to the artist(s). It may include the location (which they should visit), the type of paintable surface and its condition, the size of the paintable area, access, timeline, payment (if known), and make sure to include what artist insurances are needed. Compare and assess the artists' responses to make your choice.

Once you have selected an artist, create a written agreement with them. Due to the lifespan of murals, the artist agreement needs to address the issue of what happens when the mural needs to be revitalised or replaced. Ask the artist to come and visit the site and prepare a design concept. The artist can work with community members to develop the design and work with a few of them to paint the artwork. Some muralists, however, might prefer to not do this.

## Mural themes

Murals can be many themes in many different styles. They can reflect contemporary times, community identity, nature or history.

The City supports family friendly murals, not ones depicting unsightly imagery or negative, offensive messaging, sexualised content, illegal activities or violence, promoting unhealthy or illegal activities like smoking, alcohol consumption or drugs, or touting business logos, commercial publicity or advertising.

## Prepare the surface

Prepare the mural surface in preparation for the mural. This might include repairing brickwork, removing any flaking paint, treatment of moisture and/or rendering over bricks. Bricks are porous and will soak up the paint. We recommend rendering exposed bricks as smooth surfaces are easier to paint and the mural is easier on the eye to view. If you do not prepare the surface properly the mural's lifespan will be reduced.

## Install

This is the exciting part, where the artist paints the mural! This could take anywhere between three to 10 days, weather permitting.



*Life is like a Dream*, 2022, Hayley Welsh and Banksia Grove Primary School students, Peridot Park, Banksia Grove

## Protect the mural

Use an anti-graffiti/UV coating after the artwork is fully dry. Sometimes these coatings can bring a gloss to the mural. Read the data sheet carefully and/or try some on a small area first to judge the outcome.

There are two types of these coatings, sacrificial or non-sacrificial. In public areas non-sacrificial may be used but will need to be re-applied if damage occurs.

## Maintenance and repairs

Make sure the artist provides a maintenance manual with a list of colours used and associated technical sheets.

If there is damage to the mural, the artist should always be contacted first. If the artist is available and willing, they can arrange to repair the artwork for a fee. If they are unavailable, they should be able to recommend someone who can assist.

## Celebrate

Once the mural has been completed, celebrate it with the local community. Throw a street party or have a BBQ.

**If you are unsure about your project, please contact the City of Wanneroo Arts Development Officer for advice before commencing on 9405 5913.**



*The Old Wanneroo Road, 2007, Celestin Hutchinson, Carramar Community Centre*



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