



northern  
beaches  
council

## Public Art Trail for the Coastal Walkway



### Working Group Meeting #1

Wednesday 13 December 2017

Curl Curl Creative Space

## Summary Report

# Introduction

## Background

On 27 June 2017 the Northern Beaches Council Administrator pledged \$2 million over four years to create a Public Art Trail along the Connected Communities - Coastal Walkway from Palm Beach to Manly. A Council project team was established in October 2017 to develop a strategy and framework to deliver high quality public artworks at various sites along the walkway that reflect the cultural heritage and natural significance of the Northern Beaches coastline.

Extensive stakeholder engagement is being undertaken to inform the strategic direction and development of the project, including the establishment of a Public Art Trail Working Group, comprising members of the local arts community to assist Council to achieve the following outcomes:

- Develop a strategy to establish a clear vision and framework to deliver a Public Art Trail along the Coastal Walkway from Palm Beach to Manly
- Deliver a distinctive program of permanent and temporary public art outcomes that celebrate and reflect the cultural, social and environmental significance of the Coastal Walkway
- Enliven the Coastal Walkway with iconic works of public art that will contribute and enhance the character and design of memorable public spaces for visitors and the community
- Increase community involvement (and visitor numbers) along the Coastal Walkway
- Create a cultural connection for the Northern Beaches community along the Coastal Walkway through cultural programming, pop-ups and events associated with the Public Art Trail

Nominations were sought from the community in October and 13 applications were received. Three people withdrew upon learning they would be ineligible to apply for artists' commissions. Nine people were then invited to form a Working Group for the Public Art Trail project.

All nine members of the Working Group participated in the first meeting, held at Curl Curl Creative Space from 4-6.30pm, Wednesday 13 December 2017.

The Group included:

- A cross section of residents to represent the arts and culture sector (including those with experience in visual arts and gallery management, film and television, literature and publishing, community arts and events, art education and heritage)
- Representative(s) from the former Art, Culture & Heritage Strategic Reference Group
- Representative(s) from the business community
- Representative younger than 25 years

Council's internal project team were also in attendance. Staff attending included:

**Kylie Walshe**, Executive Manager Community, Arts & Culture, **Eilis O'Beirne**, Public Art Trail Project Manager, **Megan Treharne**, Public Art Trail Project Coordinator, **Michael Hedger**, Director Manly Art Gallery & Museum, **Gynt Drinan**, Connected Communities Coastal Pathway Project Manager, **Andrew Grocott** and **Lindy Riese**, Community Engagement.

### **Working Group purpose and meetings**

The Public Art Trail Working Group will meet every two months for the life of the project to:

- consider options and provide feedback to Council on matters relating to the development of a strategy for the Public Art Trail for the Coastal Walkway being built between Manly and Palm Beach
- represent the views of the local arts community in relation to public art outcomes along the Coastal Walkway and to support engagement between the arts community, the broader community and other important stakeholders, with an interest in the Public Art Trail's development
- assist Council to develop, design and implement strategies and plans for the Public Art Trail; and to provide feedback on public art project ideas (both temporary and permanent) for artworks placed along the Coastal Walkway.

# Working Group Outputs

## Meeting #1 Overview

Kylie Walshe, Executive Manager Community, Arts & Culture welcomed the Working Group and invited the community members and Council's project team to introduce themselves and give a short summary of their past and current experience in the arts and what they will be bringing to the Public Art Trail project.

The Working Group members were then briefed on: their roles and responsibilities within the framework of the project; the Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct for the group; and the Connected Communities Coastal Walkway project – as the context for the Public Art Trail.

The need to develop a strategic plan to achieve the project's outcomes was presented and discussed.

<b>The Strategic Plan</b> A roadmap for the Public Art Trail project				
Guiding Principle	Objective	Priority	Action	Outcome
Promote high quality public art on the Northern Beaches	Activate the Coastal Walkway through public art and create a cultural connection for the community	Engage with the community about cultural matters and significant places associated with the Coastal Walkway	Culturally map the coastline along the walkway, to recognise and acknowledge the environmental, social, cultural and Indigenous heritage of the Northern Beaches	Develop place-based artistic briefs and initiate partnerships with artists to implement the objectives of the Public Art Trail
<b>Output</b> A comprehensive strategic plan and framework for Council to deliver a vibrant and connected trail of outstanding public art along the Coastal Walkway				

## Working Group Outputs (cont.)

### Meeting #1 Overview (cont.)

The Working Group was then invited to participate in a facilitated group activity around a 3m colour aerial photograph of the Northern Beaches coastline - to conceptualise and brainstorm what a Public Art Trail could look like along the proposed route of the Coastal Walkway.

Three key aspects of the project were explored:

<b>Conceptual Activity: 'What will the Public Art Trail look like'</b>	
<b>The Vision</b>	Curatorial Narrative – what story will it tell? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Opportunities / Themes / Contexts</li><li>• The Experience</li></ul>
<b>The Artworks</b>	What sort of artworks will be created? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sculpture</li><li>• Curated Design or Landscape Elements e.g. outdoor furniture / lighting / fences / paving / bubblers</li><li>• Temporary Installations / Outdoor Exhibitions &amp; Performances</li><li>• Street Art / Murals / Guerrilla Art e.g. yarn / flower bombing</li><li>• Community Art-Making Events</li></ul>
<b>Special Places and Significant Spaces</b>	Assessing significance and appropriate sites for artwork considering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The natural environment</li><li>• Our cultural heritage</li><li>• Indigenous voices</li><li>• Current uses e.g. surf clubs</li></ul>

Working Group members were asked to capture their responses to the conceptual questions and group discussions through post-it notes. These were collected by the project team and read out for further group discussion and then were placed within the context of the three key project areas. (See Appendix)

## Working Group Outputs (cont.)

### Findings and Results

Four key quotes that reflected important and passionate discussions about the conceptual drivers of the project were captured in the meeting:

<b>Key Quotes: 'What will the Public Art Trail look like'</b>	
<b><i>'Define our places, tell our stories'</i></b>	Land on a powerful overarching narrative for the trail – a curatorial vision that connects the community, their places and the art experiences they will encounter
<b><i>'Explore and reflect on the culture of the Northern Beaches'</i></b>	Use the opportunity to create/acquire artwork that truly reflects the unique culture of the Northern Beaches
<b><i>'Compliment not compete with the natural environment'</i></b>	Carefully map and scope the coastline, engaging with key stakeholders to assess each area for significance and select the most appropriate sites to place artwork within the natural coastal environment
<b><i>'Have a strong, local creative contribution'</i></b>	Engage with the local arts community, cultural groups, creative arts educators and their students, and invite them to participate in the project - to activate the coastal walkway by utilising its spaces and sites for their art making, performances and cultural activities

Key messages to emerge from the facilitated group activity (post-it notes and discussions) conceptualising the project include:

<b>Key Conceptual Messages: 'What will the Public Art Trail look like'</b>
<p><b>Develop a narrative</b> for the Public Art Trail - a curatorial thread to connect the art along the Coastal Walkway</p> <p><b>CONNECTION</b> was the consistent and overwhelming narrative theme to emerge from the post-it notes and discussions</p>
<p><b>Create a brand</b> – a unique cultural identity for the Coastal Walkway to promote what will be a distinctive and memorable experience – encountering outstanding public artworks whilst walking along the spectacular coastline of the Northern Beaches</p>
<p><b>Establish the Coastal Walkway Public Art Trail as the focus for local arts and cultural activities.</b> Make coastal places and spaces available for community-based arts events and cultural activities (especially youth and K-12 curricula). Lead the way with Council-generated arts and culture events along the walkway</p>
<p><b>Focus on the Indigenous history</b> of the coastline and invite the Aboriginal community to participate</p>
<p><b>Do not interfere with the natural environment</b> or compete with iconic coastline views</p>
<p>Take a <b>place-based approach</b> to commissioning the artworks, that specifically responds to the history and stories of each site/place</p>
<p><b>Include temporary and ephemeral work</b> and works that are interactive and immersive</p>
<p>Create design briefs for <b>artists to produce customised seating, lighting, bubblers, handrails and landscaping elements</b></p>
<p><b>Map the sites appropriate for artwork along the walkway</b> considering all elements of significance e.g. environmental, cultural, social, historic and current uses, including an audit of the existing public art</p>
<p><b>Benchmark</b> – research successful public art trails and sculpture parks around the world to create the best possible model and framework for the Northern Beaches Public Art Trail</p>

### **Wrap up and next steps**

The first meeting of the Public Art Trail Working Group captured valuable information about the community's vision and expectations for the project. The group's individual comments, lively discussions and wide-ranging ideas and suggestions have provided a consistent set of shared priorities and a clear artistic direction to follow as Council begins the work of preparing a strategic plan, cultural scoping study and implementation framework for the Public Art Trail for the Coastal Walkway.

The Working Group will meet again on **Thursday 15 February 2018** to provide feedback and ideas on the project's next steps.

Megan Treharne  
Project Coordinator, Public Art Trail for the Coastal Walkway  
30 January 2018

## **APPENDIX**

### **POST-IT NOTES collected and recorded from:**

Public Art Trail Working Group – Inaugural Meeting

Date/Time: Wednesday 13 December 2017, 4.30-6pm

Venue: Curl Curl Creative Space

### **THE VISION - The Public Art Trail should:**

Connect a completely new community

Create connection for the community from Manly to Palm Beach

Enhance the walkway experience and the experience of visiting the coast and the northern beaches

Walkway needs a recognisable name – a ‘brand’ to promote the experience and the art trail

Art Trail should link places and communities

Artworks/Sculptures should be temporary – none should be permanent

Art work materials need to relate to the natural environment

Include sculptural seating

Artistic utilitarian street furniture/lighting/bbqs/walls/fences/etc

Seating as artwork

Lovely seating

Should the sculptures be permanent?? Need an agreed lifespan

Discreet sculpture, don't compete with the views

What's the narrative – the art trail needs a narrative

The Vision should align with the culture of the Northern Beaches

Designed and integrated interpretive/directional/place signage – should include the Aboriginal/Indigenous names of each place

Community engagement and events around the construction and installation of artworks

Showcase local authors/poets/writers – using quotations on signs or on the pathway

Manly Village – artworks and signage should explore 1) commercial history 2)

tourism and holidaymaker history 3) changing face of resident population since white settlement

Initiate an acquisitive Northern Beaches sculpture prize to unite the Northern Beaches

Provide art making opportunities for K-12 students on the Northern Beaches – engage with public and private school students from Manly to Avalon

Commissions for local artists

Artworks should reframe a view or experience along the walkway

Curated project

Framework should include an annual opportunity for a curator to select and commission work

Artworks should be rotational – not permanent

Install both permanent and ephemeral work

Relate to the coast and the horizon

Inspirational, thoughtful and contemplative

Visually complimentary to the environment

Relevant to the site

Context for ideas on sculpture

Thematic Project

Interactive

Night and Day works  
Migration, Indigenous and non-Indigenous histories  
Individual experience made miniature  
Capturing the experience of the immensity of nature  
Indigenous Dreaming – with permission and consultation  
Sculpture that draws attention to an aspect of each site ie. social, cultural, natural environment, flora and fauna  
Environmental themes  
Use recycled materials  
Forces of Nature – water, wind, rain, sea, light  
Organic – use natural materials  
Tactile and Immersive experiences  
Unexpected connections  
Shake up and challenge the community's concept of what art is  
Impactful 'wow'  
High impact 'wow factor'  
Work must be substantial  
Iconic artwork  
Cultural theme to link the works  
Privilege the elements – wind and waves  
Manly – aspirations / construction boom in the 1920s / dreams of independence  
Community focused  
Ephemeral  
Weaving and nature art  
Statement pieces on headlands  
Not competing with the landscape or the seascape  
Concentrated sculpture walks in smaller section – Curl Curl to Freshwater  
Establish a section (gathering place) along the walkway that is set up for light-based artworks – to participate in events like Vivid or Earth Hour  
Artworks that speak to children  
**THE VISION - The Public Art Trail should not include:**  
Plonk art or baubles  
Environmental destruction  
Rusted steel  
Large abstracts – art for art's sake  
Irrelevant art  
Don't clutter the coast with sculpture  
Don't want to see cafes, commercial spaces or garbage along the walkway  
Not be a facsimile of Sculpture By The Sea  
Northern Beaches Public Art Trail should not be the same as other art trails – it should have its own Northern Beaches brand

## **THE ARTWORKS**

[Storm King – NY](#)

[Gibbs Farm - NZ](#)

Multimedia

Works that creep up on you

Landmark artworks interspersed with more discreet ones

Surf clubs – transform their infrastructure ie. bollards, toilet blocks, walls with street art/murals)

Include work by recognisable Australian sculptors

Place-based artworks

## **SPECIAL AND SIGNIFICANT PLACES**

Competitive sculpture event at Curl Curl associated with the Creative Space

One artwork that appears over several sites – linking the headlands up to Palm

Beach perhaps eg. Story of the whale migration or a relevant Indigenous story

Artwork installed in the middle of Dee Why Lagoon

Shelly Beach – highly significant and very accessible

Palm Beach – Governor Phillip Park on the way to Barrenjoey Lighthouse

Long Reef

Bilgola Headland

Bangalley Headland (Avalon) – a natural gathering place for young people, evokes a conversation about mental health

South Avalon Headland – a sunrise spot - very popular morning hangout for young people and surfers – a small delicate glass installation using the natural light of the sun

Repurpose existing sites that are not working – that need help to become places

Narrabeen Beach (the surf beach not near the lagoon entrance) – accessible and highly significant

Manly Beach – commemorating shipwrecks and WWII fortifications, not along the beach front...closer to the Corso

Manly Oval

Narrabeen Lagoon (western shore)

Bungan Headland – speaking to the extant stone work

Long Reef Headland

Fisherman's Beach (White Rock)

Shelley Beach – former fisherman's lookout

Collaroy Beach – rising sea levels

Sites that highly significant to the Indigenous people should be highlighted

The beginning and the end of the Coast Walk – significant works that are linked

Don't be prescriptive – let artists choose the exact site where they want to install their work – provide a general area for them to respond to

An artwork that connects all the villages, beaches and suburbs along the walkway

Artwork that follows the colour of the sea as it changes along the beaches

No sculpture on the beach EVER – nearby is ok

Opposite 'the Castle' in Newport

Curl Curl

Freshwater