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Publicart Works

Evaluating public art in the development application process

Public art is booming. More and more local councils are demanding public art in private development and require developers to deliver this as part of the DA process. Public art is part of the emerging Australian dream that see people living and loving their street, and wanting the built environment to embody their cultural identity and lifestyle. Now, we find public art very much embedded as a cultural activation and urban design tool, paid for by government and also mandated for the private sector, with artists at the forefront of the design and building of landmarks, memorials, architectural facades, street furniture and a raft of placemaking features.

Most large Council's in Sydney require a public art contribution for developments valued over \$5-\$10m depending on the LGA. Some regional councils also now nudge the developer for a contribution, but the compliance requirements vary enormously. Some wield big sticks, some wield little, and some Council's don't know what they need to be doing. As more councils introduce art as a requirement of a development, the compliance landscape will become more specialized. Local government planners who have to regulate developer-led public art need to know how to assess a Public Art Plan submitted with a DA, provide feedback on artwork concepts for construction certification, then be able to evaluate how well, if at all, artwork has been delivered for Occupation Certification.

This workshop will provide examples of Council policies and test cases showing how high quality public art finds its way through the compliance landscape. It will compare the compliance requirements of three councils Sydney City, Ryde, and Byron Shire, and show images of public art from DA through to completion. Different LGA's have different opportunities and capacities and the workshop will assist as an educational process for both Councils and developers.