9.4 LEEDERVILLE PUBLIC ARTWORK

Attachments: **Nil**

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council APPROVES Nuanced Encounters public artwork remaining at Lot 3 (on P63619) Oxford Street, Leederville.

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To seek Council approval for the Nuanced Encounters public artwork to remain permanently on Lot 3 Oxford Street, Leederville (lot 3 on P63619) land known as the pedestrian laneway on the Water Corporation easement.

DELEGATION:

Council previously resolved to endorse the Nuanced Encounters artwork and consequently approved the location for this artwork. While Council has previously contemplated the revised location a formal resolution to approve the location has not previously been sought.

BACKGROUND:

Council at its 30 March 2020 Special Council Meeting (Item 6.2), approved the release of $500,000 from the City's Percent for Art cash-in-lieu reserve to develop projects that provide local artists and creative industries relief from the impact of COVID-19.

Council at its 15 September 2020 meeting (Item 9.4), endorsed the City of Vincent Rebound Plan (Item 9.4) which referenced Phase 2 (Major Public Artwork) of the COVID-19 Arts Relief Grant funding.

Council at its 22 June 2021 meeting (Item 9.3), endorsed the Arts Rebound: Town Centre Artworks Express of Interest with artworks proposed for the Leederville and William Street town centres.

Council at its 14 December 2021 meeting (Item 9.8), endorsed a concept design proposal by Adam Cruickshank for the Nuanced Encounters public artwork to be located on the median strip in Leederville Village Square (Newcastle Street) with a contract executed in 2022.

Council at its 22 December 2022 meeting (Item 9.7), endorsed relocating the public artwork eastward to the next section of the median strip within Leederville Village Square. This change was made to address turning circle issues by large vehicles and buses at the originally approved location.

At the 25 February 2025 Council Workshop, officers updated Council on a number of unforeseen issues that had emerged at the approved median strip location which affected the feasibility and timing of the artwork installation. These issues included:

- Additional height clearance to accommodate the Public Transport Authority's electric bus fleet;
- Delays in obtaining Western Power approval for the installation of the required power supply;
- The discovery of an underground fire hydrant line that was not identified in Dial Before You Dig records further complicating the footing and artwork design; and
- Ongoing costs for the storage of the completed artwork.

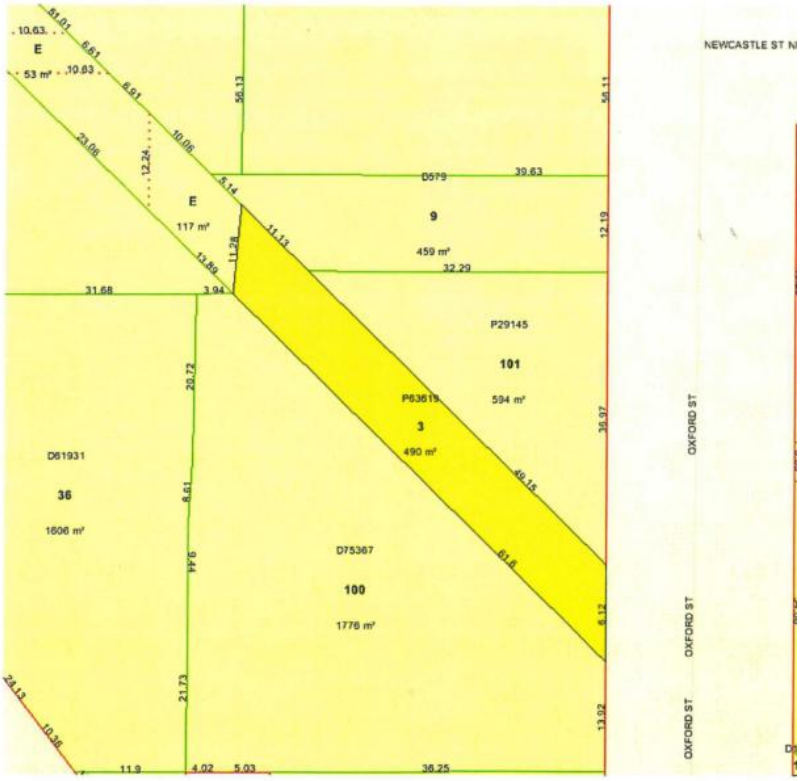
As the artwork had already been fabricated and the storage facility was due to close, officers proposed temporarily installing the artwork in an alternate location while the median strip issues were resolved. Council supported this approach.

DETAILS:

Investigating Alternate Locations

Following the February 2025 Council Workshop, Administration investigated alternate locations identifying the Oxford Street entrance to the pedestrian laneway, located on the Water Corporation main drain easement, as the preferred location (as illustrated on the map below).

The subject land is located at Lot 3, Oxford Street, Leederville and is described as Lot 3 on Deposited Plan 63619 is owned by the Water Corporation and forms part of their broader drainage system. The City has a License which commenced 1 July 2001 for a period of 99 years which grants the City use of the land for the purpose of a pedestrian access way as shown in the image below as '3' and in a brighter yellow colour.



Administration subsequently undertook detailed site investigations and coordinated the installation planning with the artist. This work confirmed the suitability of the site and enabled the finalisation of the artwork installation methodology. This process also included confirmation from Water Corporation that the artwork installation was in line with the 99-year license agreement.

In April 2025, the public artwork was installed in the laneway location. Due to Water Corporation's easement protecting the underground main drain, above-ground foundations were required. This approach provides flexibility should the City determine that the artwork requires relocation in the future.

The laneway location provided several benefits, including:

- Allowing the artwork to be publicly displayed rather than remaining in storage while a permanent location was considered.
- Utilising existing power infrastructure to support the artwork's lighting.
- Minimising disruption, with no road closures required and reduced traffic management requirements through Kailis' provision of access to its adjacent carpark.
- Creating an entry statement to the laneway from Oxford Street, drawing attention to the area and supporting future aspirations to improve the laneway and surrounding development.

To expand on the final point, Action 4.5 of the Leederville Town Centre Place Plan identifies the Water Corporation Main Drain Corridor as a key pedestrian connection that will become more important through the Frame Court and The Avenue redevelopments, and specifically references the Nuanced Encounters public artwork, lighting and planter boxes as a "catalyst for further improvements". The artwork in this laneway location supports the Place Plan's vision for a pedestrian focused connection between Oxford Street and The Avenue car park.

The public artwork has now been located within the laneway for over 15 months and has been well received by the community with no complaints received although minor graffiti has occurred on the above-ground foundations. The artwork has also contributed to activation of the town centre, with community members using the central foundation as informal seating throughout the day and night.

Long-term location considerations

The installation of the artwork at the laneway location provided an opportunity to assess the suitability of the site while avoiding further delays associated with the original median strip location. The trial period has demonstrated that the artwork can be successfully accommodated within the laneway, with positive community response and no significant operational issues identified.

Council is now able to consider the long-term location of the artwork, including retaining the artwork at the current laneway location or relocating it back to the median strip within Leederville Village Square. The implications of each option are outlined below:

- **Option 1 – Retain artwork at laneway location (recommended)**

  Retaining the artwork at the laneway location would allow the City to formalise the existing installation and complete minor improvements to enhance the presentation and functionality of the space. With reference to the License agreement, Water Corporation have confirmed that the artwork, where it is currently installed, can remain long term.

  Should Council endorse the laneway location as the permanent location, Administration will progress project close-out activities, including documenting lessons learned and recommendations to inform future public art commissions.

  The temporary electrical connection will be upgraded to a permanent connection at the laneway location, including concealing cabling. The current arrangement has been established as a temporary solution while the location was being assessed.

  Minor improvements will also be investigated and delivered, including formalising seating opportunities on the central foundation and applying paint and anti-graffiti coating to all three concrete bases.

- **Option 2 – Relocate artwork to median strip within Leederville Village Square**
  Should Council determine that the artwork should be relocated to the median strip within Leederville Village Square, significant additional design, approval and construction works would be required, including:
  - Engagement with the artist, surrounding businesses and Leederville Connect Town Team.
  - Redesign of the footing system, including approvals from ATCO and Water Corporation for clearance from underground services, as well as structural engineering certification. This would be challenging due to the location of existing underground services and significant tree roots. Above-ground foundations are not considered suitable for the median strip location.
  - Redesign of the artwork, including potential pole height modifications, adjustments associated with the footing design, structural engineering certification and approval from Main Roads WA.

- Western Power approval for the unmetered power supply, which would require a minimum approval timeframe of three months and incur a minimum cost of $2,000. This process would only commence once a decision is made to relocate the artwork to the median. This process had previously commenced with no connection approved in the two year period between lodgement and the decision to consider an alternate site.
- Public notification of upcoming works.
- Removal of the artwork from the laneway location, making good the laneway location after removal.
- Transport to the artist's studio for any pole and artwork modifications.
- Transport to the median strip and installation of the footings and artwork at the new location.
- Traffic management requirements associated with the removal, transport and installation of the artwork.

CONSULTATION/ADVERTISING:

Prior to the artwork being installed at the laneway, engagement took place with the artist, surrounding businesses, Leederville Connect Town Team, and design review sought from the Design Review Panel.

The artist supported installation at the laneway with a far less complex installation methodology, approvals and traffic management requirements than the Newcastle Street median location. He also preferred to have the artwork publicly displayed rather than in storage.

Surrounding businesses had no issues with the installation and were pleased to see investment and enhancement in the area.

The Leederville Connect Town Team supported the laneway location and prefer it to the median location initially proposed. At the median location, the artwork would impede on their use of the Leederville Village Square for events. Having the artwork at the laneway location is in keeping with the town team's masterplans for the area and longer-term intention to enhance the laneway.

Design input was provided by Simon Venturi, former Arts Advisory Group member and current Design Review Panel Chairperson. Simon was also an assessment panel member for this artwork commission originally. Simon supported the intended approach and has continued to assist on finer details.

LEGAL/POLICY:

Arts Plan 2023-2028 Objective 3: *We work towards injecting creativity into all our public spaces, to showcase art and culture and deliver thriving places*

Arts Collection Policy Objective 2 states that we aim to: *Enrich our public spaces and community facilities with bold, innovative, and creative artworks, that enhance Vincent's identity and make arts and culture accessible to all.*

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Low: It is low risk for Council to approve the pedestrian laneway as the permanent location for the Nuanced Encounters public artwork as the location has improved the amenity of this key pedestrian corridor, resulted in the installation of a significant artwork contributing to the City's public art collection and being well received by the community. The alternative location was able to be delivered more expediently and at a reduced cost than initially considered.

Reputational Risk

Risk Category	Risk Appetite/Tolerance Statement	Descriptor/Clarification
Activity risking long-term values or reputation of Council	*The City has **zero risk appetite** in any activity that will put its long-term values or reputation at risk.*	

Relocating the artwork at this point would incur additional costs and may not result in an improved outcome to the broader community.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS:

This is in keeping with the City's *Strategic Community Plan 2022-2032*:

Connected and Healthy Community

We have enhanced opportunities for our community to build relationships and connections with each other and the City.

Thriving Places

Our town centres and gathering spaces are safe, easy to use and attractive places where pedestrians have priority.

Art, history and our community's living cultures are evident in the public realm.

Sensitive Design

Our built form is attractive and diverse, in line with our growing and changing community.

More people living in and working in or enjoying our town centres.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS:

Sustainable Vincent Framework

This does not contribute to any specific sustainability outcomes of the Sustainable Vincent Framework, however making the laneway location permanent would avoid any further works and materials.

PUBLIC HEALTH IMPLICATIONS:

This is in keeping with the following priority health outcomes of the City's *Public Health Plan 2026-2031*:

Increased mental health and wellbeing

Increased physical activity

FINANCIAL/BUDGET IMPLICATIONS:

If Council approves the public artwork to be located in the laneway permanently, there are no further associated project costs. Any minor improvements would be funded through the existing Arts Plan Implementation budget.

ITEM	APPROX. COST
Permanent electrical installation	$1,500
Formalised seating on the central footing	$10,000
Mural artwork and anti-graffiti coating to footings	$6,000
TOTAL	**$17,500**

If Council were to relocate the artwork back to the previous median location, exact figures are not known but the following table provides estimates. Additional budget would need to be sought at the Mid-year budget review to accommodate this approach.

ITEM	APPROX. COST
Redesign of footings and structural certification	$5,000
Redesign and modification of artwork, and structural certification	$10,000
Western power approval, installation of power supply, connection of artwork	$16,000
Artwork removal, transport and install (labour)	$19,000
Traffic management for artwork removal, transport and install	$9,000
TOTAL	**$59,000**

COMMENTS:

Whilst the Nuanced Encounters public artwork was initially installed in the laneway as an interim solution, it has proven to be a well-suited location over the last 15 months. In this location the artwork achieves the artistic, cultural and place outcomes that the project set out to achieve, and people are able to view and engage with the artwork up close without the dangers of being on a road. The location also supports the Leederville Town Centre Place Plan's vision for a pedestrian focused connection between Oxford Street and The Avenue car park.

The median location presents several complex issues to be resolved for installation, and with associated costs the endeavour to relocate the artwork is deemed disproportionate to the outcome it would achieve.

In addition, the median is in close proximity to another public artwork *Downlounge* by Midnight Tuesday.