

# **Domestic and Family Violence Memorial Garden Public Art Commission Artist's Brief**

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### **Blacktown Showground - Artist's Brief**

#### **Introduction to the project**

Blacktown City Council is seeking expressions of interest from experienced artists for an integrated art commission for a new Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) memorial garden, provisionally called Showground Memorial Grove, currently being designed for Blacktown Showground.

#### **The site**

##### Blacktown Showground

The Blacktown Showground precinct (Francis Park) is located at the corner of Richmond Road and Balmoral Road and incorporates sports fields, children's play areas, a community garden and café, amongst other things. Please see <https://www.blacktown.nsw.gov.au/Sport-and-recreation/Parks-and-recreation-directory/Blacktown-Showground-Precinct-Francis-Park> for further information and a map.

The Showground is open to the public during daylight hours and locked between sunset and sunrise.

##### The DFV memorial garden

The chosen site for the DFV memorial garden (selected in consultation with local families of women from the City who have lost their lives as a result of domestic and family violence) is a raised area inside the Showground, currently landscaped with trees and mulch. (See Appendix A for site map and initial designs for the DFV memorial garden.)

The initial garden designs include a sandstone path leading up to a circular slab of sandstone at the centre of the site surrounded by seating. The current design options show either a space at the centre of the sandstone ring for an artwork (option 1) or a tree (option 2); however, we are open to alternative proposals from artists, which may include collaboration with the BCC landscape architect on seating and landscaping, for example.

## **Art commission brief - vision, purpose, audience and design considerations:**

### Vision:

To create a place of comfort and healing that:

- reflects the experiences of those affected by family and domestic violence
- recognises and acknowledges the impact of domestic and family violence in our community
- conveys hope, optimism and lightness

### Purpose:

A 'living' multi-use space for:

- private reflection,
- small community gatherings (larger community events will likely take place on adjacent lawn and proposed stage at eastern end of lawn)
- honouring, telling stories and remembering,
- commemorating the traumatic impact of family and domestic violence on individuals, families and communities,
- raising awareness and furthering the dialogue for understanding and change.

### Objectives:

- provide a safe space for reflection, comfort and healing for survivors,
- create an inclusive place that welcomes diversity, enables gatherings and participatory activities, and encourages people to connect positively around the issue,
- raise awareness and understanding in the broader community and further the dialogue for creating change,
- acknowledge and commemorate the traumatic impact on individuals, families and communities and express community support,
- give a powerful public profile to the vision of a future free from family and domestic violence.

### Audience:

Whilst it is envisaged that the primary users of the DFV garden will be: survivors of family and domestic violence, family members, friends and communities of people who are affected, the garden will be open and accessible to the broader community whenever the Showground is open



to the public (Summer: December to February: 7.00 am to 7.30 pm, Autumn: March to May: 7.00 am to 6.30 pm, Winter: June to August: 7.00 am to 5.30 pm, Spring: September to November: 7.00 am to 6.30 pm)

#### Garden design considerations (for any collaboration with the landscape architect only)

In consultation with family members and friends of women who have died as a result of domestic violence, to create a:

- place of peace, safety, reflection and healing
- accessible, welcoming and inclusive space for all ages, women and men, young people and children
- natural environment inviting all the senses
- place of comfort, security and amenity
- creative and symbolic space
- positive, celebratory, uplifting and compassionate place
- sense of openness and freedom (not hidden or closed) while still enabling a sense of privacy to encourage peaceful contemplation.

#### Artwork design considerations:

It is envisaged that the artwork be a permanent subject-sensitive sculptural work that provides a focus for contemplation and reflection on domestic and family violence in Blacktown and around the globe. This focus might be visual and/or sound (e.g. wind chimes) and might include still water, budget permitting. The exact form and materials are open for artists to suggest, as long as they are achievable within the allocated budget (see below for breakdown); however, there is a preference for natural materials and curvilinear forms.

The artwork(s) might be integrated into the soft or hard landscaping of the memorial garden and/or installed independently into the centre of the sandstone ring, as mentioned above, and/or installed in and/or around the surrounding trees.

The artwork may also be interactive or involve the participation of the public or relevant invited audiences i.e. DFV affected families, including Darug and First Nations Communities.



The work should be designed for permanent installation outside and be inclusive and accessible to people of all ages and abilities. It should also be made of durable and robust materials suitable for the local climate that require minimal maintenance.

Please note: There is currently no running water or electricity at the garden site and noise from the nearby basketball court and railway line may need to be taken into consideration, for instance, if a sound work is proposed.

### DFV Memorial design considerations

Consultation with families on the art commission working group led to a request for the lives of those lost as a result of DFV to be acknowledged in the garden in some way, ideally through a design element/symbols, rather than through names or initials, that can be added to the garden over time. The artist(s) will need to discuss and agree (with the landscape architect and working group) how and where this can be done and whether this forms part of the artwork and/or part of the landscape design.

Further consultation should also be undertaken by the artist with stakeholders, in particular DFV affected families, including Darug and First Nations communities.

**Expected lifespan of artwork:** permanent (20 + years)

See attached Blacktown City Council Maintenance Policy and Maintenance Schedule template.

### **Art commission process and timescale:**

Artists shortlisted and notified: late July

Shortlisted artists site visit, meeting with Working Group and families: end of July

Artist interviews and initial concept design presentation to Working Group: late August

Selected artist notified and contracted: end of August

Concept design development: September

Concept design presentation and feedback: October

Detailed design development: October - November

Final design sign-off: end of November

Commission production: December 2021 - January 2022

Commission installation: February

Note: there is the possibility of a commission related event on Thurs 25 November, to tie in with the first day of 16 days of activism against gender-based violence (see

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/end-violence-against-women>)

Other key dates i.e. press interview and photo call, public workshops, evaluation, etc. TBC



## **Art commission budget:**

The garden is being funded by a grant from Federal Government's Local Roads and Community Infrastructure program with additional donations from Councillors for this art commission.

A total budget of approximately \$55,000 is available for this commission, inclusive of GST and expenses. It is anticipated that the budget be broken down as follows:

### Stage 1

Artist initial concept design fee: \$1,000

Artist concept design development fee: \$2,000

### Stage 2

Artist detailed design fee: \$4,000

Artist commission fee: \$8,000

Artwork production expenses (incl. materials, equipment, fabricator/manufacturer/supplier costs, staffing e.g. installation, security, etc.): \$40,000

## **Shortlisting process:**

Three artists will be shortlisted and invited to submit initial concept designs by the end of August 2021. There will be a fee of \$1000 per artist for this stage.

## **Shortlisting criteria:**

### Creative

- quality of artistic merit and the concept (originality, impact, magical/wow factor, etc.) of previous work
- relevance of previous work to this commission

### Practical

- proven track record in producing relevant work (i.e. using natural materials and/or for gardens/other outdoor spaces, etc.)



- ability/experience in cross disciplinary collaboration (ideally working with landscape architects)
- ability/experience in community consultation and/or engagement
- ability and experience of working with government and in consultation with working groups
- ability/experience in project management
- availability and location of artist, in relation to site of commission
- ability to work within timescales and budget on previous projects
- risks and ability to manage risks e.g. extent to which health and safety considerations were addressed
- extent to which EOI requirements are met (e.g. public liability and professional indemnity insurance, etc)

#### **Selection criteria:**

##### Creative

All of the points listed above as practical criteria for shortlisting will continue to apply as well as:

- appropriate and relevant response to the brief and the sensitive topic of DFV and current discourse around this important issue
- extent to which proposal is site-specific in an appropriate and relevant manner (i.e. is integrated into the fabric of the DFV memorial landscape design and wider Blacktown Showground park)
- quality of practical and other design considerations e.g. quality of design and execution (quality of proposed materials and extent to which these compliment materials used in the DFV memorial landscape design and surrounding natural environment of the Showground park and experience of proposed fabricators/manufacturers, if applicable)

##### Practical

All of the points listed above as practical criteria for shortlisting will continue to apply, as well as:

- extent to which contract requirements are met (e.g. public liability and professional indemnity insurance, etc)



- extent to which budget is realistic in relation to artist's proposal and ability to work within budget
- ability to work within project timescale
- extent to which artist's proposal creates employment and development opportunities for other artists and creatives especially local, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, to flourish and engage more fully with the community (Artists can propose to collaborate with other artists/community members.)
- maintenance considerations and quality of maintenance plan (Are resources required affordable and attainable?)

In accordance with BCC's Public Art Policy, Public Art Commissioning and Approval Procedures, the Council supports artwork which:

- is integrated into the fabric of the city in ways that reflect, respond and give meaning to the City's unique environment, history and culturally diverse society
- achieves excellence, innovation and diversity in the design and aesthetic of the City's public domain
- contributes to the City as a creative environment
- provides opportunities for artists, especially local and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, to flourish and engage more fully with the community
- supports artists to contribute to the design and development of the public domain by collaborating with other artists as well as architects, landscape architects, urban designers and planners in relevant BCC capital works projects
- includes the City's diverse communities in creative planning processes to encourage civic pride and a distinct local character
- increases community understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of public art
- creates a Blacktown specific and suburb specific sense of place
- encourages artists to question, comment on and provide diverse and respectful representations of the City's communities
- creates employment and development opportunities for artists
- enhances and links open space areas through art and culture.



Approval criteria:

BCC will only approve artworks which:

- have high artistic merit, originality and relevance to Blacktown
- are relevant and appropriate to the proposed site
- comply with current Council planning instruments including BCC's Strategic Plan 2021-2024 (<https://www.blacktown.nsw.gov.au/About-Council/What-we-do/Community-Strategic-Plan>) and City Vision
- ensure safe access to the site
- have an adequate maintenance plan and budget
- result in a positive impact on Council's reputation
- contain content which is not offensive or discriminatory

**EOI application requirements:**

Please send the following to the contact listed below:

1. response to artist brief – proposed approach, including which of the two landscape design options (with or without tree in the centre of the stone ring) is preferred (max. 1 page)
2. CV (max 3 pages)
3. biography (optional, max 1 page)
4. artist statement
5. up to 10 digital images (jpeg format) as examples of a maximum of 10 previous art projects
6. two professional references – names and contact details

**Closing date for applications:** Monday 19 July 2021

**Contacts:**

Please send EOI applications to:

Sarah Wang, Special Projects Officer - public art

Arts & Cultural Development Unit

Blacktown City Council

T 9839 6307

E [sarah.wang@blacktown.nsw.gov.au](mailto:sarah.wang@blacktown.nsw.gov.au)



Artist selection/advisory/working group panel members:

Tony Barnden, Manager Community Development, Blacktown City Council

Matthew O'Connor, Manager Recreation Planning and Design, Blacktown City Council

Monir Rowshan, Coordinator Cultural Planning and Community Engagement, Blacktown City Council

Reginald Santos, Landscape Architect, Blacktown City Council

Sarah Wang, Special Projects Officer – public art, Arts & Cultural Development, Blacktown City Council

Catherine White, Executive Officer, WASH House

Family members

## **DVF background information - international, national and local context for art commission:**

‘...a global public health problem of epidemic proportions requiring urgent action.’

This is how the World Health Organisation (WHO) describes the levels of violence experienced by the world’s women. Family violence and/or intimate partner violence is the leading cause of serious injury, disability and death for women in Australia. On average one woman a week is killed by her intimate partner (quote from whiteribbon.org.au).

In Australia, domestic, family and sexual violence is found across all cultures, ages and socio-economic groups, but the majority of those who experience these forms of violence are women.

There are 31,000 DFV assaults every year in NSW (As reported by the Sydney Morning Herald in 2020). Blacktown alone has averaged over 2,000 cases a year for the previous 9 years and during the Covid lock down period last year, 4 women were killed by their partners.

These figures clearly show that DFV is one of the greatest single issues confronting the Blacktown community. Reported incidents are the most numerous crime category in all three police area commands in Blacktown City. Whilst these figures are disturbing, we are aware there is often significant underreporting – with estimates that up to 80% of women do not make formal reports to police.

In 2016, BCC became the first council in Western Sydney to gain White Ribbon Workplace Accreditation. The accreditation was awarded in recognition of the Council’s actions to prevent and respond to violence against women. BCC supports a range of local services and events to draw attention to this serious social issue in Blacktown, and beyond. This art commission and DFV memorial garden form part of Council’s ongoing commitment to increasing: understanding and prevention of DFV and support for victim survivors and their families.

**APPENDIX 1**



Above: location of proposed domestic and family violence memorial garden



Above: domestic and family violence memorial garden design - showing areas for possible seating surrounding sandstone





Above: domestic and family violence memorial garden landscape design - option 1





Above: domestic and family violence memorial garden landscape design – option 2