



# Plaques and Memorials Policy

Version 1.0

Approval Date: 7 August 2023

Review Date: August 2027

## DOCUMENT CONTROL

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| Division                     | Regional City Planning and Assets       |                       |
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## 1. Background

Public infrastructure and open space are an important part of Latrobe City's social and cultural heritage and makes a significant contribution to the lives of people who live, work and recreate in the municipality.

The significance that public infrastructure and open space hold for many people results in Council receiving requests for the placement of commemorative plaques and memorials on or in public infrastructure and open space.

## 2. Objectives

This policy provides direction for assessing requests for the installation of new plaques and memorials within Council owned and managed public infrastructure and open space, and for managing plaques and memorials generally.

Any decision needs to consider the balance between the desire to commemorate events or individuals and the ongoing enjoyment of (natural uncluttered open) areas.

## 3. Scope

This policy applies to all Council managed land and assets and addresses the range of memorials (such as a roadside item placed to commemorate a fatal accident), plaques or minor items placed to commemorate a person or minor event, or a major sculpture item or landscaping commemorating a significant or national event.

## 4. Principles of Management

### General Principles

- All plaques and memorials:
  - will only be considered where they are sympathetic with and suited to the surrounding landscape. Unless a major memorial such as a war monument, the item must “blend in” and otherwise not negatively impact the aesthetic or environmental value of public space, nor the use of the space by the community.
  - must not create a significant maintenance or renewal burden on Council, and Council does not accept ongoing liability for the condition or replacement of the item. For example, the item shall be robust, easily cleaned, and if affixed to an asset, have a life proportionate to the asset's life, and if damaged Council is not obliged to replace it. Major memorials

such as significant war memorials are an entity themselves and have specific budgets that Council determines annually.

- cannot be permanent.
- have a “display” period corresponding with the person or event being recognised.
- must be safely installed, easily managed and not present a danger to visitors or maintenance personnel.
- Council shall endeavour to maintain the public space in a neat and tidy state, balancing the community desire to acknowledge people or events against the impact on the amenity of the space to Council’s current Horticulture Maintenance Standards.

## **Roadside Memorial Requests**

Roadside memorial requests shall be managed through a permit process whereby the applicant must indicate their acceptance of liability for any damage or injury arising from their installation and acknowledge that Council, and in some cases Regional Roads Victoria (RRV), take no responsibility for maintenance. The roadside memorial itself shall be:

- If not flush to the ground, comprised of a light frangible material so as to disintegrate and not present a danger to a motorist or pedestrian etc. if struck by a vehicle
- Installed:
  - in a position where it will not distract drivers’ attention or interfere with any traffic control item.
  - in a position where it will not be hazardous to vehicles or pedestrians or interfere with maintenance of the road reserve. VicRoads “Design Guidelines for Clear Zones” should be used to assess the location of a memorial.
  - well clear of the road edge and in such a manner so as it does not interfere with or impact the safe use of the road or with maintenance activities, including the the management of non-road related infrastructure located in the road reserve, including above and below ground utility services.
  - with consideration given to the location of a memorial so to not promote unsafe roadside parking, or other impacts to not only memorial visitors but other road users.

- with the impersonal details encouraged to be included on the memorial for contact purposes, for instance, a non-identifying email address or PO Box, however Council understands that when someone places a roadside memorial the last thing on their mind is letting the responsible road authority know how to contact them.

If Council needs to undertake any works in the vicinity of a roadside memorial, that requires its modification, relocation or removal, Council will endeavour to contact the memorial maker. Roadside memorials are not maintained by Council or RRV, however the proponent of a roadside memorial may be requested by Council or RRV to neaten a roadside memorial from time to time.

Roadside memorials are not owned by Council and are installed by others under permit (fee waived) who accept the liability. Where a roadside memorial has fallen into disrepair or unreasonably interferes with road management or maintenance activities, Council will endeavour to contact the memorial maker to arrange for its modification, relocation or removal.

Any objection or complaint from nearby residents or from road users regarding any aspects of memorials, including the activity of visitors to the memorial, should be carefully considered and if necessary, the memorial should be relocated or removed.

Arrangements for the placement of permanent roadside memorials shall be made with the Regional Roads Victoria Gippsland Region Director, or Council's Chief Executive Officer in accordance with policy guidelines.

## **Plaque or Memorial Requests**

Requests for plaques and memorials will only be considered where they are consistent with Council's master plan or concept plan for the proposed area of open space or public infrastructure. If there is no master plan or concept plan for the proposed area of open space, then the request must be consistent with Council's Public Open Space Policy and the land's public purpose and must not result in a change of amenity or use of the land. Requests for memorials on or within Council owned or managed public infrastructure shall also be considered under this policy.

Plaques and memorials commemorating deceased persons will not generally be allowed to be placed in Council open space. In exceptional circumstances they may be allowed, and will only be considered where they meet the following criteria:

- They commemorate an individual who:
  - Is deceased for at least one year
  - Was a member of the Latrobe community and has made a substantial contribution to the Latrobe community, or as determined by Council where necessary

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- The contribution of the individual was extra-ordinary and over and above what might reasonably be expected through paid employment or their voluntary contribution to the community, and that contribution stands out from others who may have also made a valuable contribution
- The subject of a requested plaque or memorial must have a clear association and strong significance to the location proposed for the plaque or memorial.

Memorials commemorating the death of pets and animals or local level events are not permitted, unless deemed of a significant nature by Council officers.

### **Requests from the Community:**

- Persons making initial enquiries regarding the installation of a plaque or memorial should be referred to this policy for direction regarding the criteria applicable to the enquiry.
- Applications must be in writing that will allow Council officers to assess the application against this policy.
- Approval will be at the discretion of Council's Chief Executive Officer

### **Requests by External Funding Bodies**

- Where an external agency such as the state or federal government has provided funding for a project and the funding agreement requires recognition in the form of a plaque, the layout and wording of this plaque will be in line with the requirements specified in the funding agreement.

### **Council Initiated Requests**

- Plaques may be installed by Council to commemorate the opening of a new or refurbished Council building or facility, or to commemorate an event that may be of historical significance now or at some time in the future.
- Plaques installed by Council will be funded by Council. Council may seek a financial contribution from funding partners if applicable.
- The layout and wording of Council initiated plaques must be submitted to the Engagement and Customer Focus department for approval.

### **Other**

Plaques or memorials may also be considered where they:

- Commemorate a Latrobe group or association who have made a substantial and outstanding contribution to the community.

- Commemorate a significant historical or cultural event which has a profound resonance with the broader Latrobe community or is of national or state significance.
- Recognise significant donations (\$50k and over) for open space infrastructure (e.g. barbeques, picnic shelters, picnic settings, playgrounds, buildings etc).

## **Plaque and Memorial Approval and Installation**

In considering requests for the placement of a plaque or memorial on or within Council owned or managed public infrastructure and open space, Council officers will review the request against this policy and the relevant criteria and determine whether to approve or refuse the request. Officers will provide the recommendation to the Chief Executive Officer for endorsement.

All fabrication and installation costs for a community requested plaque or memorial will be at the proponent's cost. Fabrication and installation shall be to Council's required standard and satisfaction.

Proposed sites for plaques and memorials shall meet the requirements of council planning documents and regulations, and shall only be installed whereby:

- There is no conflict with existing plaques, public artworks or other objects in the vicinity of the proposed location
- The location of the memorial will not adversely affect existing use or themes of that location
- The new plaque or memorial will not commemorate a person, event or place that is already memorialized in the region or community of interest unless determined by Council to be appropriate
- The placement does not detract from the aesthetic value of the space, nor have a negative impact on the use of the site by the community.
- Where necessary, the proposed memorial, other than a plaque, must demonstrate design merit (as assessed by the Art Gallery Advisory Committee or equivalent Council body) and be an original work.

## **Duration of Installation for Plaques and Memorials**

All approved plaques and memorials will be retained in place for as long as practicable, with the following exceptions:

- The area in which the item is sited is to be redeveloped
- The use of the area in which the item is sited changes significantly in character and the item is not deemed suitable for the site

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- The structure or support on which the item is located is to be removed or permanently altered
- The item is deemed unsafe, has been vandalised and is no longer viable

Latrobe City Council does not guarantee that a plaque or memorial will be maintained in perpetuity, and its retention may be reviewed at any time. The criteria to determine the retention of the plaque or memorial would be based on the:

- Physical condition of, the plaque or memorial
- Suitability of the plaque or memorial in light of the current social values
- Whether the plaque or memorial is now so intimately related to the asset that it forms part of the value of the site

Major memorials may remain in perpetuity subject to:

- The body responsible undertaking the required maintenance
- The location is not required by Council for community purposes

### **Plaque and Memorial Maintenance**

All costs associated with establishing, fabricating, installing, and maintaining a plaque or memorial will be met by the proponent.

### **Ownership and Removal**

Except for roadside memorials, any plaque or memorial on Council land becomes Council's property. If a plaque or memorial is damaged such that it is no longer fit for purpose, the proponent may attempt a repair, however there is no obligation on Council to replace the plaque or memorial.

If Council is requested by the proponent of a plaque or memorial to remove it, the proponent will be responsible for the removal of the item. In the instance a proponent is no longer contactable, Council shall arrange for the removal and disposal of the item.

If Council deems that a plaque or memorial is no longer required for any reason, it will undertake a reasonable search to locate the proponent of the item to return it. Council would remove and store it as above, or if the proponent wishes to remove the plaque or memorial themselves, they will have an agreed period to arrange removal under a permit from Council (permit fee waived), and will be required to make good the asset on which the item was installed.

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The placement of plaques or memorials on public infrastructure or in open space must have prior written approval from Council. Any plaque or memorial which has been installed without prior Council approval shall be removed. All reasonable efforts will be made to identify and contact the persons responsible for installing the item to advise them of this policy, and the removal. Reasonable attempts will also be made to return any removed item to the persons responsible for its placement.

## 5. Accountability and Responsibility

Accountability and responsibility for this policy is outlined below.

### 5.1. Council

- Responsibility to ensure this Policy is consistent with Latrobe City Council Strategic Direction and other Latrobe City Council Policy
- Responsibility for the decision to approve this Policy by Council Resolution

### 5.2. Chief Executive Officer

- Overall responsibility for compliance with this policy
- Overall responsibility for enforcing accountability
- Overall responsibility for providing resources
- Overall responsibility for performance monitoring

### 5.3. General Manager

- Responsibility for compliance with this policy
- Responsibility for enforcing accountability
- Responsibility for providing resources
- Responsibility for performance monitoring

### 5.4. Manager

- Develop frameworks and procedures in compliance with this policy
- Enforce responsibilities to achieve compliance with frameworks and procedures
- Provide appropriate resources for the execution of the frameworks and procedures

## 5.5. Employees, Contractors and Volunteers

- Participate where required in the development of frameworks and procedures in compliance with this policy
- Comply with frameworks and procedures developed to achieve compliance with this policy

## 6. Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed every four years.

## 7. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy:

- A 'roadside memorial' is an object installed at the roadside within the road reserve to commemorate or indicate a road fatality. Memorials may include items such as wooden crosses, coloured posts, flowers or any type of construction with or without plaques or inscriptions.
- A "plaque" refers to a flat tablet with text and and/or images which commemorate a person/groups/association or an event that would be affixed to an object, building or hard ground surface located within public open space, and does not include roadside memorials.
- A 'memorial' refers to an object established in the memory of a person, group, association or event but does not include 'major memorials'. This may include sculptures, statues, fountains, other landscape items, and does not include plaques or roadside memorials.
- A 'major memorial' includes memorials that have a significance in their own right, more than the event they are associated with, such as a war memorial or the Yallourn township memorial.

## 8. Related Documents

- Council's Public Open Space Policy

## 9. Reference Resources

- VicRoads Roadside Memorial Policy

## 10. Appendices

Nil

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