

Expression of Interest Guidelines

Drum Theatre Façade Art Commission

2024



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Project Overview

Rich in history and culture the City of Greater Dandenong has the most culturally diverse community in Australia. Greater Dandenong residents come from over 156 different countries and speak over 69 different languages.

Greater Dandenong City Council is looking for an artist, art collective or designer to produce a Public Artwork for the Drum Theatre Façade. We are seeking a proposal for an artwork (not design) and that is creative and innovative.

The Drum Theatre, formerly known as the Dandenong Town Hall, is an outstanding marriage of old and new architecture. This commission seeks to contribute to the architectural context, with the inclusion of an eye-catching, site-specific, and temporary (5 years) artwork.

We are seeking an inspiring and innovative large-scale artwork, that captivates viewers, pushing the boundaries of traditional art forms and evoking a sense of wonder and curiosity. The artwork should become a landmark on its own right.

It is expected the artwork will visually share with our local community and residents in south-eastern suburbs the inner life of a performance and community hub venue. Despite its nearly two-decade existence, many people remain unaware that there is a theatre housed within the building of former Dandenong Town Hall. The building itself remains an obstacle for many communities. The project aims to transform the non-heritage elements of the building into something more inviting and suggestive of what happens inside.

Background Information

About the Drum Theatre

The Drum Theatre is a 518-seat, state-of-the-art, purpose-built performing arts theatre within the heritage facade of the former Dandenong Town Hall, situated in the heart of central Dandenong.

The theatre is well situated as an anchor for engagement with the performing arts, civic vibrancy and an attractor of audiences that include Dandenong's diverse communities and the one million residents in Melbourne's south-east growth corridor.

Forming part of the Dandenong's expanding arts precinct together with the Walker Street Gallery and Arts Centre, the Drum caters to a diverse range of audiences, hosting local and international artists, communities, and premier productions.

The Drum Theatre engages with artists and the community to host more than 200 performances and events for over 40,000 patrons each year via a range of professional

touring productions, local theatrical performances, and community presentations.

The theatre develops and promotes the accessibility of the performing arts and continues to consolidate itself as the iconic, cultural heart for Dandenong and a vibrant hub for arts and cultural activity.

History and Heritage Considerations

The suburb Dandenong sits on the traditional lands of the Bunurong Country.

There has always been a strong Aboriginal connection with the land that is now called the City of Greater Dandenong. History tells of the Aboriginal people moving off the missions and back onto this land after settlement. Their vision is of walking hand in hand into the future with all the people that now make up this city.

Dandenong Town Hall, constructed in 1890 to a design by Beswicke and Hutchins, originally housed a Council Chambers, Court House, Concert Hall, municipal offices and Mechanics Institute.

In mid-2000s, the Town Hall building was refurbished and expanded to accommodate the present Drum Theatre. Designed by architects Williams Ross, the state of the art 521-seat performing arts venue opened in 2006. The redevelopment retained a portion of the original 1890s building facing Lonsdale Street and Walker streets and incorporated a new theatre addition to the rear.

The architects delivered a striking, contemporary architectural design, with the theatre expressed as the dramatic, modern “drum” that envelopes the auditorium, foyer amenities, and fly-tower as a single, strongly coloured form.

What is the heritage status of the building-? include here

At Stage 2 the shortlisted professionals will be required to:

1. Adhere to any heritage and planning requirements, including seeking expert advice as required
2. Familiarise themselves with The Drum Theatre (Former Dandenong Town Hall) Conservation Management Plan, and follow relevant conservation, interpretation and management policies
3. Consultation with local historical societies and advisory committees (as guided by City of Greater Dandenong staff)
4. Consult with the Bunurong Elders and Bunurong Land Council to consider local narratives.

Public Art context

The City of Greater Dandenong values the influence of creativity on the fabric of our city and recognises that arts and culture is intrinsically linked to the city's identity. Council is committed to making arts and culture an everyday experience for its citizens and visitors. Public art that is integrated into the city's public spaces and places is recognised as one of the most effective ways to make this happen.

Council understands that investment in public art adds both aesthetic and commercial value to the municipality, enticing tourists, residents, tenants, and investors through its capacity to share stories, build community and create memories. While the value of an individual artwork may appreciate over time, broader benefits are found in the enhanced visibility, awareness, and foot-traffic in the area. Public art can express community values, enhance our environment, transform a landscape, heighten our awareness, or question our assumptions. Placed in public sites, art is a powerful form of collective community expression.

Strategic context

Our city recognises and invests in arts, culture, and heritage. Its spaces and places reflect the arts, culture, and heritage. The cultural heritage of our city is identified, protected, and valued, allowing us to acknowledge the past and inform our future.

As our city continues to change and evolve, our strategy reflects a Greater Dandenong that is vibrant; celebrates and shares the richly diverse stories of its people; supports the local creative and heritage sector and economy and enables all to participate.

Arts, culture, and heritage has the power to bind fractured communities by enabling and empowering individuals and groups to express their stories, experiences, and identity.

For our community arts, culture and heritage is a critical mechanism to address social issues, build community cohesion, represent one's culture, feelings, and emotions. However, there are barriers to inclusion and engagement, as well as challenges in scaling and growing creative activity.

Our vision for arts, culture, and heritage: A vibrant City that celebrates and represents the richly diverse stories of its people; supports local creative and cultural activity and economy to thrive; and enables all to participate, enjoy and be inspired by arts, culture, and heritage.

The Brief

Who we are looking for

We are seeking a culturally sensitive and creative professional, whether an individual artist, collective or team who can consider, engage with, and be informed by local Aboriginal knowledge and culture. Your work should demonstrate an understanding of the importance of interpreting local cultural heritage and knowledge, transforming these insights into an artwork that is contemporary and relevant to the community.

While experience in large scale fabrication is preferable professionals with limited experience fabricating on a larger scale may collaborate with artists, designers of other professionals. However, is essential that the primary development and leaderships of the artistic concept must come from the artist.

The successful applicant will be responsible for managing design and fabrication; however, they may choose to outsource specific elements of the project to appropriate skilled suppliers or craftspeople.

Commissioning Objectives

We are seeking an inspiring and innovative large-scale artwork, that captivates viewers, pushing the boundaries of traditional art forms and evoking a sense of wonder and curiosity. The artwork should become a landmark on its own right.

This project is centred around changing perceptions and revitalising the urban recognition of the Drum Theatre, transforming it into an inviting, welcoming, and culturally safe space for local and south-east community to become more engaged.

The key objective of this commission is to create a site-specific, temporary (5 years) artwork which visually tells a story of art experiences, vibrant programming, charm, and intimacy hidden within the theatre façade. The artwork should embrace the three-dimensional nature of the building, utilising the building structure, shape, and architectural features. This play between external look and internal identity needs to be innovative, creating a glimpse into stories of place, engaging the viewer, and evoke sense of belonging, connection, and pride.

Scope

It is expected that the artwork will consider visibility and any constraints as outlined in the History and Heritage Considerations (above) in its presentation.

It should reflect the project brief while responding to the space, enhancing its visibility, architectural features, physical conditions, and purpose.

Selection Process

The selection process for the commission will be across three stages.

Stage 1 – Expression of interest concept proposal – April to June 2024

The Expression of Interest (EOI) is the first stage of the process. At this stage we are only seeking a preliminary concept proposal. No fees will be paid for Stage 1.

Expression of interest concept proposals must be received no later than **11.59pm, Monday 3 June 2024.**

A shortlist of up to three artists will be selected from the Stage 1 submissions and offered an opportunity to develop a more detailed concept and design.

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified via email.

Please submit the following:

- Completed online application form, including 300-word concept proposal.
- CV of recent work, including two referees.
- Examples of up to four previous relevant works, noting artwork date and location (Consolidate into one document. Accepted file types: doc, docx, ppt, pptx, txt, mp4 or pdf.)
- Information about any existing or potential conflicts of interest and the process for mitigating against any risks.

A shortlist of up to three artists will be selected from the Stage 1 submissions and offered an opportunity to develop a detailed concept and design.

Stage 2 – Shortlisted artists concept designs – June to August 2024

Up to three (3) artists will be shortlisted for Stage 2. A proposal fee of \$2000 (excl GST) will be paid by the Council to each shortlisted artist. These artists will be invited to submit a detailed concept and design based on their preliminary proposal. The concept must respond to The Brief.

All shortlisted artists will be invited to a site inspection at the Drum Theatre, where they will be offered an opportunity to ask further questions regarding the curatorial objectives for the work, including information about consultation requirements.

Please note shortlisted artists are responsible for covering any travel costs to attend the Drum Theatre site visit and presentation.

These artists will be invited to submit and present to the selection panel their detailed concept design, based on their preliminary proposal. Including:

- Conceptual outline and understanding of the brief

- How the work will engage with its audience
- Medium/s, materials, and dimensions
- Examples, rendering, maquette, prototype and/or samples to best illustrate and present the concept. Any samples provided will be returned to the artist on request
- A detailed budget with a breakdown of each component
- A proposed timeline outlining each stage of the project
- A list of proposed subcontractors or fabricators, if relevant
- A completed risk assessment covering any risks to health, safety, audience engagement, misinterpretation, and cultural sensitivity
- Maintenance Plan
- Evidence of current insurance cover, including Public Liability insurance.
- Details of the legal structure under which the artist is working (sole trader, company, collective etc)
- References from a minimum of two previous clients, including any Local Government Authorities the artist has worked in, if relevant
- A signed Artist's Agreement and invoice for stage 2
- Availability throughout 2025

Concepts should be technically feasible, reflecting scalability to suit a budget between \$60,000 and \$100,000, and realistically able to be delivered within a timeframe. Council will favour concepts that consider these constraints in detail and outline steps to delivering within budget and on time.

Artists will be asked to present their concept in person to an assessment panel. This provides artists with the opportunity to explain and sell their concept to the panel who will appoint the final commission.

A panel of experts will decide which concept best fits the selection criteria and will appoint a single artist to progress to project delivery.

All materials submitted during this stage will remain the property of Greater Dandenong City Council unless specifically requested otherwise by the artist.

Stage 3 – Project delivery (funding dependant) – September 2024 to February 2026

The Council's selection panel will select one artist from the shortlist. The successful artist(s) will be commissioned to design, fabricate, and deliver an artwork within this budget. This fee includes all material costs and the artists' payment.

The successful artist will be required to sign a Greater Dandenong Council Agreement, which outlines standard terms, including those relating to copyright. The Council shall not be under any legal obligation to accept a proposal unless and until an Agreement has been signed by the Council and the successful applicant.

Depending on the design of the artwork and the materials conceived, an engineering assessment may be required. The cost of this will need to be covered within the overall stage budget.

Requirements:

- Presentation of the concept at a working group meeting.
- Regular progress updated.
- An engineering assessment, if relevant.
- A fully realised artwork.
- Delivery.
- On-site installation support.
- Completed Maintenance, cleaning plan and life-cycle plan.
- A signed Artist Agreement.
- An invoice for Stage three delivery.
- The successful artist will be required to deliver the work on time and in line with budget and installation requirements.

Criteria

Artists will be selected against the following:

Selection criteria	Weighting
Statement of ideas and artistic merit: demonstrates imagination, distinctiveness, originality, and viability.	30%
Statement of interest: the commission is relevant in a local, national, and global context and enhances a sense of place.	30%
Experience delivering similar successful projects: has contributed to innovative and new thinking in public art.	25%
Standing in the artistic community: regarded by peers as having a unique aesthetic identity and body of work.	15%

Confidentiality

All submissions will be treated as strictly confidential between Greater Dandenong City Council and the applicant.

Reserved rights

Greater Dandenong City Council reserves the right to cancel this process and/or again call for further submissions should the responses be deemed unsatisfactory or insufficient.

Consultation Requirements

The successful artist is required to consult with the community members, Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation, Greater Dandenong Council, Councillors, and other stakeholders as the need arises.

Budget

The recommended commission value of between \$60,000 and \$100,000 is dependent on funding. The successful artist will need to account for their fee, materials, and fabricating costs within this budget.

The following budget considerations are a guide only:

- Artist fee (25%)
- Superannuation (9.5%)
- Heritage and planning advice
- Engineering report
- Materials
- Fabrication
- Delivery
- Installation

Timeline

Dates are subject to change.

Stage 1 – Expression of interest concept proposal	
EOI advertised	April 2024
EOI closes	3 June 2024
Selection process	4 June - 18 June 2024
Non/Shortlisted artists advised	21 June 2024

Stage 2 – Shortlisted artists	
Site visit and information session during working hours	2 - 5 July 2024
Concept development	2 - 30 July 2024
Concept due	31 July 2024
Artists present their concept to the panel	5-9 August 2024
Selection process	12 – 16 August 2024
Non/Successful artists notified	19 August 2024
Stage 3 – Project delivery (funding dependant)	
Pending Funding - Commission Agreement signed	September 2024
Final design due	October 2024
Begin delivery - Pending Funding	August 2025
Complete Installation - Pending Funding	February 2026

Appendix: The Site

The theatre is situated in the heart of Dandenong and is a short walk from the Dandenong train station and famous Dandenong Market.

Walking from the Train Station, Walker Street Gallery, and the Dandenong Library - Directly ahead – Lonsdale Street (west) elevation and clock tower. (figure 3, 4 and 6).

Walking from the Dandenong Market along Lonsdale Street - Lonsdale Street (west) elevation and clock tower (figure 3, 4 and 6).

Walking from the Dandenong Market past the Plaza - Drum Theatre east elevation looking west from Langhorne Street (figure 9), Walker Street façade: 2006 Drum Theatre addition (figure 8).

From the Langhorne Street Bus Depot – Drum Theatre east elevation looking west from Langhorne Street (figure 9), Walker Street façade: 2006 Drum Theatre addition (figure 8).

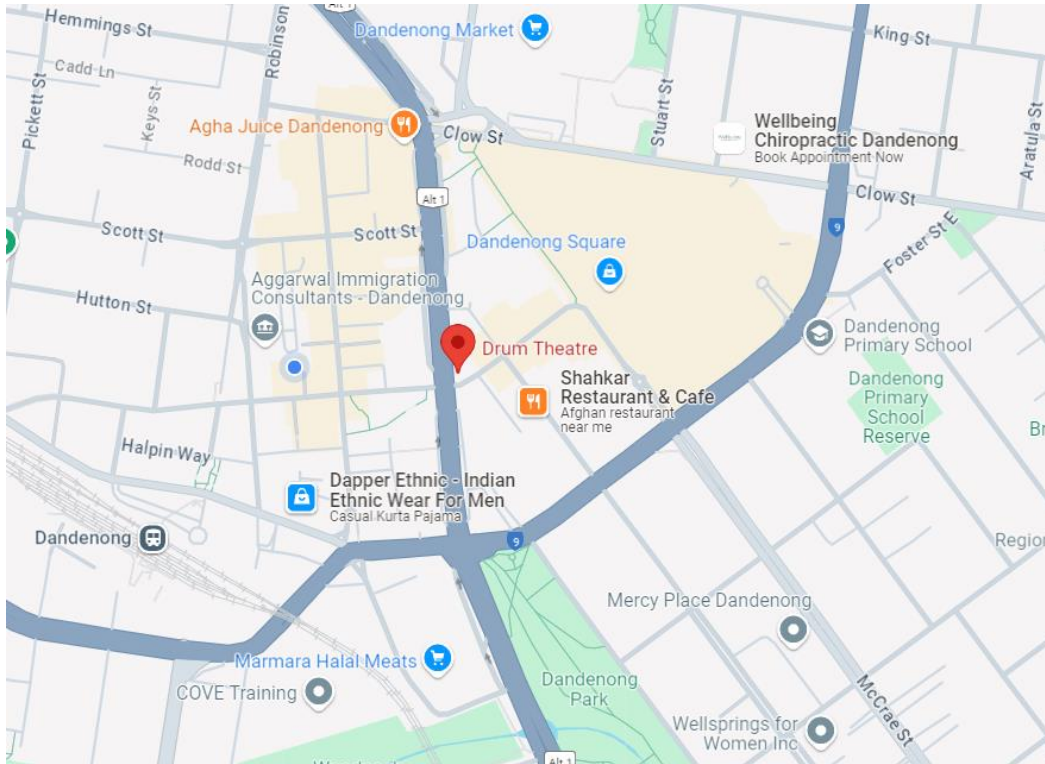


Figure 1 The location of the Drum Theatre at 224-234 Lonsdale Street, Dandenong (indicated by a red star).

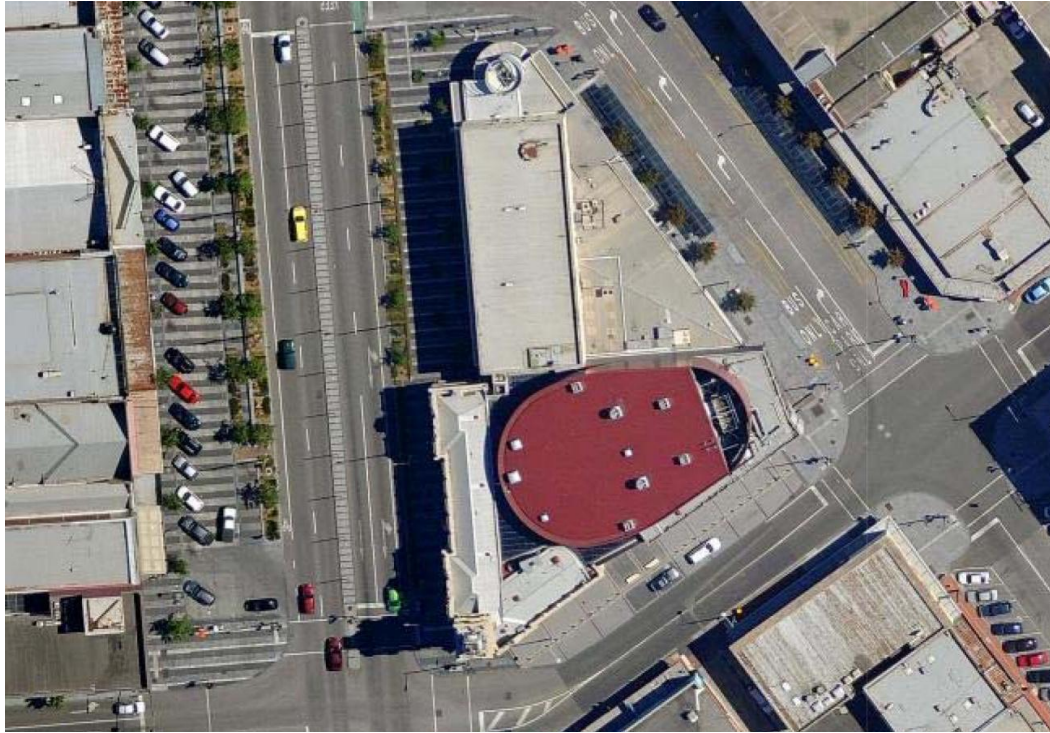


Figure 2 Aerial photograph of the Drum Theatre (indicated) and its immediate surroundings.



Figure 3 Lonsdale Street (west) elevation.



Figure 4 Detail of the 1940 Lonsdale Street entrance. The doors are recent additions.



Figure 5 Walker Street façade: detail of remaining 1890 section.



Figure 6 Detail of clock tower



Figure 7 View of the roof looking east. The nineteenth century parapet facing Walker Street is visible to the right and the Drum Theatre extension to the left.



Figure 8 Walker Street façade: 2006 Drum Theatre addition



Figure 9 The 2006 Drum Theatre east elevation looking west from Langhorne Street.