

6.16. GRANT FUNDING PROPOSAL - REGIONAL ARTS FUND (RAF) FOR ERGON ENERGY PLACEMAKING PROJECT

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| REPORT AUTHOR | Arts and Culture Officer |
| MANAGER | Manager Community Services |
| DEPARTMENT | Community Services |

RECOMMENDATION

That Council resolves to support an application to the Regional Arts Fund (RAF) for up to \$30,000 to develop and implement the Creative Spark Ergon Energy Public Art Project, inclusive of a Council-led framework for public art installations on Ergon Energy assets.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Creative Spark Ergon Energy Public Art Project presents an opportunity for Douglas Shire Council to establish a strategic and sustainable framework for public art installations on Ergon Energy assets. This initiative will ensure a structured, best-practice approach to approvals, cultural consultation, insurance, risk management, maintenance, and material compliance.

Currently, no formal process exists to support these installations, creating barriers for artists, the community, and Council in delivering high-quality, inclusive public art outcomes. By applying for funding under the Regional Arts Fund (RAF), Council can facilitate the development of this framework and pilot the installation of up to ten decorated Ergon Energy assets across the Shire.

The pilot project will serve as a test case for the framework, refining the processes and demonstrating the potential for broader implementation. This initiative aligns with Council's Operational Plan objectives to support placemaking and creative community expression through public art.

BACKGROUND

Douglas Shire has a strong tradition of embracing public art as a means of cultural storytelling, placemaking, and enhancing community identity. However, the absence of a formalised process for installing public art on Ergon Energy assets has limited opportunities for creative placemaking.

The Creative Spark initiative (funding proposal) is a two-stage project that will:

1. Develop a structured Council-led framework to guide public art installations on Ergon Energy infrastructure, ensuring consistency in application approvals, cultural protocols, insurance, materials, and assessment processes.
2. Pilot the program by delivering up to ten decorated assets at key locations within the Douglas Shire to test and refine the framework.

This project aligns with the Draft Corporate Plan 2025 – 2030, Council's locally identified priorities for Arts and Culture, and will inform the review and development of Council's Arts General Policy and Public Art Policy in 2025.

COMMENTS

The Regional Arts Fund Project Grants offer up to \$30,000 for high-quality arts initiatives benefiting regional communities. While co-contributions are not mandatory, applications must demonstrate a level of support from the applicant.

Council's in-kind contribution to the funding proposal will include the time and resources within the Arts and Culture role to facilitate policy development, community engagement, site preparation, mapping, curation, venue provision, and media. RAF funding will support key project components such as cultural consultation, project management, documentation, digital communications, professional artist fees, and materials.

PROPOSAL

That Council supports an application to the Regional Arts Fund (RAF) for up to \$30,000 to facilitate the development and delivery of the Creative Spark project, with Council providing in-kind contributions to ensure project viability and success.

FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The funding application will seek up to \$30,000 from the Regional Arts Fund, with Council providing in-kind contributions in the form of administrative and logistical support. No direct financial allocation from Council is required for the project at this stage.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

A structured framework for public art installations will reduce risks associated with public art projects, including:

- Establishing clear protocols for approvals and maintenance to mitigate legal and compliance risks.
- Ensuring cultural consultation is embedded to avoid inappropriate representations or insensitive placements.
- Managing insurance and material compliance considerations to ensure longevity and safety of installations.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

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| Economic: | Public art installations contribute to the vibrancy of public spaces, supporting cultural tourism and local artist engagement. |
| Environmental: | The framework will include guidelines on sustainable materials and practices to minimise environmental impact. |
| Social: | The project will enhance community pride and connection to place while fostering cultural expression and inclusion. |

CORPORATE/OPERATIONAL PLAN, POLICY REFERENCE

This report has been prepared in accordance with the following:

Corporate Plan 2019-2024 Initiatives:

Theme 1 - Celebrating Our Communities

Douglas Shire Council embraces the diversity of our communities and values the contribution that all people make to the Shire. We recognise that it is a core strength of the region. We acknowledge our past so that it may guide us in the future. We recognise the wrongs done to our Indigenous community and we actively seek to reconcile so that we may all benefit from and enjoy our Shire. We acknowledge early European settlers who forged an agricultural base for our economy and we welcome all new arrivals as part of our broader community.

Goal 1 - *We will celebrate the diversity of our community and ensure that all infrastructure, programs, and services are underpinned with inclusiveness and accessibility.*

Goal 2 - *We will deliver programs and services that protect and enhance the liveability of our beautiful Shire.*

Goal 4 - *We will promote arts and cultural programs and events that bring vibrancy to the community and compliment the tourist experience.*

Theme 4 - Inclusive Engagement, Planning and Partnerships

In delivering for our communities, economy and environment, Douglas Shire will ensure open and transparent engagement and communication. We will develop robust strategic plans and we will partner with our community and key stakeholders.

Goal 1 - *We will implement transparent decision making through inclusive community engagement and communication.*

Operational Plan 2024-2025 Actions:

Public Art & Placemaking - Support creative projects and initiatives that empower our communities to express their connection to place.

COUNCIL'S ROLE

Council can play a number of different roles in certain circumstances, and it is important to be clear about which role is appropriate for a specific purpose or circumstance. The implementation of actions will be a collective effort and Council's involvement will vary from information only through to full responsibility for delivery.

The following areas outline where Council has a clear responsibility to act:

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| Advocate | Council makes representation on behalf of the community on important issues, funding opportunities, projects and programs. Council will use its influence to seek the best outcomes for the community. |
| Facilitator | Council often brings stakeholders together on important issues, projects or for service delivery. In this role, Council can act as a mediator, connector, collaborator or initiator. |
| Funder | Council often partly funds services, events or community organisations through grants, donations, subsidies and in-kind support. Council will apply robust governance to ensure that such funding is fair and appropriate. |

CONSULTATION

Internal: Community Services, Open Spaces, Planning and Development, Corporate Services.

External: Consultation will be undertaken with key stakeholders including local artists, Traditional Owners, and Ergon Energy to ensure a well-informed and inclusive framework development process.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Consultation with the community will be undertaken if Council are successful with the grant application.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil