

Media Release

Artists challenged to rethink Sydney's main street

The City of Sydney has put out a global call for artists with ideas to reimagine the city's main street.

Lord Mayor Clover Moore said it was a once-in-a-lifetime chance to create magnificent public spaces in the heart of the city.

"The transformation of George Street into a light rail and pedestrian boulevard gives us an extraordinary opportunity to reimagine central Sydney with new public artworks," the Lord Mayor said.

"We want to inspire people to explore our city, and create space to escape from the hustle and bustle.

"I encourage creative people across Australia and beyond to share their big ideas for how we can bring George Street and its surrounds to life."

The City of Sydney has budgeted more than \$9 million over the next decade to transform central Sydney with public artworks, complementing the new light rail link to make George Street a destination in its own right.

The plan's first – and most ambitious – project aims to return George Street to its former glory as the city's central spine, with artworks that strengthen the link between Central Station in the south and Circular Quay in the north.

Artists are also invited to submit their ideas for the plan's second major project, which aims to activate the 'east-west connections' that cross George Street at key intersections, such as Park, Hunter and Bridge streets.

The City Centre Public Art Plan identifies a number of approaches that artists can use as a starting point for their submissions, including art that responds to Sydney's history, unique topography, harbour identity and enviable climate.

Expressions of interest (EOI) for both opportunities are now open until 31 October 2013.

Up to five artists will be shortlisted for each project following the EOI process and given the chance to develop their designs. Final designs will be selected early next year.

The successful artists will work with the City's design staff and City Centre Curatorial Advisor Barbara Flynn, under the guidance of the independent Public Art Advisory Panel, to implement their proposals over the next three years.

The plan also identifies other major projects to be funded by the City over the next decade. Ideas for artists to develop include:

- Reimagining Sydney's public squares with sculpture gardens in popular spots like Barrack Street and Regimental Square, offering pedestrians an escape from the hustle and bustle of George Street; and

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- Continuing the City's laneway revitalisation program with both permanent and temporary works that encourage Sydneysiders to discover the gems hidden within these unique city spaces.

The plan also presents ideas the City could pursue in partnership with cultural organisations and the private sector, including:

- Joining forces with cultural institutions to commission performance works or other temporary projects to enliven George Street during the light rail construction period;
- Giving Martin Place a new lease on life as Sydney's outdoor 'lounge room' through a new city-to-city art exchange with major cultural capitals like London, Paris, Beijing and New York;
- Establishing Sydney's first official artist-in-residence program, which could be filled by some of the world's most exciting artists and designers, alongside promising local practitioners; and
- Working with developers throughout the city to ensure that new developments meet design excellence standards and incorporate high-quality public artworks whenever possible.

For more information, visit: cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/cityart

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