

First Nations Mural

Community engagement summary report

Background

The First Nations Mural Project will bring to life a large wall at Atkinson Street Multi-level car park in Oakleigh, on the lands of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung People.

Commissioning a First Nations mural aligns with Council's recently endorsed Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan that outlines the shared approach Council is taking to work alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to advance reconciliation in our workplace and across the Monash municipality.

As part of this project, artists were asked to submit two concept designs. Gunditjmarra, Yorta Yorta and Wemba Wemba artist Tommy Day (represented by Mamam) was chosen by our Public Art Project Panel, which included representation from the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage and Aboriginal Corporation.

Monash residents were invited to have their say in which of the two concept designs they would like to see transform this busy corner of Oakleigh.

Ways to provide feedback

The engagement period was open from 23 October until 17 November 2023.

- The community was invited to vote on the preferred artwork for the mural through Council's community engagement platform Shape Monash (<https://shape.monash.vic.gov.au/first-nations-mural>)
- The community was invited to attend a community engagement session with the artist on Tuesday 14 November from 7-8pm, at Oakleigh Chambers
- Students from Oakleigh Primary School attended a session with the artist on Tuesday 14 November
- Share their feedback by email or phone.

Promotion

The community was informed of engagement opportunities through a flyer that was promoted via the following avenues:

<u>Online</u>	<u>Hardcopy</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Council social media channels• Rotary e-newsletter• Council internal e-bulletin• Art and About e-newsletter• Monash Library e-newsletter• Sustainable Monash email list• Reconciliation Action Plan working group members• Positive Ageing Lifestyles email list• Oakleigh Leadership Group• MaPH e-news and social media• Local members of Parliament• Oakleigh Primary School newsletter	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Oakleigh Shopping Centre noticeboard• Promotion at Glendi Festival• Rotary – Sunday market• Community Safety Breakfast event in Oakleigh• Oakleigh Chambers• Oakleigh Library

Feedback

- A total of 313 people voted on the mural during the engagement period, with 263 (84%) preferring concept 1 and 50 (16%) preferring concept 2.
- The most common rationale for selecting concept 1 was the bright and vibrant colours and the inclusion of the Bunjil and Waa (eagle and crow).
- One email was received that was not in support of the project.
- No phone calls to Customer Service or the project staff were received.
- 40 people voted for their preferred mural at Glendi festival, with 39 people preferring concept 1 and one person preferring concept 2.
- Year 5 visual arts students from Oakleigh Primary School met with the artist for a one-hour workshop to share their feedback on the concepts.

Shape Monash Findings

See Appendix A for full list of comments from Shape Monash.

Sentiments

There were 7 respondents on Shape Monash and one email that did not support the project. These respondents stated they either did not like the designs, thought the project was a waste of money, or believed the money should be spent elsewhere.

Oakleigh Primary School student feedback

Students wrote comments on their preferred artwork:

Concept 1

- I prefer this painting as it makes me feel happy and enthusiastic with different colours and birds
- I like how the birds are flying through the picture
- I like the vibrancy and the cultural symbols and lines
- I prefer this one because the other one is just basic and doesn't include the animals and the brightness too
- I prefer this because of the brightness, use of lines and the two birds (culture symbols)
- I like how the Eagle is mid flight
- I really like how the Eagle and crow in it – it's really colourful. I also love the story behind it and the gum leaves.

Concept 2

- I like the colour scheme but think they there were like an insect or animal e.g. gecko towards the middle
- Think that maybe it will look better if you add some animals such as kangaroos and koalas, basically Australian native animals
- I like it
- I love how the colours are sort of pastel and not as strong themed
- I like how it has more if an earthy vibe to it and the theme of the eucalyptus leaves and river
- I like how the colours resemble earth and the ground
- I really like to colour palette and shades used
- I like how the water has different shades of colour in it as it flows
- I really like how all the colour blend together
- I love the colour and how the colour sort of represents land and I like how the waters colour changes
- I like how the water goes through the circle thing
- The blue streak of water that runs through the middle reminds me of the Murray Darling rivers and Scotchman's Creek.

Next steps

Thank you to everyone who provided their feedback about the First Nations Mural Project.

This report and its findings have been provided to the artist and will inform any final adjustments to the design, prior to installation in early 2024 (weather depending).

We will continue to keep our community updated on the project via the Shape Monash platform.

Appendix A

Responses from Shape Monash to “Why did you choose your preferred mural concept?”

Concept 1

the animal design gives the mural a subject to focus on
"This concept leaves me feeling fresh, happy, and full of energy – exactly what I need."
A lively, fun design that brings a smile.
Although I prefer the colour palette of concept 2.
Appeals to me much more!
Artist is not First Nations to Wurundjeri or the Kulin Nation. In lieu of Cultural Protocol, the Artists Cultural Interpretation, focuses on Bujil the Creator Spirit of the Kulin Nation and Was the Crow. The interpretation enforces Wurundjeri Woiwurrung connection to country by including the Multi Cultural life line of the Monash area and catchment/ electoral City of Kingston.
As the name says - bright and vibrant - which is what I believe Oakleigh to be. Also, with the brighter colours, this option is bound to attract more attention quickly.
Beautiful design, and love the birds.
Because it is simpler better and the birds add to the scenery and make it more believable
Because it is vibrant
Best suits the location
Better
Better aesthetically.
better and more fitting composition
Bird
Both options are very apt but I feel option one is more appealing because of the colours chose to represent earth, sky and vegetation.
Bright & vibrant is more eye catching. I love the inclusion of the eagle & crow. It makes the mural more interesting.
Bright and vibrant as the title. It can be seen from a distance and the Eagle watching over the land.
Bright and vibrant colours have the greatest impact.
Bright and vibrant is a clear winner.
Bright and vibrant is a very active painting. It shows promise and whilst anchored in the land and the present, the birds are moving to the future
Bright, positive and easy to remember.
Brings light to a dingey corner, attracting your eye to the artwork
Bunjil and Waa add movement and vigour to the site
Bunjil and Waa are two symbolic birds of spiritual and cultural significance to the Wurundjeri people (and the Kulin Nation as a whole). The mural is incomplete without these two mythical (and native species) birds. Plus the mural is more aesthetically striking with them included in the drawing. It presents a powerful image of the First

Nation communities that once thrived here living in harmony with the natural environment we now occupied.
Bunjil and waa look great, probably prefer the softer colours if they had the birds.
Bunjil the Eagle and Waa the Crow taking flight also provides a sign of life which is advancing and thus creates more hope and a lively environment for the community.
Classic Tom Day piece
Clear eagle can be seen. Easier for different people/ cultures to identify with.
Colour suits the area
Colours
Concept 1 gives me a feeling of energy.
Concept 1:
Concept one better expresses the connection to traditional owners, and the inclusion of Bunjil and Waa add a dynamic, uplifting element.
Connection to land
Eagle represents vision, wisdom, strength, freedom, renewal and protection in Aboriginal and many cultures that reside in this beautiful land of Australia. Crow is also symbolic of knowledge. In many cultures including Aboriginal it is representation of your elders in past. Full of wisdom. This mural will have more to tell to the passer by young and old.
Full of life and movement and it will last longer and not fade as Soft Earth might.
has animals
Having the eagle makes it stand out
I accept the moiety of Waa and Bunjil as indeed the bright and vibrant nature of the work.
I can resonate with the artist's statement.
I chose this concept because it has more detail. I also really liked the inclusion of Bunjil the Eagle and feel it demonstrates a stronger connection to traditional owners.
I just feel that I like it a little more.
I light the Bunjil and Waa also represented in the mural. The colour combination really makes the beautiful native animals stand out, and adds depth to the story behind the mural.
I like having the birds in the mural and i like the bold colours.
I like the animals in the design
I like the birds :)
I like the bolder colours and the addition of the crow and eagle.
I like the bright colors and the more interesting design with its meaning for all nations here to enjoy.
I like the brighter colours and the birds
I like the concept of including Scotchmans Creek as well as bird life
I like the eagle and crow - very dynamic, as well as the representation of Scotchman's Creek.
I like the eagle and the crow
I like the first concept as it says so much more to me with the link between the rivers/waters/land/trees and the encompassing sky. Its good to see the more common

crows flying around and a thrill when you see a much rarer and more impressive eagle!
I like the idea of having an animal, in this case a bird, in the artwork
I like the inclusion of Bunjil and Waa - and the colours pop more
I like the inclusion of Bunjil the Eagle and Waa the Crow, symbolising creation and protection.
I like the inclusion of the eagle. I think that the mural should have board stationed next to it to explain the story of the painting. These shapes represent places or events that may be missed by novices like myself. In this way we can also educate the public in indigenous culture
I like the movement implied with the presence of the birds, over the land and creek.
I like the spirit of optimism it makes me feel during these tough times
I like the story and movement
I like the vibrancy of the colours, but even more than that, I love any representation of Bunjil.
I like the Waa and Bunjil details.
I like to colours
I love the birds and the brightness seems to capture both the celebration of the past and the hope for the future
I love the colours in this design and also the meaning of Bunjil the Eagle and Waa the Crow. A great piece of artwork.
I love the colours, and Bunjil and Waa images
I love the design
I LOVE the fact there is the crow and Eagle to really represent out First Nations land
I love the representation of bunjil (wedge tail eagle)
I love the symbolism and bright colours, and as a bird lover, having Bunjil and Waa in the painting makes it a winner for me.
I personally like the soft earth one better if I was picking it for my own walls, but I've picked the birds as something striking for Oakleigh, as well as the symbolism of creation and protection. If the soft earth one had the birds on it, it would be perfect for me (Scotchmans creek stands out more in the soft earth, which I like)
I prefer 1 because it has Bunjil and it has brighter colours than 2. Also it has more colours and fits more on the wall, and (I think) will have more people walking by going "Oh, look at that lovely mural." -9yo
I prefer 1 because of all the elements including Bungil and Waa, a big part of one of our Earth's many tales of how it came to be. -11yo
I prefer bright and vibrant because I think the colours represent our bright country we are a land of sunshine and that
I prefer bright to the muted tones and the sun may make the muted ones fade sooner than the bright one.
I prefer the Bright and vibrant as it features Bunjil and Waa, important totems of the Wurundjeri and Bunurong tribes of the Kulin Nation on the land we stand on.
I prefer the colours and like the inclusion of the birds
I prefer the colours used and find the whole concept more inspiring and uplifting

I think both designs are beautiful, and I would like to say to council that asking non-First Nations people like myself to vote on their preferred design feels representative of how First Nations people constantly have to seek permission to exist and express themselves on their own country. It's not necessary. I trust Mr Day to create something wonderful in this space.
I think for kids this is more accessible, they will remember the birds, and it will catch their eye.
I think it is stunning with Bunjil the eagle and Waa the crow depicted in the artwork. These additions add to the vibrancy of the artwork.
I think it's important to include Bunjil and Waa
I think my child will like seeing bunjil and give us an opening to share the story.
I think the Bright and vibrant concept suits the Oakleigh area perfectly
I think the colours and the concept of the Bright and vibrant option are better suited to Oakleigh.
I think the setting looks very suitable for something energetic and bright, and I like eagles very much and it gives me a more positive energy looking at something figurative instead of abstract.
I think the two birds gives a nod to the protection of the land and the Kulin nation
If a bright construction goes in next door (what was the paint shop), this mural needs to be bright enough not to disappear into the background. Also, I like the eagle.
In addition to the connection and history represented, I like the images and meaning of the birds. Our urban environments are built over and busy. A reminder to stop, notice and appreciate the birds and their significance is important
In Concept 1 the unifying depictions of Scotchmans Creek and Community are stronger and more evident. And the living moieties of Bunjil and Waa are very significant, resonating with generations of oral culture.
Inclusion of the birds
It depicts Bunjil and Waa, and is a brighter mood
It gives positivity which is necessary for everyday life.
It has a more visual dynamic. It shows Bunjil and Waa that are important representations to First Nations People.
It includes nature and creatures as is our land.
it is bright and uplifting
It is eye catching and vibrant!
it is more interesting to look at without knowing the artists concept.
It just looks more vibrant and makes you feel good.
It looks better.
It more represents the character of the land in this location.
It needs the animals/birds to be a clearer message..other wise sadly they just look like modern art ,not conveying anything indigenous to the average Aussie.. also would have liked more natural features if it is to connect with the nature we all share here of their custodianship. Thanks . Earth kinship.
It seems more easy to see but if there is another option for it I would say both designs
It show's strength and the connection with the earth.
It spoke to me somehow.

It was more visually appealing and interesting.
It won't get lost as just another background with so much colour and interest
It's alive with colour. Yet still gives a story.
It's more eye catching
It's more lively and the birds make it
It's much more defined
Less likely to have graffiti superimposed. Has a graffiti protection been invented?
Like the addition of the eagles
Like the birds in the mural
Like the inclusion of the birds
Looks better
looks more exciting
Looks more interesting, fits in better to the local aesthetic
Looks so fresh and maybe will make people stop and see.
Love bunjil and design is bright and cheerful
Love the birds
Love the bright colours and the addition of the birds.
Love the soaring birds; feeling of being lifted by it.
Love the vibrant colours, and inclusion of eagle and crow
Loved the birds
Loved the colour way and the connection to community
Make it inclusive celebrating the diversity and multiculturalism that makes up Monash! I would love to give the Monash Council a "First Nations" kick up the ass!
Melbourne has a lot of cloudy days and wintery weather. If we are to have a large mural it would be good to have a colourful bright and vibrant one to lift up our spirit. It would also be a more inviting welcoming space.
More colorful. It feels happier than earthy colors.
More eye catching and love the inclusion of wildlife images
More eye catching and we love the link to Scotchman's. Congratulations to the artist on two gorgeous designs!
More in the Mural
More lively and inviting
More lively and inviting.
More striking and colorful
Most eye catching. Love birds in flight
My first pick - As I used to play in Scotchman's Creek it reminds me of my childhood days also.
My husband preferred the aesthetic of the bird. I liked the concept description and design. Great to see Oakleigh getting some attention. thankyou
My preference is for the mural concept Bright and Vibrant containing both moieties Bunjil and Waa.
Neither, how about some decent art
Nice and bright, my kids loved it too!
No contest - it has got to be No.1 :)

Not sure how it will achieve the targets though
Our relationship with our aboriginal brothers and sisters must be bright, cheerful and full of hope and MUST NOT reflect the air of darkness, distrust and concern which has infiltrated the relationship in recent times.
Prefer the brighter palette and incorporating the birds.
Prefer the Crow & Eagle in the mural
Purple is an Oakleigh colour and the birds give the mural life.
represents Australia
Stands out more. Loud and proud. Incorporating birds represents to me freedom and movement.
Symbolism of animals and nature. Design is eye catching and pays respect to the lands and First Nations people. Always was always will be indigenous land.
The addition of 2 aerial flying creatures lifts the composition from the rather turgid concept 2. But is this wall an appropriate place? Looks rather impermanent to me.
the bird flying really captured my attention in this picture. More aboriginal art please. What about putting this mural on the exterior of Oakleigh library so it stands out more.
The birds add so much
The birds are nice. I prefer the colours of "Soft earth", but my enjoyment of the birds outweighs it.
The birds are powerful symbols and are magnificent creatures.
The birds look great! But both designs are amazing and would work.
The birds make me feel free
The birds may attract more attention for the mural from a wider age range.
The birds really enhance the image. The idea of flight adds to the concept of rising as a community. Freedom and energy.
The blue tones resonate more with the local area (and with Monash's branding!). Oakleigh is a place filled with vibrant people, and I feel that the vibrant colours suit this
The bright and vibrant colour scheme fits better with the surrounds.
The brighter colours depict a more lively and encouraging outlook for the community.
The brightness and inclusion of Bunjil and Waa make 1 feel more uplifting and hopeful. It captures water, earth and sky, along with community. -adult
The colors and the bird
the colour & movement
The colours are bright and vibrant which I like.
The colours are cheerful and birds are beautiful and easy to see the other 1 is hard to read and not as cheerful.
The colours are lovely - both designs are beautiful but the first appealed to me more. It would be terrific to see more of these types of murals all over Monash and be a leader in this space.
The crow and eagle stand out more and provide movement to the artwork.
The eagle

The figurative elements of Bunjil and Waa are stunning, and the vibrant colour palette works better in the urban environment in which it is situated
The gum leaves look more balanced as they highlight the eagles.
The iconic image of Bunjil the eagle
The inclusion of bunjil the eagle makes the first mural a dynamic inclusion for a busy corner in Oakleigh
The mural which features the Eagle looks great and I am sure would make the grey wall it is covering be a fitting gateway to Oakleigh. Well done Monash. We need to do all we can to recognise and build strong partnerships with our First Nations Peoples.
The second option is also very good but when I first looked at it, I had no thoughts, feelings or reaction unlike the first concept. I believe the first reaction is the most important when it comes to visual impact. The first concept made me feel that it was more alive and natural. Also easy on the eyes, it makes you take notice. The other one does nothing like that for me.
The soft earth one is super boring
This artwork represents more of the beliefs of the Aboriginal people - that is, the belief that Bunjil the Eagle created the land which is represented by the other interconnected artwork representing the people, land, rivers and trees.
This design stands out and elicits a feeling of joy and pride. The inclusion of Bunjil and Waa are important to me, as they are important deities that have been with this land for many thousands of years but are not as well known as they ought to be.
To loudly celebrate the traditional custodians of the land we live on. Bright to also hide any attempt to graffiti
Vibrancy of Concept 1 - and love the birds
While I love the energy of the colours, what a pity the Magpie and Currawong weren't represented instead – both of whom are much more common along Scotchmans Creek, as is quite a robust snake population...
With more nature concept and bright colour will last longer.
Without the eagle and crow, option 2 appears to be missing something. I like the brighter option and prefer the colour palette of option 1.
You can see this design from further away. It also gives a sense of vibrancy. The soft design looks wishy-washy.

Concept 2

A peaceful and calming artwork will look good at this site
As is the background story
Can we please have a blend of the two? Two birds in soft Earth colours?
I did not like the birds of prey, would rather green budgerigars which are native to the outback.
I initially preferred the bright and vibrant, but looking at the preview images of the paintings as they would appear when installed I think that the soft earth mural looks better.
I just prefer the colour tones but like both concepts
I like it better

I like the colour palette and how it takes centre stage without the birds
I like the colours better.
I like the continuity of the pattern.
I liked the eagle included in the mural
I prefer the colours and design of the Soft earth option. Apart from anything else I hope it saves that corner from development. I find the aims of this project both commendable and ambitious in terms of improving community safety and reducing tagging and bill posting.
I prefer the cool colour scheme of option 2, although the addition of birds in concept 1 was tempting. The brighter colours in concept 1 looks more 'gimmicky' and importantly a layman might easily miss the idea that it showcases aboriginal artwork.
I prefer this mural because there seems to be more of a connectedness between the different features and colours of the land. Concept 1 uses colours that disassociate rather than connect. And though the eagle/crow work as symbols, they become the focus that separates the foreground from the background, thus, creating a hierarchy of importance (iconography vs background). Furthermore, I'm not sure that I've seen too many eagles around the Monash council in my 7 years of living in the area.
I think it has a more traditional first nations look - the Eagles flying seems more of a western viewpoint.
I think it reflects Oakleigh's CBD a bit better
I would love to see Bunjil and Waa, fly high, don't forget if possible to have a plaque on what they mean/Story and artists' names, please!
I'm not sure why other than to say I was very drawn to this one, an instinctual decision, despite loving birds
It will give everyday feeling that we are working closely with Mother Earth.
It's more representative of the area.
It's not too bright, not so distracting for drivers. More inclusive for people who may find it difficult to look at bright colours. I like the earthy tones, giving a natural look to the mural and for the area.
Looks and feels more indigenous!
Looks more muted.
More durable over time
More in line with Country.
More muted colours and appropriate for the Oakleigh community.
Relates more to First Nations culture
Seems to fit the surrounding area.
The colours look more settled and suitable for the space.

The first has birds of prey, so I prefer the second. Though as a white fella on stolen indigenous i think my opinion on this should count way less than indigenous Australians from the area.
The other one is too bright for me
The softer colours seem to stand out more again the usual signs and advertising around. More effective
there are too many colours in the bright and vibrant one.
This mural will be more enduring.
Unfortunately it looks like a filter was used in concept 2 (the asphalt and building are noticeably darker), which makes the entire picture look more appealing.