

# Murals Toolkit

A practical guide for Aucklanders

*(Revised June 2018)*





Front cover: **Jeremy Shirley**, *Beach Haven*, 2018, acrylic and spray paint, Lysander Crescent, Beach Haven

This page: **Reuben Paterson (Ngati Rangitahi/Ngai Tuhoe)**, *Andale, Andale*, 2014, glitter and mixed media on aluminium, Newmarket Train Station

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## Introduction

### Thinking about creating a mural in your neighbourhood?

These guidelines are designed to help you through the process of creating a mural in your neighbourhood. They provide step by step advice on planning, preparing, producing and then caring for the mural. The guidelines also contain useful tools, tips and sources of information. They are primarily aimed at community members. If you are an artist, you may find that some aspects of these guidelines don't apply but many will still be useful, especially if you have not previously undertaken a mural project or if you are working with a community group.

But first, a word about murals.

## What is a mural?

### A mural is an artwork applied directly to a large surface in a public space.

As a form of street art, murals can be distinguished from graffiti-vandalism, tagging or guerrilla advertising. Murals are typically temporary in nature and can be produced in a variety of ways – for example; painted, digital, ceramic, airbrush and aerosol can.

## Why murals?

Experience shows that well-produced murals in well-considered locations often become neighbourhood icons and can have a dramatic impact on communities and passers-by. For this reason, it is important to think and plan carefully before starting a mural project. If a mural is the right project for you, we hope that this toolkit helps your mural achieve your goals.

Consider the following points when deciding if creating a mural is the most appropriate response to an issue or opportunity.

### The benefits of mural making

- Murals are an accessible and relatively low-cost way to improve a space.
- They allow people to shape their community and to create a sense of place.
- Almost anyone can be involved in mural making.
- Planned street art can discourage anti-social behaviour and graffiti-vandalism.
- They can promote belonging and a sense of identity and pride.

## What makes a great mural?

Great murals:

- encourage genuine community participation and offer a chance for people to develop new skills
- have a high quality and memorable design with a clear message
- are well-prepared and cared for
- are relevant to the community (eg: highlight the history of a place)
- are unique, and respectful of the site and local features
- help make their neighbourhood stronger and safer.

## Some of the challenges

People who have made murals before say that these are some of the trickier things to achieve:

- staying true to your vision and aims
- achieving a quality outcome
- securing a site (both location and surface quality)
- finding the right artist
- securing funding
- maintaining and decommissioning the mural.

## A few questions before beginning

These five simple checks can help you feel confident about proceeding with a mural project.

- **Opportunity and response:** Why create a mural? What problem are you trying to solve, or what opportunity are you responding to? Are the reasons and aims for creating a mural clear? Will a mural achieve these aims and genuinely make a difference?
- **Community generated:** How can the community be involved, and will the mural project benefit them?
- **Personnel and experience:** Do you have access to the necessary skills and expertise for the whole project? Will you include a professional artist in the team?
- **Location:** Do you have an appropriate site with a suitable surface? Can you easily find out who owns the site? What activity happens, or will happen, in that location that the mural might affect?
- **Final check:** Are you confident that a mural will achieve your desired outcomes and benefits, or is a different project more appropriate? (eg: planting a garden or a having good clean-up of the area).

## A visual guide to the mural toolkit



## How to use this toolkit

So, you have decided that a mural is the right project and now you are ready to create or commission your own mural. If you are going to commit to making a mural, it is worth doing it properly. It can be a complicated process, but there are four key stages to work through. Each stage has a few steps to follow and we have provided advice and checklists to keep your project on track.

### Four clear stages



### Recommended documents

We suggest you create the following documents as part of this process:

- project brief
- project plan
- artist brief and commission contract (if a professional artist is commissioned)
- site owner agreement
- maintenance plan

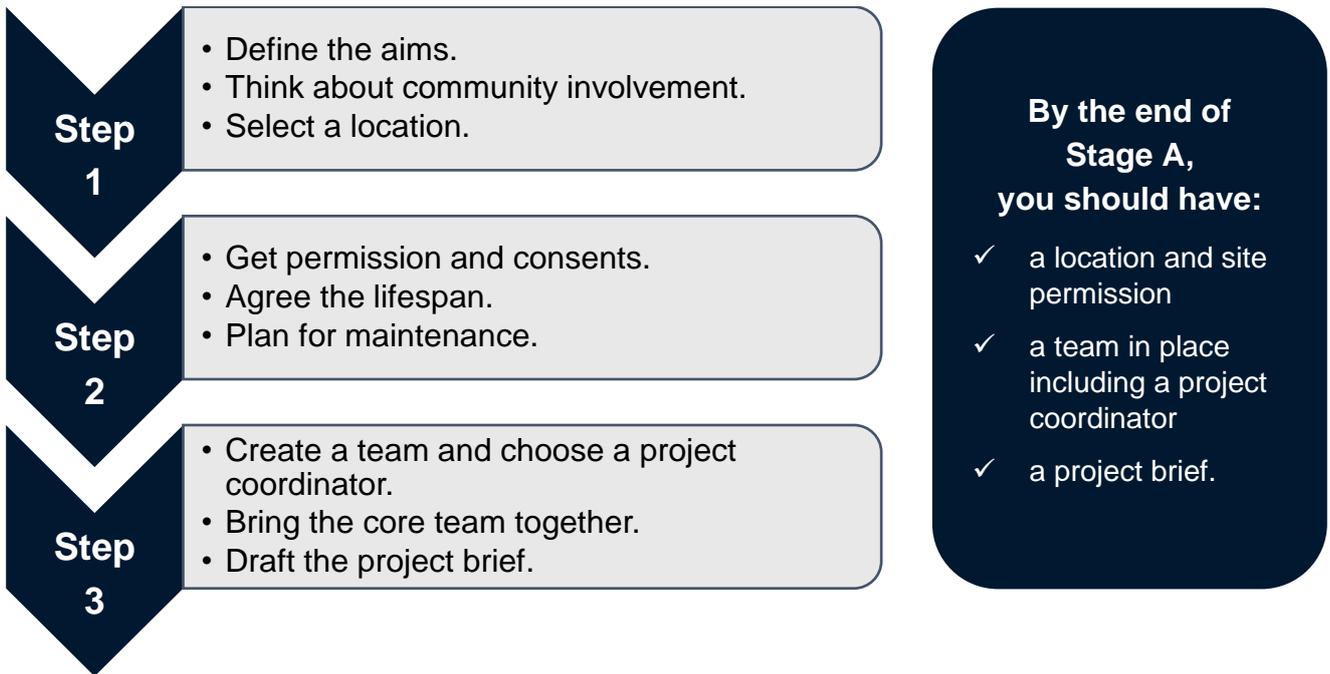
Unless you own the property, you will require site owner approval, so we have provided a simple template in *Appendix B: Briefs, Plans and Useful Forms* at the end of this toolkit. There is also advice about what to include in your project brief, project plan, artist brief and artist commission contract.

### Seek advice and inspiration

There is a wealth of information available online, with examples varying widely in terms of ambition, scale and cost. Here are a few suggestions to inspire you.

- City of Sydney, Public Art: [www.cityartsydney.com.au](http://www.cityartsydney.com.au)
- City of Philadelphia Mural Art Programme: [www.muralarts.org](http://www.muralarts.org)
- SCAPE Public Art, Christchurch: [www.scapebiennial.org.nz](http://www.scapebiennial.org.nz)
- Public Art Information: [www.publicartonline.org.uk](http://www.publicartonline.org.uk)

## Stage A: Planning for your project



### Step 1: Why and where?

#### Aims of your mural project

Start by describing why you want to create a mural, what you hope to achieve and why it is important to your group. Do you have a clear purpose and a topic? The advice in ‘Why murals?’ and ‘What makes a great mural?’ on pages four and five should help you. Be ambitious but also be realistic. These aims should be the starting point of your project brief.

#### Involving the community and local businesses

A successful, well-loved mural relies on community support so its always valuable to find ways to consult with and involve people in the area. Talk to neighbours, local associations, community groups, and businesses. They may have ideas on the topic and style, and they may wish to help or participate.

#### What makes a good location?

- safe, easy access for the team and those viewing it
- good visibility is vital – you want people to see it!
- a surface that is in good condition, and is suitable for painting and can be thoroughly cleaned
- a surrounding environment that will be genuinely improved by the mural
- will not add ‘visual noise’ to a location and is not in direct proximity to an existing artwork.

Please note: Auckland Council does not maintain a register of walls that are available for mural making.

## Undertake due diligence

It's important to be aware of the site's heritage value and any significance to local iwi. You may need to seek further advice on this. It is also important to check whether redevelopment or another artwork is planned for the site. If the site has an existing artwork, it is your responsibility to liaise with the author and site owner to obtain consent to paint over or next to it.

## Step 2: Practicalities

### Secure permission and consents

It is vital to establish who owns the surface you want to use and to get written permission from the legal owner or controlling institution before you begin. Discuss with the owner what might happen to the mural if your chosen site is sold.

For ownership, there are two scenarios:

- privately owned, or
- publicly owned.

In both cases, the same rules apply. You will need to contact the owner and get written agreement for the mural, including the proposed theme or topic for the mural, the planned lifespan, who will be responsible for maintenance, and an outline of the decommissioning process (see page 16 for more information on decommissioning).

To obtain permission for the surface:

- if it is publicly owned, contact **landadvisors@aklc.govt.nz**
- if it is privately owned, contact the owner directly.

If the planned site is the exterior of a tenanted building you will also need to obtain agreement from the tenants/occupiers.

## Top Tips

If finding a site is tough, consider painting on panels or a canvas sheet. This is useful for displaying the mural in different locations, including indoors.

Establish a good relationship with the site owner from the outset. If it is part of a building, try not to disrupt the business being conducted by the owner, or tenants/occupiers.

Take photos along the way and create a social media page, scrapbook or blog detailing the end-to-end process as a record of your achievement.



*Welcome to Glen Innes, designed and painted by Glen Innes youth assisted by Gary Silipa and Sean Hill, 2017.  
Photo credit: Brendan Kitto*

## **Fundraising**

Businesses, business associations and community groups can sometimes assist with products, funding, publicity or volunteers for your project. Be sure to approach them well in advance with your requests and let them know how their assistance will be recognised (such as promotion on the mural or via any publicity you receive).

More ideas for funding include:

- Generosity New Zealand is an online search tool for funding opportunities. Visit <http://generosity.org.nz>
- Paint companies may offer sponsorship-in-kind by donating or discounting paint and supplies to help your project. Ask about paint that has been incorrectly tinted and may be available at a discounted price.
- Resene Paints runs a Mural Masterpieces competition with prize money. Visit [www.resene.co.nz/murals](http://www.resene.co.nz/murals)
- Auckland Council grants funding to support community-oriented projects: [www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/grants](http://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/grants)

## Lifespan

Murals typically last three to five years. After this time, the condition of the mural may decline, the topic or theme may become less relevant, or the owner may want to renovate or demolish the site. For these reasons, it is important to agree on the lifespan of your mural before starting work, and document it in any contracts or plans.

Towards the end of the agreed period, review the condition and relevance of the mural, talk with the site owner, and decide whether to keep it for a further period or remove it (decommission).

## Maintenance

It is essential to plan for the care and maintenance of your mural after completion. Its longevity can depend on exposure to weather, and the paint and surfaces used. Think about who will check it, repair it and, if necessary, remove it. You should make a provision for ongoing maintenance in your budget

## Step 3: Who and how?

### Create a team

This is the moment to bring together a core group of people who are committed to the project. There are two ways you can form your team:

- community-led, or
- artist-led.

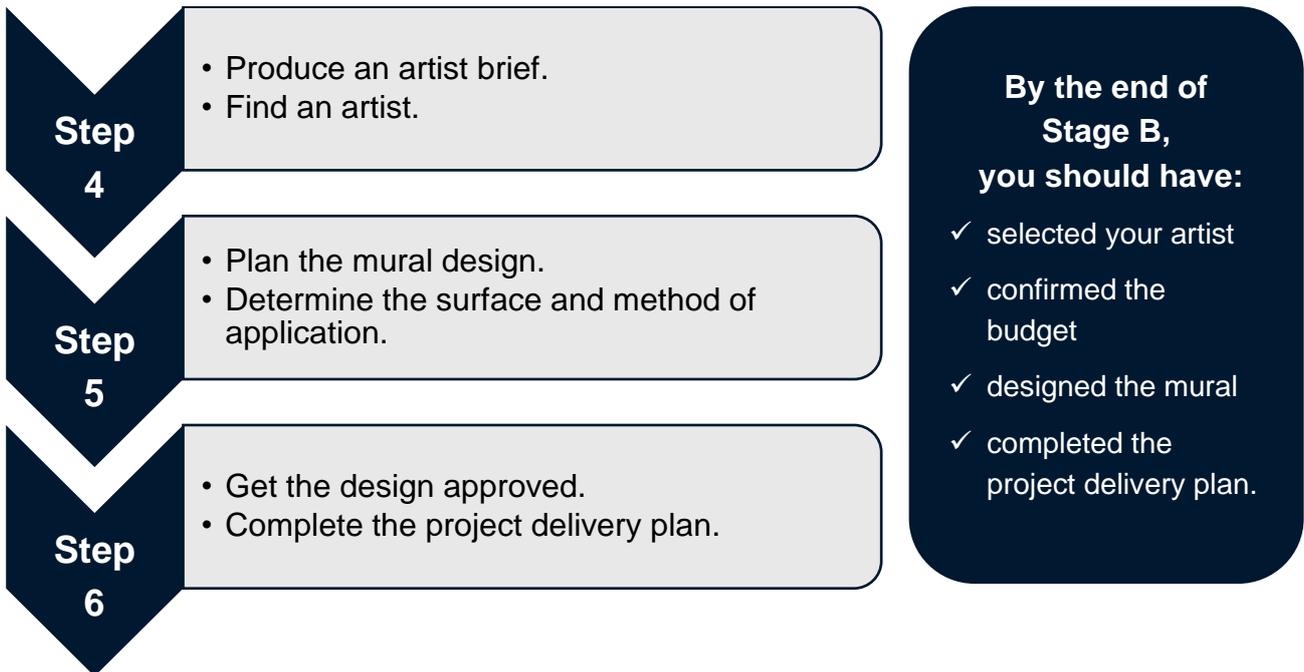
Even if the mural will be community-led, consider whether you want to involve a professional artist in your team and if so, in what capacity. Involving a professional artist has many advantages. Their experience and skills could help you achieve a great outcome and they are likely to be knowledgeable about budgets and timeframes. Be sure to select an artist who has the right skills and experience for the project.

You will also need a project coordinator - someone who has the time and energy to see the mural project through from planning to completion, and who is a good organiser and communicator.

### Create a project brief

Developing a project brief will help you clarify what you want your mural to achieve and how you will make the mural. A list of topics to include in your project brief is provided in *Appendix B: Briefs, Plans and Useful Forms*, and you'll also find a budget checklist in *Appendix A: Checklists* at the end of this toolkit. Although some of the detail will emerge during Stage B, we recommend that you complete as much as you can of the project brief now.

## Stage B: Getting prepared



Now is the time to decide on how you'll produce your mural and to develop a plan for the project.

### Step 4: Commissioning an artist

#### Creating an artist brief

If you decide to commission an artist, here are a few pointers to help you find and contract an artist:

- Start by agreeing what skills or style you are looking for, and what you will want them to do. eg: do you want them to liaise with the community on topics and themes, or just paint the mural?
- Then, write a brief for the artist using the project brief as a foundation.
- Artist fees depend on the size and complexity of the project, and responsibilities and professional standing of the artist.

#### Finding an artist

You may know an artist already. If not, here is a tried and tested approach:

- Create an advert asking for expressions of interest and advertise it on arts and culture websites such as [www.thebigidea.co.nz](http://www.thebigidea.co.nz). You can also promote it through your local community arts centre and networks.
- Share the brief with interested artists and ask them to submit proposals that demonstrate their work and their ideas by a certain date.

- Get your team together to assess the proposals and select an artist.
- Once you have selected an artist, finalise an agreement with them. We have provided some advice on what to include in a simple artist commission contract in *Appendix B: Briefs, Plans and Useful Forms* at the end of this toolkit.

## Step 5: Designing your mural

### Workshops

Bring people together to establish a concept and brainstorm the mural design, then work it up into a detailed design. Take into account any opinions and ideas from the community and stakeholders, as well as the original reasons you undertook this project. Think about ‘What makes a great mural?’ (page five). If you’re working with an artist, they will be able to lead this process.

### Determining surface and method

When selecting your site, think carefully about the surface it offers and the mural-making methods that will suit. There is a checklist for ‘preparing the surface’ in *Appendix A: Checklists* at the end of this toolkit that may be useful. Decide which method of application will best suit your design and the surface. If you’re not sure, get advice.

## Step 6: Securing approval and planning the next stage

### Getting the design approved

Once your mural is designed, present the design concept to the owner of the location / surface for their approval, and with key stakeholders such as community groups, local associations or funders.

### Completing the project plan

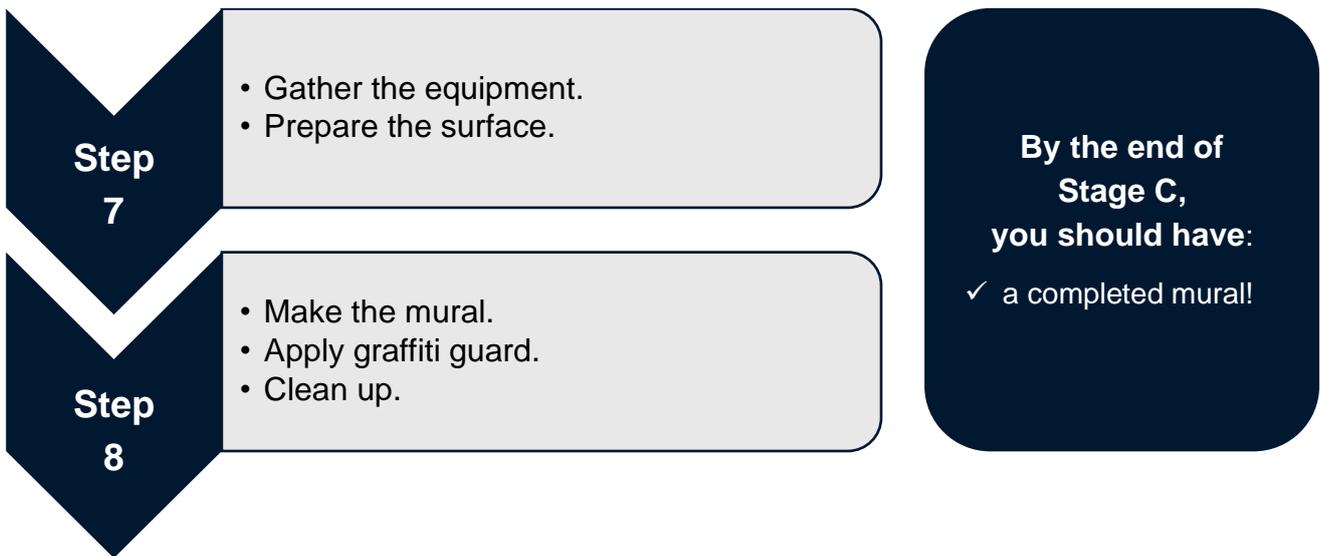
By this point you should have all the information necessary to complete your project plan. This will prepare you for the next stage of producing the mural. We’ve provided some advice on what to include in your project plan in *Appendix B: Briefs, Plans and Useful Forms* at the end of this toolkit.

### Top Tip

When planning, keep in mind that weather conditions may affect drying times. If the weather is bad, alternate work days may be required.

It is good to give your mural a title as early as possible in the process, so you can start using it publicly and getting your community excited about the project.

## Stage C: Producing your mural



### Step 7: Getting ready

We've included a checklist for assessing and preparing the mural surface in *Appendix A: Checklists* at the end of this toolkit.

#### Gathering equipment

Here is a list of some of the equipment you might need:

- cleaning materials
- water blaster
- paint
- undercoat
- graffiti guard product
- cherry picker / scissor lift / scaffold
- a selection of brush and roller sizes
- masking tape if you need to mask off areas
- plastic drop cloths to protect the area around the mural
- WET PAINT signs
- cones/ tape to cordon off the area
- goggles and protective equipment
- individual small containers for paint
- rubbish bins
- sun protection
- high visibility vests.

#### Preparing your site and surface

Here are a few pointers:

- Clear the site of any hazards and provide shelter for participants if needed.
- Thoroughly clean the wall/surface with appropriate products.
- Fill any cracks or grooves in the surface.
- For a sealed surface, a penetrating oil undercoat gives good adhesion for your mural paint.
- A coat of white, low sheen paint works well to provide a neutral base, or if the mural is mostly one colour consider painting that colour as the undercoat.
- Acrylics are some of the most durable and accessible paints for exterior murals.

## Step 8: Making the mural

### Health and Safety

A proactive approach to Health and Safety is vital throughout your project, but particularly when you get to the mural-making stage.

If community members are involved, this invokes a wider range of health and safety considerations and requires a higher level of supervision. It is important that everyone involved, including volunteers, understands their responsibilities and seeks to reduce health and safety risks. For the lead organiser, this includes undertaking a risk assessment at an early stage and creating a health and safety plan.

The primary piece of legislation governing health and safety practices in New Zealand is the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 (HSWA). For a useful source of information, visit [www.worksafe.govt.nz](http://www.worksafe.govt.nz).

We've provided a list of general considerations to help you form your health and safety plan in *Appendix A: Checklists* at the end of this toolkit.

### Mural painting

There are three common methods of transferring the design onto the surface:

- measured grid: the most simple and effective, it ensures proportions and layout will be correct
- projection: use a data, slide or overhead projector to outline the projected design onto the prepared surface
- drawing freehand: if your mural involves large areas of colour, or if you're improvising, let your team use their imagination and see what happens.

If you are working with an artist, they will lead this process.

### Cleaning up

We've included a checklist for keeping the site clean and tidy at the end of each day in *Appendix A: Checklists* at the end of this toolkit.

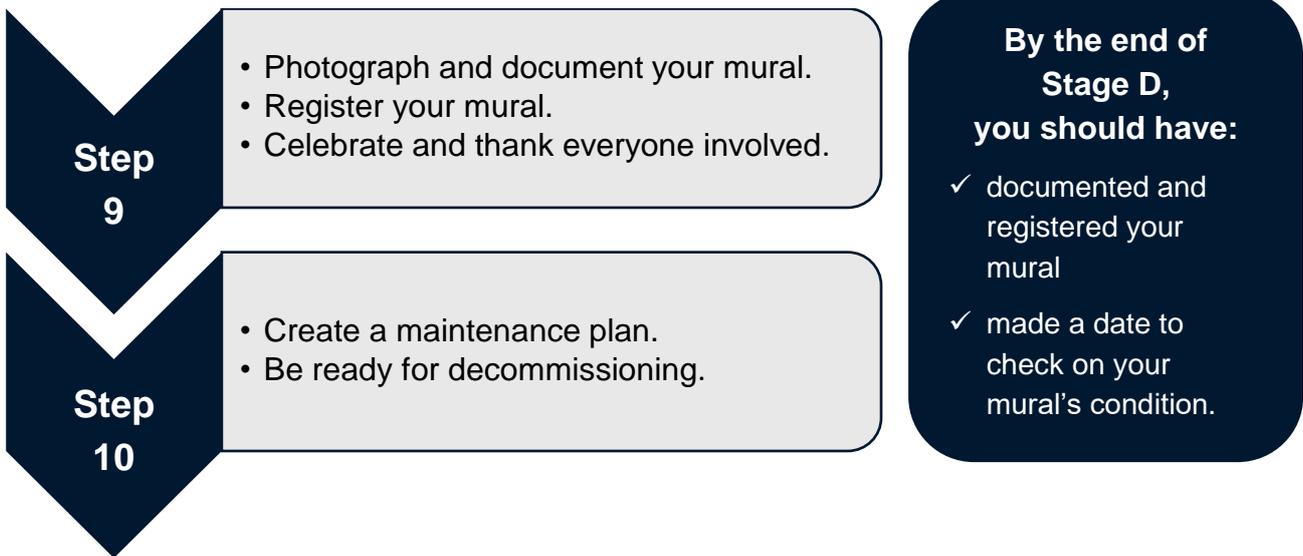
### Applying graffiti guard

When you have completed the mural, protect it with a sealant such as graffiti guard. This minimises sun damage and means that any graffiti applied over the top can be more easily removed. If you need assistance, Auckland Council offers a graffiti registration and removal service via its website: [www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/graffiti](http://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/graffiti)

### Top Tip

Rain and dampness can affect preparation and drying time. Summer is great for quick drying but remember to provide hats and sunscreen for people.

## Stage D: Launching and caring for your mural



### Step 9: Celebration and registration

Once your mural is complete, it's time to celebrate! Take plenty of photos! Invite your community! This is also a good time to look back at what you have achieved, review the project and acknowledge everyone who has contributed. You may choose to have your mural blessed, if its appropriate.

Remember to register your mural by emailing [publicart@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz](mailto:publicart@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz)

When a mural is produced with the permission of the structure's owner, it is eligible for inclusion in the Auckland Council Murals Register. Inclusion in the register will avoid your mural being inadvertently removed. No registered mural will be removed by Auckland Council without first checking the register, so you can rest assured that your hard work will not suddenly disappear without your knowledge.

Please note, you are still responsible for the care and ultimate removal of the mural!

### Step 10: Think maintenance and decommissioning

Your plan should include regular checks on the condition of your mural and a budget for repairs. If there is any damage and an artist was commissioned, they should be given first option to undertake the repairs.

Undertake a review of the condition and continued relevance of the mural three years after the mural is installed. At that time, you can decide whether to keep the mural for another one or two years or remove (decommission) it. It is important to plan from the outset to decommission the mural at a future date and to document this in all plans and agreements.

# PAPATOETOE GENERAL STORE



Christine Trout, *General Store*, 1997, paint on wall, Old Papatoetoe Town Centre  
Photo credit: Patrick Reynolds

## Appendix A: Checklists

These checklists are provided as a guide. Please seek advice and undertake your own research to ensure that you have covered everything.

### Assessing and preparing the mural surface checklist

Here is a checklist for assessing and preparing your surface. There may be other things to consider, we recommend getting advice.

- If plywood can be affixed, make sure it will withstand the elements. Consider the thickness of plywood and linkages between plywood sheets.
- Fill and coat all edges with several layers of paint including an alkyd primer and any protective top coating.
- Finish top edges with plastic molding to prevent water from penetrating.
- Apply a line of caulking between the plywood and the surface to which it is attached.

Be aware that murals first painted onto wood or plywood cannot usually be attached to solid concrete or stucco.

### Budget checklist

To help you to create a realistic budget for your mural project, here are some possible costs to consider:

- fees for the project coordinator and artist
- consultation, hui and workshop costs (eg: venue hire, materials, catering, transport)
- research and development fees
- site preparation
- materials and resources
- opening celebration
- promotion or publicity
- photography
- an allowance for unexpected costs
- maintenance and repairs
- specialist advice.

### Health and safety checklist

- Consider the possibility of injury, paint spillage, inclement weather. What will you do if this happens and what can you do to avoid it happening?

- ❑ Protect the mural site by putting out cones and provide people with high visibility vests.
- ❑ Cover the ground with sheets and provide rubbish bins.
- ❑ Think about access to drinking water, storage and bathroom facilities.
- ❑ If you are working above three metres, you may need equipment such as scaffold / scissor lift and someone to be on the ground in support.
- ❑ You may need a Traffic Management Plan to guide people away from the mural making site and to ensure everyone is safe from traffic.
- ❑ It is worth holding an appropriate amount of public liability insurance to cover any unintended personal injury or damage to property. If you are working with an artist, check that they have such insurance.
- ❑ Make sure there is someone on-site with a first aid certificate and a fully-charged cell phone to call for an ambulance in case of incident or serious injury.
- ❑ Make sure the street address of your location is known and any instructions for getting to your site are written down and easily accessible.
- ❑ Think about hazardous substances (such as paint thinners), and how you will store them on-site and away from public access.
- ❑ Will you need shade from the sun or rain? If you are going to use an ezi-up tent or gazebo, use sandbags or pegs to prevent it from blowing away or collapsing.

### Eco friendly site cleaning

- ❑ If paint is spilled, quickly clean up as much as possible and while paint is wet, treat with a solvent cleaner, then rinse with water. A hose and stiff-bristled brush is effective for water-based paint
- ❑ Wipe or squeeze excess paint onto an absorbent material such as old rags or newspaper and allow this material to dry and dispose of it with household waste.
- ❑ Wash brushes, rollers and other equipment with water in a 20-litre or similar sized container.
- ❑ Transfer the washed equipment to a second container filled with clean water to rinse – by the next morning, the paint solids in the first container will have settled down to the bottom of the container.
- ❑ Tip off the clear water from this container onto a garden, grass or open area away from streams, waste water drains or the coastline.
- ❑ Dispose of the paint solids at the bottom of the first container by scraping them out onto absorbent material and dispose of them with household waste. The second container now can be used as the first wash.
- ❑ Use this rotation system until the job is completed

**Important:** Never allow waste water or chemical solvents from washed paint equipment to enter household or storm water drains or sewers

## Appendix B: Briefs, plans and useful forms

### Project brief

Having a project brief as a foundation helps you clarify what you want your mural to achieve and how you will go about creating the mural. A simple word document is fine, and topics usually include:

- a brief introduction including reasons for undertaking the project and any specific objectives for the project
- the proposed title and topic of mural
- how, or if, the community can participate
- who else is interested in the project (stakeholders) and how you will work with them on your project.
- whether you plan to engage a professional artist
- a description of location and address
- site measurements and photos
- surface and proposed mural-making method
- desired lifespan and maintenance plan
- estimated budget
- a target completion date
- the name of and contact details for the project coordinator.

### Project plan

There are a range of project planning templates online (the term 'project management plan' may be useful in your search). Pick a template that suits you and keep it simple. There is no need to replicate the information in the project brief. Contents of a project plan typically include:

- actions (including who is responsible and dates for completion)
- team roles and responsibilities (including an artist)
- a budget and a plan for managing costs
- a risk assessment and health and safety plan.

Update this document as things change; it will be a useful tool if someone else needs to take over the project for you. Use the plan to regularly review progress, especially the 'action' section.

### Artist brief

Like the project plan, there is a lot of advice online for creating an artist brief. You may find 'design brief' a useful term for searching.

In addition to the information in the project brief, we recommend including:

- a history of the project and information about the individual / organisation leading it (“the commissioner”)
- a description of the site
- the proposed role and scope of artist
- aesthetic considerations: style, materials, your topic and inspiration
- constraints and practicalities
- documentation requirements
- copyright and ownership of the designs and the final artwork
- budget, including artist fee and payment schedule
- timeframe
- main point of contact
- a copy of the Expression of Interest: submission date and requirements; images of previous work; CV or artist’s biography; confirmation of personal liability insurance.

### Simple artist commission contract

The project brief, artist brief and agreed budget form the basis for a contract for service between you – the commissioner – and the artist. Complete the contract before work begins, and include:

- names, definitions and contact details of commissioner and artist
- scope of work and work schedules to be carried out by other parties
- budget, exclusive of artist’s fee and payment schedule
- ownership of preparatory designs and other material
- responsibilities of the artist and of the commissioner
- guarantee that the artwork will be original
- site details
- timeline for creation of artwork
- ownership and maintenance of the mural
- insurances and indemnities - of artist, artwork, other parties
- review period and decommissioning policy after the agreed lifespan of the mural is met
- how a dispute will be negotiated
- an agreement to photographic documentation of the mural making process and finished product and use of photographs
- a copy of the artist brief.

### Site owner approval

You are advised to use the form on page 22 (or your own version of it) to secure the approval of the site owner.

## Agreement between site owner and the mural team

(date)

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (name) declare I am the registered legal owner or am authorised by the legal owner to sign this document, of the proposed mural site at \_\_\_\_\_(address) Auckland.

I have agreed to permit a mural, its theme and lifespan I have also agreed, to be painted on the building / structure located at \_\_\_\_\_ Auckland, being the \_\_\_\_\_ (describe where the location is situated, such as exterior face of the West facing wall of the building).

The lifespan of the mural is agreed to be \_\_\_\_\_ months / years.

At the end of the lifespan, it is agreed the mural will be removed / the mural refreshed for a further agreed period / the location used for a new mural.

I have agreed to allow access to the site at all reasonable times, which will be agreed in advance and have been assured by the Mural Team that all reasonable efforts will be made not to interfere with the business conducted by the Owner and / or other tenants / occupiers at the site.

If repairs are required to the mural, the Owner will notify the Mural Team in writing (email sufficient) of this and allow them a reasonable amount of time to contact the artist (if applicable) and repair the work. If the building / structure is to be demolished or the mural painted over, the Owner will notify the Mural Team prior to demolition or painting.

For the Owner:

Name and title:

\_\_\_\_\_

Email:

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone:

\_\_\_\_\_

Address:

\_\_\_\_\_

For the Mural Team:

Name and title:

\_\_\_\_\_

Email:

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone:

\_\_\_\_\_

Address:

\_\_\_\_\_



Above: **Andrew J Steel** painting for Bradley Lane Project in Glen Innes, 2015  
Below: **Andrew J Steel** mural in progress for Bradley Lane Project in Glenn Innes, 2015  
Photo credit: Brendan Kitto

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Find out more: **phone 09 301 0101**  
or visit **[aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/arts-culture-heritage](http://aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/arts-culture-heritage)**