

Create NSW

Downing Centre
First Nations Art Commissions
Department of Communities and Justice

ARTIST INFORMATION PACK



April 2026

Downing Centre First Nations Art Commissions

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This Artist Information Pack should be read in conjunction with the **Downing Centre First Nations Art Commissions Expression of Interest Guidelines**. Please read this Pack before submitting your application through SmartyGrants.

NSW First Nations artists are invited to apply for the opportunity to deliver public artwork at up to five locations identified at the Downing Centre. You can apply for more than one location in your application.

When developing your idea, you may wish to think about:

- Strength and resilience
- Connection to Country and Culture
- Family, Kin, and Community
- Shared and collective histories

Themes that inform the artworks include:

- Celebration of strength and resilience
- Connection to Country and Culture
- Representation of Family, Kin, Community
- Revealing collective histories

Details, images and budget for each site are provided below to help support your application. All figures provided are excluding GST.

For support, please contact:

Project questions: Create NSW Public Art Program at publicart@create.nsw.gov.au

Cultural questions: Create NSW First Nations Programs at firstnations@create.nsw.gov.au

SmartyGrants technical questions: arts.funding@create.nsw.gov.au

Cover: Downing Centre Cleansing Ceremony, 2025. Photo: Brendan Blacklock.

SITES

Commission 1 – Ground Floor Staircase (installation)

- Total project budget **\$160,000** including:
 - Proposed artist fee **\$36,800**
 - Artwork fabrication budget **\$110,400**

An internal grand spiral staircase links the ground floor to Level 1, positioned within a large void that extends from the lower ground level up to Level 1. The staircase and void are visible across all three levels, and the ground floor foyer features ceiling heights exceeding 4 metres. The staircase underwent refurbishment in the 1980s, with a new paint finish applied in December 2025.

Artists are invited to create a visually compelling and cohesive installation within the staircase void that enhances the culture, architectural character of the space, lighting can be included and should and responds sensitively to the heritage setting.

Installation Requirements

- The installation may be fixed to the underside of the staircase, suspended within the void, or incorporate both approaches.
- All components must be securely installed.
- The artwork must not be reachable from the stairwell, nor include any components that could be used as a weapon.
- The design must be sympathetic to both the heritage character of the space and the recently updated finishes.
- Integrated lighting can be included as part of the installation.

Site Images



Commission 2 – Ceremonial Courtrooms (weaving/textile 2 artworks)

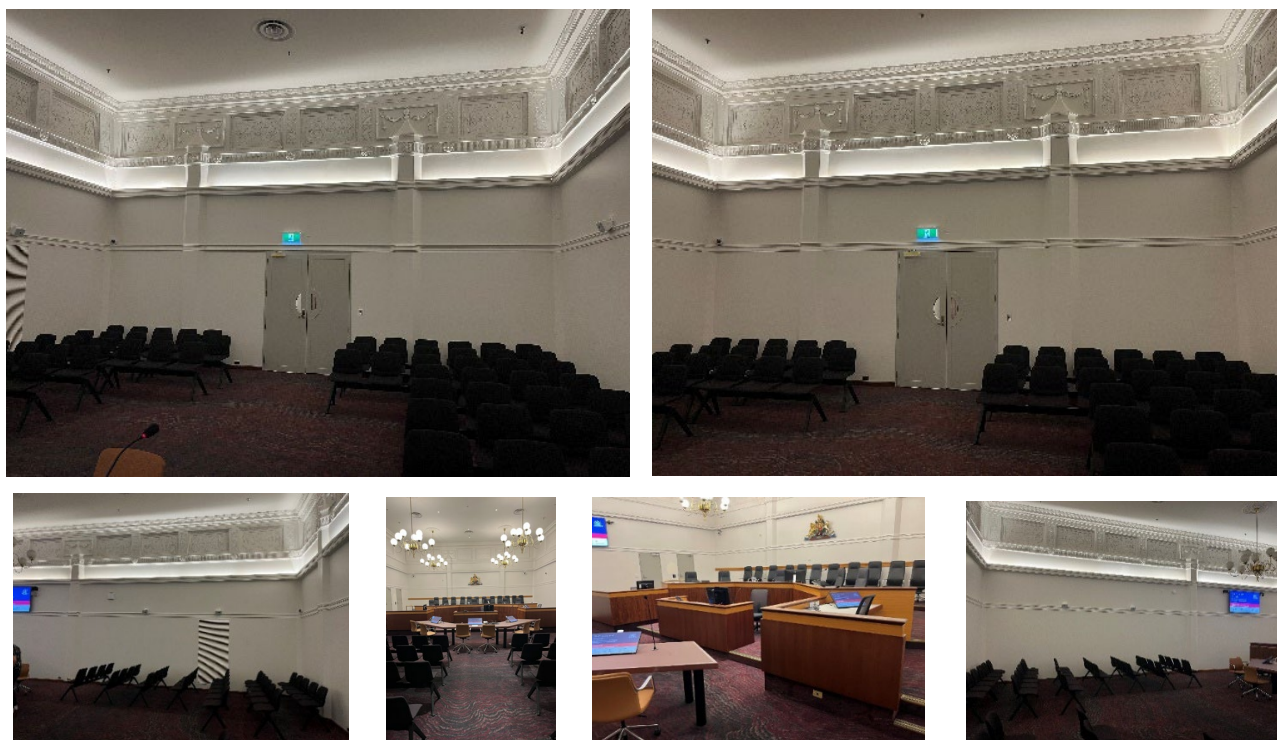
- Total project budget **\$96,800** including:
 - Proposed artist fee **\$22,500**
 - Artwork fabrication budget **\$67,500**

Two ceremonial courtrooms are located on Level 5, designed in a faux-Federation style and recently refurbished with new paint, carpet, joinery, and furniture. There is an opportunity to introduce a textile, weaving, or sculptural artwork that acknowledges Country and complements the renewed interiors.

Installation Requirements

- The artwork must be securely installed and must not interfere with courtroom operations. As part of the design process, the artwork is proposed for the rear wall of the courtrooms considering sightlines, security, and functionality.
- The artworks for the two courtrooms may be distinct and non-identical, yet they should clearly belong to the same conceptual and visual language.
- Each piece should integrate seamlessly with the architectural character of the space and embody the intent described by Judge Allen: “as infinite as the culture it represents.”
- The artwork will be located on the rear walls of the courtroom (top two images).

Site Images



Commission 3 – Staircase Level 4/5

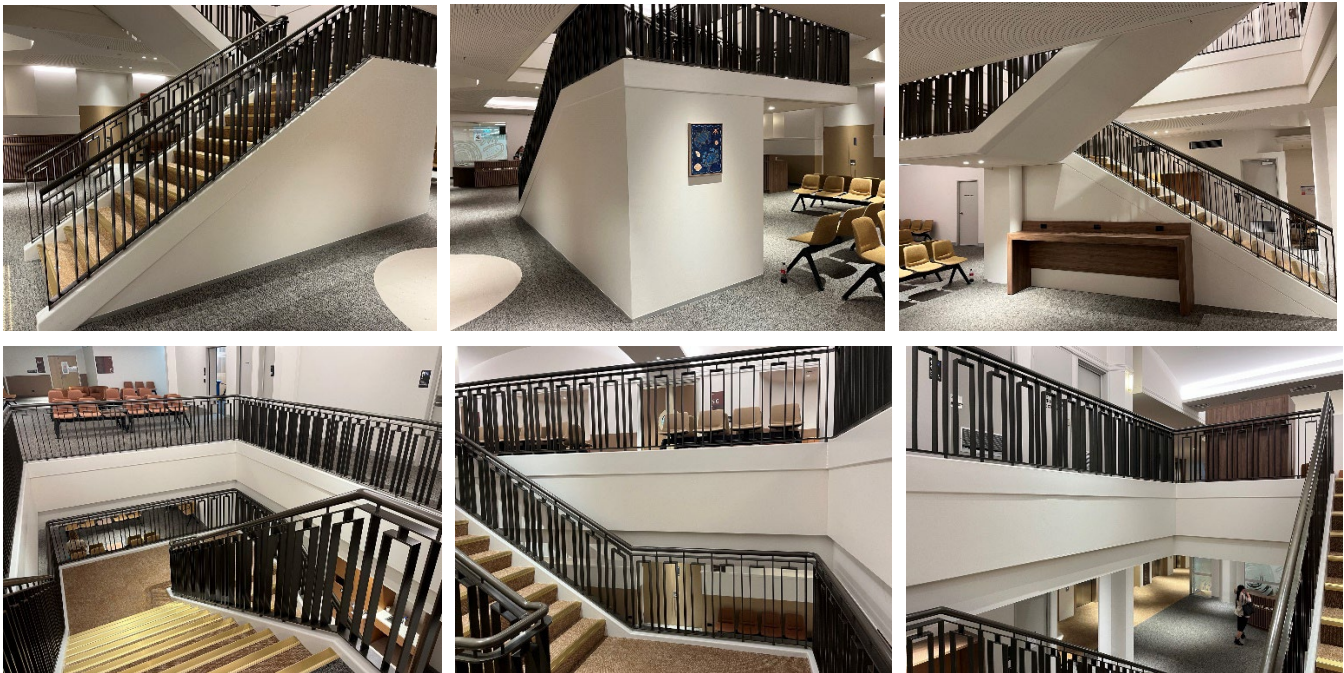
- Total project budget **\$60,000** including:
 - Proposed artist fee **\$15,960**
 - Artwork fabrication budget **\$37,240**

The interconnecting staircase between Levels 4 and 5 is a highly trafficked, functional circulation space – the busiest area within the Downing Centre. Any proposed artwork must therefore be robust, durable, and capable of withstanding high volumes of foot traffic.

Installation Requirements

- The installation is to take the form of a 2D graphic vinyl mural. While the artwork is not required to adhere strictly to the existing earth toned palette, it should remain visually sympathetic to the surrounding finishes, i.e. a bold graphic.
- The graphic treatment should wrap continuously around the painted surfaces of the staircase, covering both the internal and external faces to create a cohesive visual experience.

Site Images



Commission 4 – Exit Tunnel/Security (digital file for a mural)

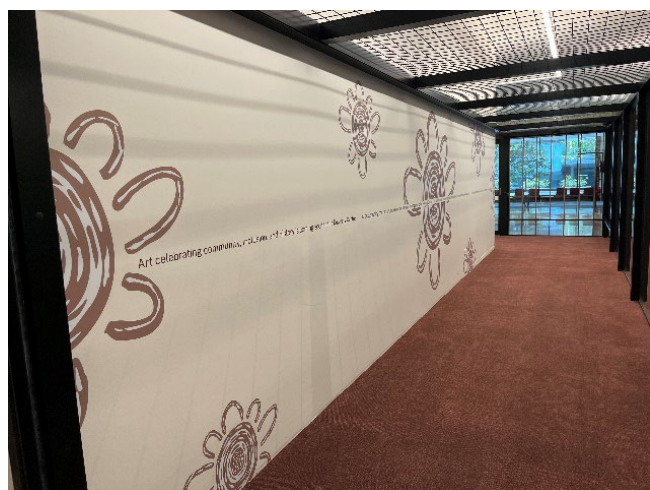
- Proposed artist fee **\$12,960**

The Ground Floor exit tunnel is another highly trafficked functional circulation space with every member of the public and legal profession utilising the tunnel to exit the building. The proposed artwork must therefore be robust, durable, and capable of withstanding high volumes of foot traffic.

Installation Requirements

- The digital file provided by the artists should accommodate the two painted surfaces of the exit tunnel, wrap continuously around the surfaces and take the form of a 2D graphic vinyl mural.
- The design must be sympathetic to both the heritage character of the space, the recently updated finishes and Commission 1, the central stairwell installation.
- Final artwork should be completed within the proposed timeframe with installation to occur at a later date. Fabrication and installation budget will be provided separately by DCJ.
- Artists will submit a digital file in accordance with the fabricator's requirements which will be confirmed at a later date.

Site Images



Commission 5 – Castlereagh Street Glass Panels (digital file)

- Proposed artist fee **\$29,160**

The heritage façade facing Castlereagh Street comprises 23 large, glazed panels plus smaller panels surrounding the 3 disused entryways. The artist is to develop a continuous graphic artwork that conveys a cohesive narrative across all 23 panels.

Artwork Requirements

- Shop drawings are required to clearly illustrate how the story unfolds across the full elevation.
- The artwork will be applied to the glazing as full colour graphic film. The background must not be transparent; it should either be integrated as a coloured element within the artwork or provided as a solid opaque backing.
- Final artwork should be completed within the proposed timeframe with installation to occur at a later date. Fabrication and installation budget will be provided separately by DCJ.
- Artists will submit a digital file in accordance with the fabricator's requirements which will be confirmed at a later date.

Site Images

