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Walcha's Open Air Gallery of sculptures and artworks



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25. Walcha Cemetery – Gordon Hookey, Melbourne: 2002
These two monuments were placed as a memorial to the many unmarked Aboriginal graves at the Cemetery and an active act of reconciliation within the Walcha community. They were unveiled by Mrs Shirley Davidson, Mrs Beryl Green and Mrs Sue Green, respected elders of the local Aboriginal community.

26. "Life on First Breath" – Victor Nui, Tonga: 1999 / Installed 2005
2m x 1.75m • This sculpture was carved from red cedar for Sculpture by the Sea 1999. It was donated to the Walcha community by Sculpture by the Sea in 2005.

27. "Birds Song" – Ross Laurie, Walcha: 2005
This sculpture made from galvanised iron, old timber and wire was created by local artist, Ross Laurie using motifs drawn by K-6 students at Walcha Central School. Senior students assisted with the engineering and stonework and funding was provided by Arts North West.

28. "Where eels swim" – Stephen King, Walcha: 2005
This mosaic was made with polished granite and depicts one of the aboriginal meanings for "Walcha". Stephen King was assisted by local artist, Myfanwy Gullifer.

29. "Bell tower" – Vaclav Fiala, Czech Republic: 2005
6m x 2m x 2m • In 2004, Vaclav Fiala, a renowned Czech artist, came to Stephen King's Walcha property to make a sculpture for Sculpture by the Sea, Bondi, an acquisitive art prize. Walcha Council and Walcha Arts Council's decision to buy it was thwarted when the sculpture won the major prize. Fiala returned the following year to make a second sculpture for Walcha and a third for entry into Sculpture by the Sea, 2005, which also won the major prize that year. "Bell tower" was constructed from hardwood sourced from coastal rainforest and milled in Walcha.

30. Middle Street Bridge mosaic – Stephen King & Myfanwy Gullifer: 2006
This mosaic depicts an eclectic stream of water life and was created using ceramic tiles made by Walcha Central art students and set into the top of the footpath wall on the new bridge spanning Apsley River.

31. "The Board" – Stephen King, Walcha: 2007
4.5m x 0.6m x 0.6m • This sculpture, carved from stringybark, travelled from Walcha to Bondi to Cottesloe Beach, Perth before finally returning to Walcha to be purchased for the Walcha community by the Walcha Town and Country Club.

32. "Up and Down" – Myfanwy Gullifer, Walcha: 2007
180 x 100cm • This mosaic was pieced together from porcelain during the redesigning of Walcha's streetscape.

33. Goodcom Communications shopfront – Charlie Trivers, Wamberal, NSW: 2007
Ironbark and Tallowwood • Artists and technicians designed and carved more than thirty posts during a ten-day workshop in Walcha to replace the old awning posts of six shopfronts.

34. Walcha Fitzderby Chambers – Rick Reynolds, Elans, NSW: 2007
Ironbark and Tallowwood

35. Commonwealth Bank shopfront – Rick Reynolds, Charlie Trivers and the Walcha Woodcarving Group – Plum Henry, Stephen King, Sam Lisle, Brian Lockyer: 2007
Tallowwood and Ironbark

36. Walcha IGA Supermarket – John Turier, Adamstown, NSW: 2007
Tallowwood and Ironbark

37. Walcha Newsagency – Walcha Woodcarving Group: 2007
Tallowwood and Ironbark

38. Walcha Tourist Information Office – Sallwa Hourani, Armidale, NSW: 2007
Tallowwood

39. "Olympia" – Sallwa Hourani, Armidale, NSW: 2007
Stringybark

40. "The Citizens" – Andreas Buisman, Austria: 2010
Carved and polished columnar basalt crystals sourced from local property "Glen Collin", St Leonards Creek • The work was commissioned by Walcha Arts Council and Walcha Council, and represents local residents catching up with each other as they go about their business.

41. Dendroglyph – Aboriginal carved tree brought to Walcha's Historical grounds in 1965 from "Silvermount" and believed to be the only remaining one of three trees carved as memorials to the men who died during a fight between local and coastal Aborigines in the late 1800s.

Photographs 3, 4, 11, 22, 24 by Beryl Feron.



11

Take a walk around the streets and along the river to see sculptures and artworks by local, national and international artists.

Walcha's Open Air Gallery

In 1996, Walcha Council was approached by Stephen King, a local farmer and sculptor, to collaborate with him to create a fountain sculpture for McHatton Park in the centre of town. The decision to accept his offer and install Walcha's first sculpture lead to the suggestion by Council to form the Walcha Arts Council to facilitate an ongoing public art program. A plan was conceived and drawn up by the Walcha Arts Council and was adopted by Council into its 1998 Management Plan. The concept came to be known as the Open Air Gallery.

By 2001, with the financial support of Walcha Council and other funding bodies and a strong and dedicated resource base of accomplished local artists to implement the plans, Walcha Arts Council had established over 25 sculptures and public artworks in the Open Air Gallery.

In 2003 an exhibition of Walcha's art was held in Sydney and in an essay written for the catalogue, the art critic John McDonald wrote:

"Walcha has found a way of signposting its continued vitality. For a modest investment of ratepayers' funds, the Council has given the town a special place on Australia's cultural map. This has come about with the assistance of artists and supporters who have donated a great deal of time and expertise to create this unique facility. It is an example of many individuals working together for the good of a community in which they share strong family and sentimental ties."



1. "Weather Signs" – Stephen King, Walcha: 1996
2.5 x 3 x 6.2m (w x d x h) • Made with local yellow-box and steel, this fountain depicts the reliance of a rural community on the weather, and the signs and stories that try to bring some certainty to the indifferent and fickle nature of the weather. Sub-zero temperatures on winter nights transform the work into an ice sculpture. Stephen King donated the work to Walcha, with the support of Walcha Council.



2. McHatton Park Shelter – Mosaic in concrete: 1996
Created from designs by local artists from Amaroo Museum & Cultural Centre including Richard Morris, Wayne Schmutter, Jason Alexander.

3. "The Family" – Tom Deko, PNG: 1998
1.2 x 0.6 x 1.9m • This is a figurative work made from oil drums representing the artist's love of family and village life. Tom Deko made this work for exhibition at "Sculpture by the Sea" 1998. Donated by the artist with support from "Sculpture by the Sea."

4. "The Warrior" – Tom Deko, PNG: 1998
2.4 x 2 x 3.3m • This steel sculpture is a rendering of traditional New Guinean imagery and was made in Walcha and purchased by Walcha Council.

5. "Sea Monster" – Emmanuel Watt, Vanuatu: 1998
1.5 x 0.4 x 1m • This stringy bark carving was made in Walcha and purchased by Walcha Council in 1999. Emmanuel Watt is a traditional artist from Vanuatu who visited Walcha during Sculpture by the Sea 1998.

6. a,b,c,d – The maquettes: 1998
Four maquettes were created as design proposals for the roundabout sculpture competition.

- a. James Rogers, "Song Cycle", 0.6 x 0.6 x 1.6m, painted steel.
- b. Stephen King, "Apsley Falls", 0.7 x 0.4 x 2m, steel.
- c. Ross Laurie, "The Tower", 0.8 x 0.8 x 1.2m, painted tin and wood.
- d. Nigel White, "The Tuning Fork", 0.5 x 0.5 x 1.5m, ironbark.

7. "Cosmology" – Bronwyn Bancroft, Sydney: 1998
This mural is located at the entrance of Walcha Central School and was painted with the assistance of the students and sponsored by ASSPA funding.



8. "Black Cockatoo" – Ross Laurie, Walcha: 1999
2.5 x 0.6 x 5m • This is the southern entrance sign, one of the four entrance signs commissioned by Walcha Council. Carved from tallowwood, it was created to keep watch over the Walcha district.

9. "Strainer Post" – Stephen King, Walcha: 1999
0.5 x 0.6 x 5m • This is the eastern entrance sign and was carved from grey box. It is a tribute both to timber itself and the industry that has played such a key role in Walcha's history.

10. "Toll Gate" – James Rogers: 1999
1.7 x 0.6 x 8m • This is the Northern entrance sign and is made from tallowwood and steel and celebrates the shape and rhythm of the word.

11. "True born native Man" – Nigel White, Mudgee, NSW: 1999
4.5 x 1.0 x 8.2m • This tallowwood sculpture is the Western Entrance sign.

12. "Generation Stick" – Stephen King, Walcha: 1992 / Installed 2000
0.7 x 0.7 x 9.5m • This sculpture was carved from stringy bark and donated to Walcha by the artist. It represents the continuum of life through DNA and generational rhythm.

13. "Song Cycle" – James Rogers, Walcha: 2001
3 x 3 x 6.5m • Made from steel, this sculpture celebrates the cyclic nature of provincial life. A melody is suggested in the shapes and lines, a melody that keeps coming back on itself. This pivotal sculpture was commissioned by the Walcha Arts Council with funding from Armidale 3rd City of the Arts.

14. "All Aboard" – David Waters, Melbourne: 2001
3.3 x 1.3 x 1.2m • This seat, representing a train was made from blue gum during the Street Furniture Project, funded by Armidale 3rd City of the Arts, Walcha Arts Council and Walcha Council with assistance from State Forests, NPWS and Fenning Timbers.

15. "The Cocktail Lounge" – Stephen Killick, Wauchope, NSW: 2001
9.5 x 0.9 x 1.9m • This seat was made from blue gum, stringy bark and tallowwood during the Street Furniture Project.

16. "The Lovers Seat" – Mike Nicholls, Melbourne: 2001
2.1 x 0.7 x 0.8 • Made from stringy bark and steel, this seat was carved by Mike Nicholls during the Street Furniture Project and constructed by James Rogers.



17. "The Bridge" – collaborative: 2001
9.5 x 1.3 x 0.7m • This work was carved from stringy bark during the Street Furniture Project by David Waters, Stephen King, Mike Nicholls and many others.

18. "The Throne" – Stephen King and Stephen Killick: 2001
3.2 x 3.2 x 3.2m • This seat was made from a huge tallowwood log during the Street Furniture Project.

19. "The Big Picture" – Mike Nicholls, Melbourne: 2001
4.2 x 0.6 x 8.7m • The idea behind this sculpture was to frame the perspectives of both sides of the Apsley River. It was made from stringybark during the Street Furniture Project.

20. "The Long Blow" – Mandy Francis, Hardy's Bay, NSW: 2001
4.0 x 0.2 x 0.5m • Constructed in blackbutt during the Street Furniture Project, this seat refers to the combs, cutters, wool tables and grating associated with the craft and industry of shearing.

21. "At the Beach" and "Down by the River" – Walcha Pool Mural – Walcha Central Students: 2001, 2006
6.0 x 0.8m each • These two mosaic murals were made with the assistance of Artstart funding under the supervision of Walcha Central Visual Arts teacher Caroline Nivison.

22. "And the cow jumped over the moon" – Ross Laurie and Myfanwy Gullifer, Walcha: 2001
1.0 x 1.0 x 4.1m • Made with painted timber and tin, this work stands as an entrance sign to the local Pre-school.

23. "The Plough" – James Rogers, Walcha: 2002
4.6 x 1.0 x 0.7m • This seat was made from stringy bark and steel during the Street Furniture Project.

24. "Rainbow Serpent" – Gordon Hookey, Melbourne: 2002
10 x 10 x 0.6m • This mosaic was made by the renowned indigenous artist Gordon Hookey with the collaboration of the local indigenous people. The commission was funded by an Australia Council for the Arts grant and has been placed overlooking the mill-hole, home of the legendary rainbow serpent.