

Attachment B

Engagement Report – the ‘Joy’ Sculpture

Engagement report – The ‘Joy’ sculpture



Digitisation of original sculpture,
in original location.

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Overview

Project background

Joy was displayed on a plinth at the corner of Yurong and Stanley streets in East Sydney for 18 months in the 1990s.

The artwork is a life size sculpture of a sex worker. Artist Loui Fraser's intent was to pay tribute to the women who historically were sex workers in the area.

The sculpture created a lot of controversy and many people were opposed to it, while others were supportive.

In 1997 the sculpture was removed at the end of its agreed installation period. Joy was acquired by Macquarie University as part of its sculpture collection in 1997 and it does not wish to part with the original. It will support a replica of the artwork.

Purpose of engagement

In November 2023 following representations, Council resolved to consult our communities on whether there was support to reinstate the statue of "Joy" or a replica to Stanley Street and Yurong Street in East Sydney. See council decision [HERE](#).

Engagement summary

This report outlines the engagement activities that took place in March and April 2024 to gather feedback on the proposal to reinstate a replica of the sculpture *Joy* to the original location in East Sydney. It also summarises the key findings from this consultation.

238 surveys were completed during the consultation period, between 26 March 2024 and 26 April 2024.

We received 18 written submissions. Submissions were received from 13 individuals, 2 businesses, the Australian Centre for Public History, Australian Historical Association and the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History.

Engagement findings

Consultation submissions showed strong support for the proposal to reinstate a replica of the sculpture *Joy* to the original location in East Sydney. This was consistent across the overall data set and the responses from people local to the East Sydney area (bordered by College Street, Oxford Street, Forbes Street and William Street).

Overall sentiment – surveys and written submissions

86% of the 256 overall respondents supported a replica of the sculpture *Joy* being returned where as 14% did not support the proposition.

East Sydney sentiment – surveys and written submissions

66 people residing in East Sydney participated in the consultation. 71% of local respondents supported a replica of the sculpture *Joy* being returned whereas 29% did not support the proposition.

Primary Themes – Survey Results

Reasons for support

Of the 209 people who supported the sculpture's return, 192 people chose to explain the reason for their support. The primary reasons mentioned were that the sculpture:

- Recognises the history of the area (74%)
- Recognises sex workers and or sex work (42%)
- Promotes inclusion and diversity (27%)
- Is high quality public art (14%)

Reasons for opposition

Of the 29 people who opposed the sculpture's return 25 people chose to explain the reason for not supporting the proposal. The primary reasons mentioned were as follows:

- Inappropriate to recognise sex workers/sex work (28%)
- Commission a new work instead (28%)
- Subject matter not appropriate for the general public (20%)
- Aesthetically unappealing/lacks artistic merit (20%)
- Money could be better spent for community (16%)

Primary Themes – Written Submissions

18 written submissions were received. 10 supported the sculpture's return and 8 were opposed.

Reasons for support

- Recognises sex workers and/or sex work (60%)
- Promotes inclusion and diversity (50%)
- Recognises the history of the area (40%)
- High quality public art (40%)
- Increases female representation in public art (40%)

Reasons for opposition

- Inappropriate to recognise sex work and/or sex workers (38%)
- Subject matter not appropriate for general public (25%)
- Sculpture could encourage anti-social behaviour (25%)
- A more nuanced memorial is required (13%)
- Sculpture lacks artistic merit (13%)
- Original should be reinstated instead of replica (13%)

Outcomes of engagement

The following is a snapshot of the outcomes from the engagement.

Submissions received during March and April 2024 consultation

We received a total of 256 submissions and the Sydney Your Say page was visited 1232 times during the public exhibition period.

Quantity	Description of activity
256	Total submissions received
238	Survey submissions
1	Journal article published in the Public History Review attached to survey submission (see Appendix D)
18	Written submissions received via emailed
1232	Sydney Your Say webpage visits

Demographic Data

Age

Respondents ranged in age from 16 to over 80. The majority of responses were by people between the age of 50-59 (21%), 40-49 (21%) and 30-39 (17%).

Gender

Of those respondents that answered this question 47% identified as female, 45% as male, and 4% as intersex, trans or gender non-binary.

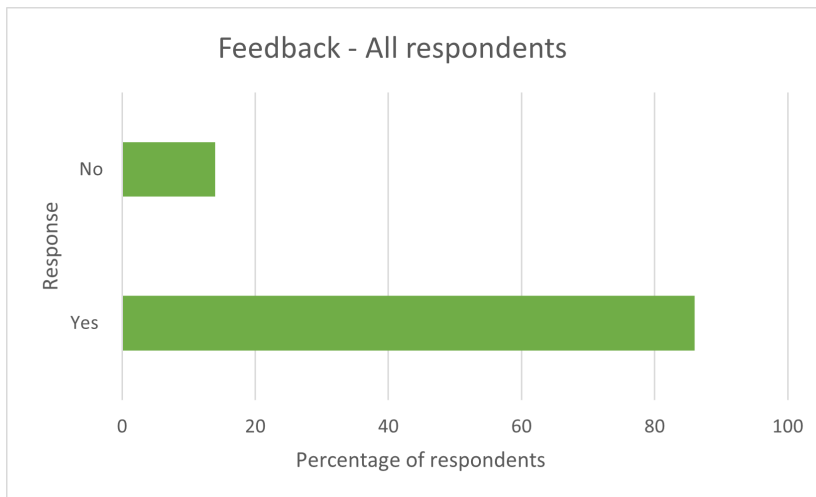
Cultural Background

Respondents identified as being from a wide range of cultural backgrounds including Australian, British, European, Asian, Sir Lankan, Aboriginal, Polish, Italian, German, Indian, French, and Greek.

Overall feedback

Overall sentiment – survey responses and written submissions

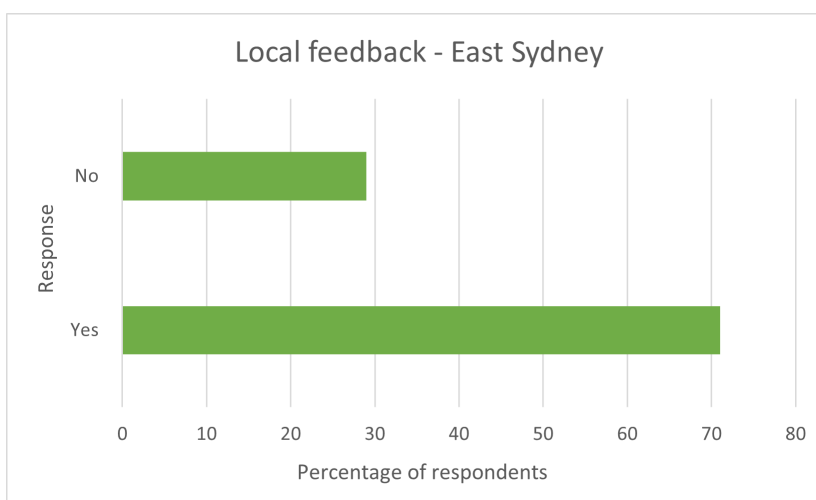
238 people completed the survey during the consultation period and 18 written submissions were received. The primary question asked in the consultation was: “Do you support reinstating a replica of the sculpture *Joy* in her original location?”



86% of overall respondents supported a replica of the sculpture *Joy* being returned where as 14% did not support the proposition.

Local sentiment

We analysed the results to understand what people who live in the local East Sydney area felt about the proposition. 66 people residing in East Sydney participated in the consultation and their overall sentiment is as follows:



71% of local respondents supported a replica of the sculpture *Joy* being returned where as 29% did not support the proposition.

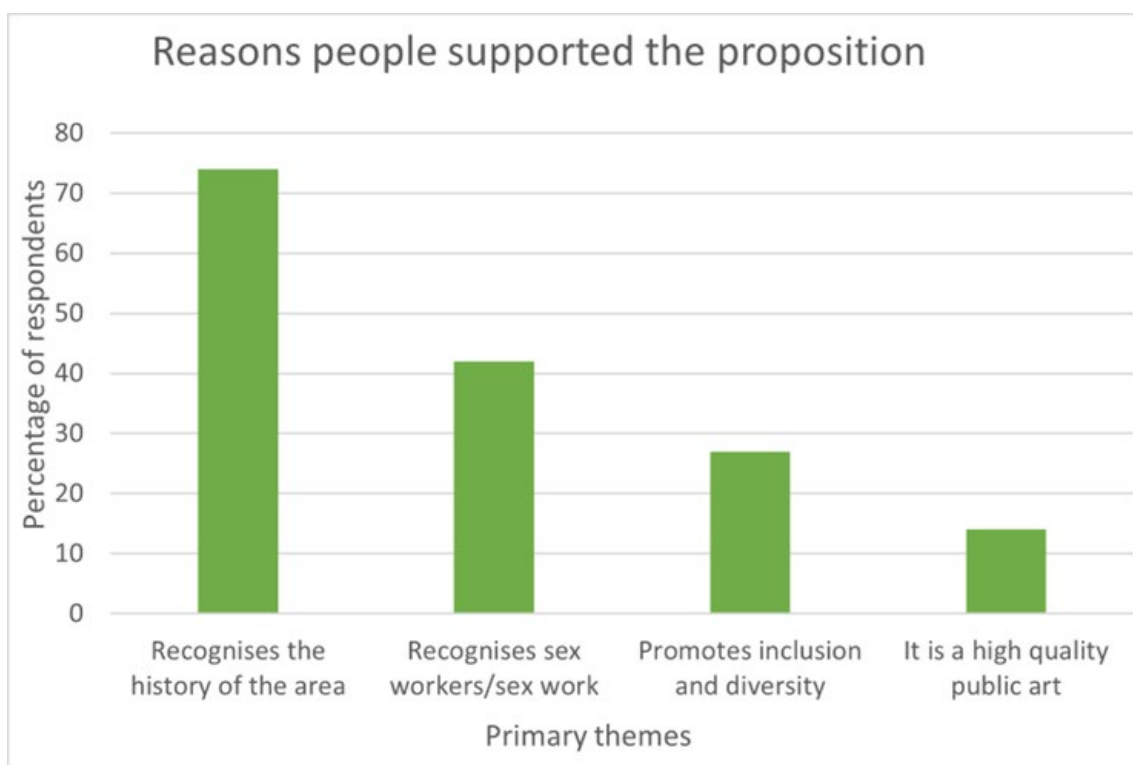
Survey Submissions

Of the 238 people who completed the survey, a total of 219 people also supplied a reason for their position.

Primary themes - Surveys

Supportive: Survey data

192 people who provided feedback via survey gave an explanation of their support. Most people supplied more than one reason. The most common reason given, by 75% of respondents, was that the sculpture recognises the history of the area.



Indicative verbatim comments

Recognises the history of the area (74%)

“This sculpture represents the history of the area in a beautifully subtle and elegant way. It’s important that cities resist the temptation to rewrite history or gloss over the people and the stories that represent an important truth about our history and identity. Knowing and embracing these histories contributes to the social fabric of Sydney.”

“It is a significant (and beautiful!) piece of public art that reflects acknowledged history and provides an opportunity to recognise matters of historical and economic significance.”

“It represents an important part of the suburb’s history and a world leading NSW legacy in decriminalising sex work. Something that should definitely be publicly acknowledged and not hidden away from view. As a Darlinghurst resident of 5 years - I know many of our residents feel a

connection to the spirit of the area as a home to demographics not always accepted and celebrated in mainstream Australian society.”

“It is an accurate and artistically bold representation of Darlinghurst history - a unique and beautiful representation of this part of Sydney. It is a shame it was taken down in the first place.”

“This sculpture provides an important historical and cultural link from the suburb's history to the current more gentrified suburb and is a means of remembering the unique identity of Darlinghurst and is something to talk about and consider.”

“As a historian and City of Sydney resident, I support the restoration of Joy to her original site as a fitting reminder of an important element in Darlinghurst's history. The suburb's associations with the sex trade date back to the late nineteenth century. It is a complex, and yes, at times dark history, but no less important for that. The role that the industry and those who worked in it had in shaping the suburb deserves acknowledgement. It can be seen especially as a tribute to the efforts of many women from the area to make sex work safer through decriminalisation and other advocacy.”

Recognises sex workers and/or sex work (42%)

“Sex work is greatly misunderstood. Joy sparks a conversation that needs to be had. As a sex worker myself, the representation of someone like me - working to support themselves and their loved ones and providing an invaluable service, changes the conversation.”

“As a sex worker, I believe our history and we should be celebrated in the most well known area for sex work in NSW. NSW was the first place in the world to decriminalise sex work and we should be proud of our history and celebrate those who came before us.”

“Joy is an important symbol of the many sex workers whom were a colourful part of the history of that area. It's important we not whitewash history but instead acknowledge the richness these women brought, and also remember that many also suffered at the hands of violence. Joy is a show of respect for these dynamic strong women.”

“By decriminalising Sex Workers and NSW took world leading action that played a huge role in the response to AIDS and to sex worker rights worldwide. We ARE the evidence that disproves the myths used to strip sex workers of our autonomy and our rights. That is something we should be SO proud of and hiding it does a disservice to all. There's nothing about the design if the statue itself that could be considered inappropriate for the public. Having it harms no one and uplifts many.”

“As a leading historian of global sexual labour, I think this sculpture is among the most unique in the world. It represents the (criminalized, invisibilized, unseen, stigmatized) labour of millions of people, mostly women, whose work (chosen or unchosen) has underwritten the global capitalist economy and has sustained families and communities. It is not simply a celebration of sex work, but rather a depiction of what for millions of women in history has been a lived reality that we should all recognize and commemorate. Society has tried very hard to push sexual labour underground and out of sight, even as it perpetuates the inequalities that underwrite it. Joy insists we look at her. Please put her back in view. She is a sculpture of global importance.”

“It is really important that Sydney (or NSW rather) takes public credit for the huge global role they play in the world as the first jurisdiction to decriminalise sex work in 1995. They have been followed by New Zealand in 2004, Northern Territory in 2019, Victoria in 2021, Belgium in 2023, and likely Queensland in 2024. It is recognised by extensive public health research as the best practice model for both sex worker rights and public health, and more jurisdictions will likely follow. Sex worker organisations globally look to the progress and successes spearheaded by Australian sex

workers since the 1970s. Joy symbolises this huge and powerful stance taken by sex workers in Sydney, and the role model they continue to provide in law reform and justice. She is also an important symbol of the often unrecognised role of women in society and the hidden work they do. Please bring Joy back!"

Promotes inclusion and diversity (27%)

"I am a sex worker & live on Yurong St, where the original sculpture was once displayed. Not only is the sculpture tasteful, it is important to reflect Darlinghurst rich history with sex workers and a symbol of hope for an inclusive culture for the future."

"It's important to have representation of the history of an important group of people who lived and worked in Darlinghurst and advocate for sex workers to reduce stigma and shaming of a group who have been historically abused and marginalized."

"It will help to combat the marginalisation of sex workers and introduce some diversity into the urban landscape. The location is appropriate in light of Sydney's history and culture."

"Sex work is decriminalized, this population was and remains a crucial and vibrant part of our community. They have experienced violence, stigma and discrimination, and I support this statue on the basis of inclusion, diversity and with a desire to not perpetuate ongoing exclusion from our diverse CoS fabric. They are also a community that has responded to the HIV epidemic with pride, and should be included in recognition in the same way as we do LGBTI communities."

High quality public art (14%)

"It is a significant (and beautiful!) piece of public art that reflects acknowledged history and provides an opportunity to recognise matters of historical and economic significance."

"Because the sculpture, and the people it represents is an integral part of the history of the area. It's also just a beautiful artwork."

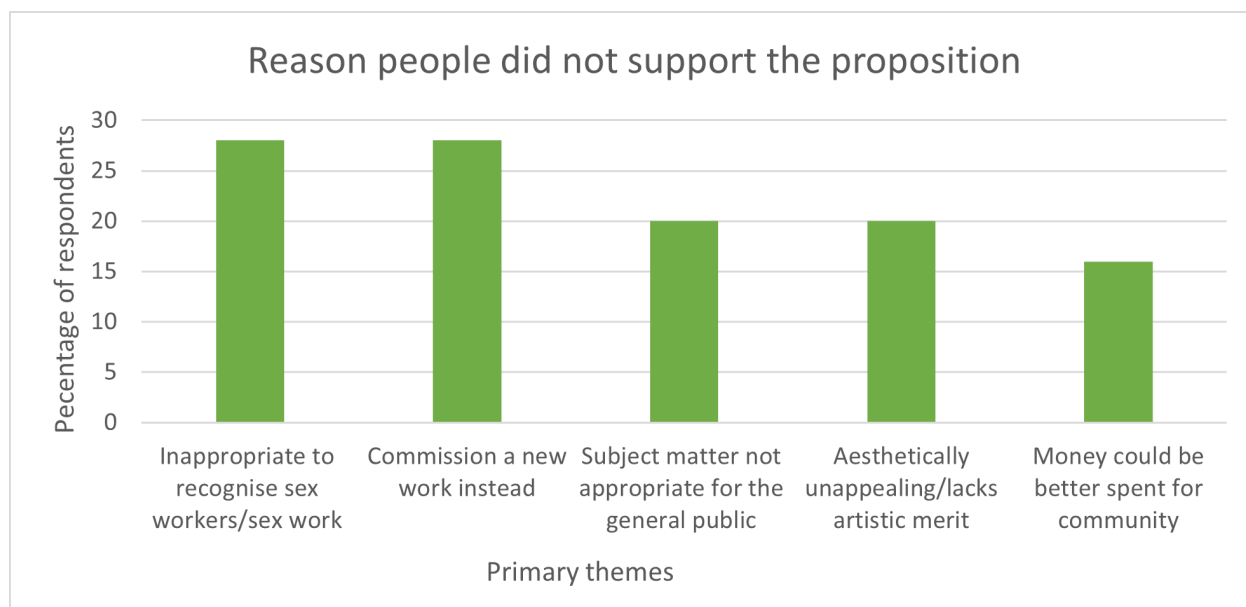
"It's an important and thought provoking piece addressing some of our area's slightly sordid past. The sculpture itself is pleasing to the eye and adds something to the streetscape, and conveys an important message about our past too. I look forward to seeing her back!"

"This is an important part of our city's life and history - the sculpture and the presence and work of sex workers in the inner city. It should be returned. It's also a great sculpture."

"This is not only a great sculpture. More generally adding more artworks in the street makes the place more interesting. Particularly when the sculpture provide an historical perspective to the place. Sculptures tend also to become iconic overtime and represent reference areas where people meet. I think that we should have more these sculptures in the area. Times have also changed and I don't think that this sculpture is shocking anymore in the same way it was in the 1990s."

Not supportive: Survey data

25 people who provided feedback via survey gave an explanation of their opposition. Most people supplied more than one reason. The most common reasons given, were that it was inappropriate to recognised sex work or workers in this way (28%), people also expressed their preference for the commissioning of a new work (28%).



Inappropriate to recognise sex work and/or sex workers (28%)

“Women have a right to be freed from the slavery of prostitution, and it should be recriminalised, never celebrated.”

“Sex work is a sad reality in our society. It is undertaken mostly by people who have few or no other choices open to them to earn the income needed to live. It is not something we should celebrate or talk about in positive terms as being a colourful part of a vibrant society or precinct. That kind of discourse disguises the suffering and exploitation involved, and ignores the abuse of power and wealth and also the mental and physical health damage involved, for both perpetrator and victim-survivor. The statue and replica do not depict the darkness and pain inherent in what we euphemistically refer to as sex work. Educated and wealthy people may like to think of sex work as in some way adding to the vibrancy or diversity of our society, but for the people trapped doing this work it is a daily reminder that they have little to no power, the lowest of low status - it is a daily struggle to maintain any sense of self worth and to earn the money needed to survive. If you want a statue, get one that commemorates the reality and the suffering of those who have walked this path over the decades and centuries.”

“Yes, prostitution is a part of the history of this area, and it should be remembered, but it's not something that should be celebrated. I remember those times. They were terrible. It was a dangerous time for those women as well as for the residents of the area. They would be walking the dark back lanes and getting into the cars of strangers or inviting them into their premises with no protection, and there was a lot of drug addiction among them. A quick Google search will tell you that over the years there were numerous murders of sex workers, drug overdoses, and even generational prostitution and drug use in this area before things were cleaned up. Yes, prostitution will always be a part of our society, but I imagine there are very few women who would engage in it

if they had the choice to do something else that paid as well. It's not a career path we should be promoting or glamourising."

Commission a new work instead (28%)

"The proposed work is a replica. With so many quality artists and galleries in Darlinghurst, an original work would help support local businesses and reflect the neighbourhood better than a copy of something at Macquarie University."

"Time for a NEW artwork exploring the SAME THEMES :) Give a new artist a chance to pay tribute to sex workers."

"I support the concept, but I would like a new sculpture that pays homage to the original 'joy' and artist intent. I would like to see new artistic sculpture installed, that references the old but is not a replica."

"So many reasons to object, did you know that there are four galleries on Stanley St: Stanley Street Gallery, Coma Gallery, Disorder Gallery and Mais Wright Gallery? This artwork was rejected by this community when it was first installed as it was felt that it did not represent who we are as a community this remains the case, this image does not represent our community. We are so much more than what this work depicts. Aesthetics and taste are personal and, in my opinion, this is a mediocre work at best, its notoriety is the result of its controversy not because it was a note-worthy work of art. I would love to see more sculptures in this city and of course in Stanley St but not this work. If our rate money can be spent on art and there are four rate paying businesses on this street involved in the art world, surely these galleries might be in a position to suggest something more appropriate and better. Art by its very nature is most often controversial but it should at the very least be considered "good art" and should enhance the community for which it is intended. Anecdotally I was told that the generous person who commissioned this work was asked to consider having this work installed in the front yard of their home (I believe somewhere on the Northshore). In this vain perhaps the councillors who vote in favour of this sculpture might consider how it would be received at their place. I do not support the reproduction of this artwork but I do support the erection of a new artwork and may there be many more sculptures. If we are only allowed one sculpture in our street let it not be this one."

"The moment has passed. I have no issue with a sculpture of a sex worker, but I given that the original now lives at Macquarie University, I think it's time to commission a new work for the location in Darlinghurst."

Subject matter not appropriate for general public (20%)

"There are families and schools in this area. What are parents of young children supposed to say if their kids ask them about the statue? Perhaps a tribute to all the women who died or were murdered in this area in the form of a plaque or memorial somewhere might be appropriate, but a statue of a sex worker in action attempting to lure customers to her door? No."

"Adults and children have a right to go through the streets without being exposed to demoralising concepts such as prostitution (never use the euphemism 'sex work')."

"Whilst acknowledging our past is important, placing such a sculpture regarding such a subject outside a nursing home and outside a boys school/ educational institution is inappropriate. The neighbourhood and demographic in East Sydney in 2024 is not the same as its seedy past. A statue of a prostitute in a prominent corner position seen by all traffic, residents, school children

from Sydney Grammer and SCEGS as they go to school and passers by is provocative and unnecessary.”

Sculpture is aesthetically unappealing and/or lacks artistic merit (20%)

“The proposed artwork is not of particular artistic merit and money would be better spent commissioning a new original artwork and supporting emerging or First Nations artists.”

“I live a block away & I find the sculpture ugly. I was born in Darlinghurst at Crown Street Women’s Hospital & I lived on Stanley Street in the 80s so I’m well aware of the neighbourhood’s reputation for drugs & prostitution, and if it were an appealing sculpture I’d think, well, why not. But it’s ugly.”

“First, I consider the site is ideal for sculpture, with high visibility from pedestrians and motorists. I don’t favour the sculpture’s form, proportions, surface and colour. 1: the legs are ill-proportioned while the arms and shoulders show a poor understanding of anatomy. 2: the red-framed doorway is an effective framing but the white plaster-like figure looks ghostly at night. 3: returning to proportion, the head is drastically out of scale with the figure while the hair and hairstyle resemble dough. I remember this work when it was first installed and thought it would be vandalised within a few months. The idea is worthy but this, to my eye, does not compliment the memories and culture of sex-workers in East Sydney/Darlinghurst.”

Money could be better spent for community (16%)

“It was removed for good reason. I am supportive of a sculpture but not the ‘Joy’. The money is better utilised in increase tree maintenance on Yurong St. Yurong st doesn’t get serviced well by the council. Trees, ground plants and leaf removal isn’t not been performed frequently enough. Let’s stop installing art when basic maintenance isn’t being completed sufficiently.”

“Personally, I’d like to see any money for that project go toward something useful, like a small enclosed area in Hyde Park where dogs could run free.”

“There is a significant rat infestation in the part adjacent this that is out of control. Investing in a cosmetic statue over remedying this issue with the rat’s is a little out of order. I’d support the statute but would prefer to see the other things fixed first.”

Written submissions

Overview

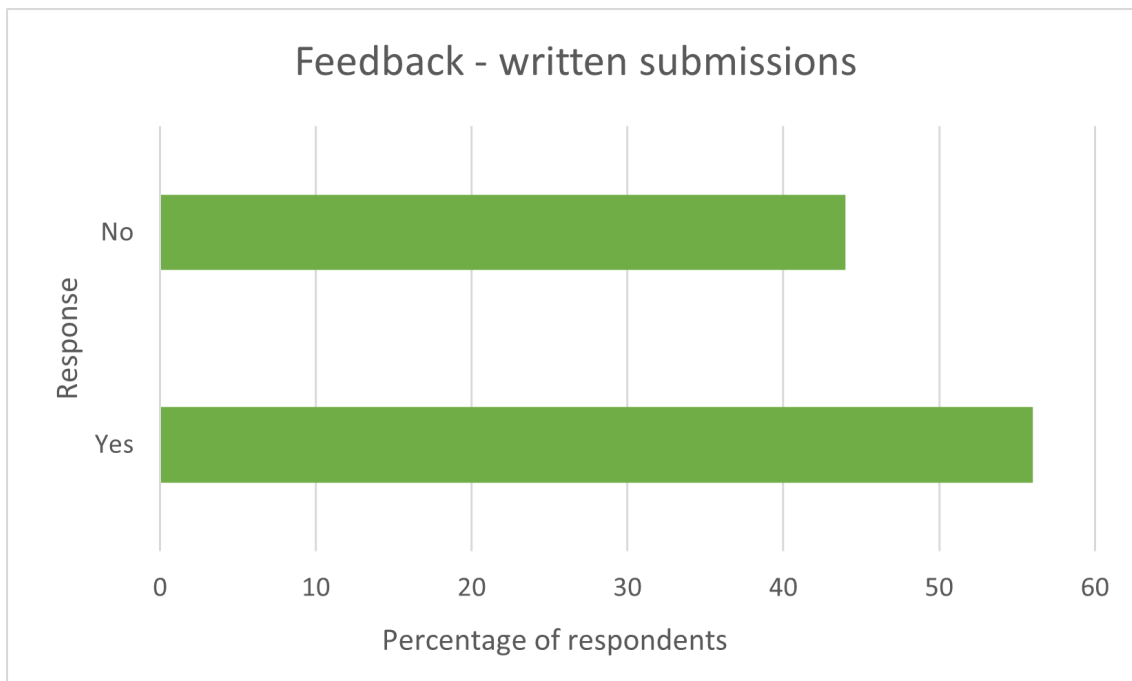
We received 18 written submissions during the consultation:

Submissions were received from 13 individuals, 2 businesses, the Australian Centre for Public History, Australian Historical Association and the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History. A selection of written submissions in full can be found in Appendix D.

Sentiment – written submissions

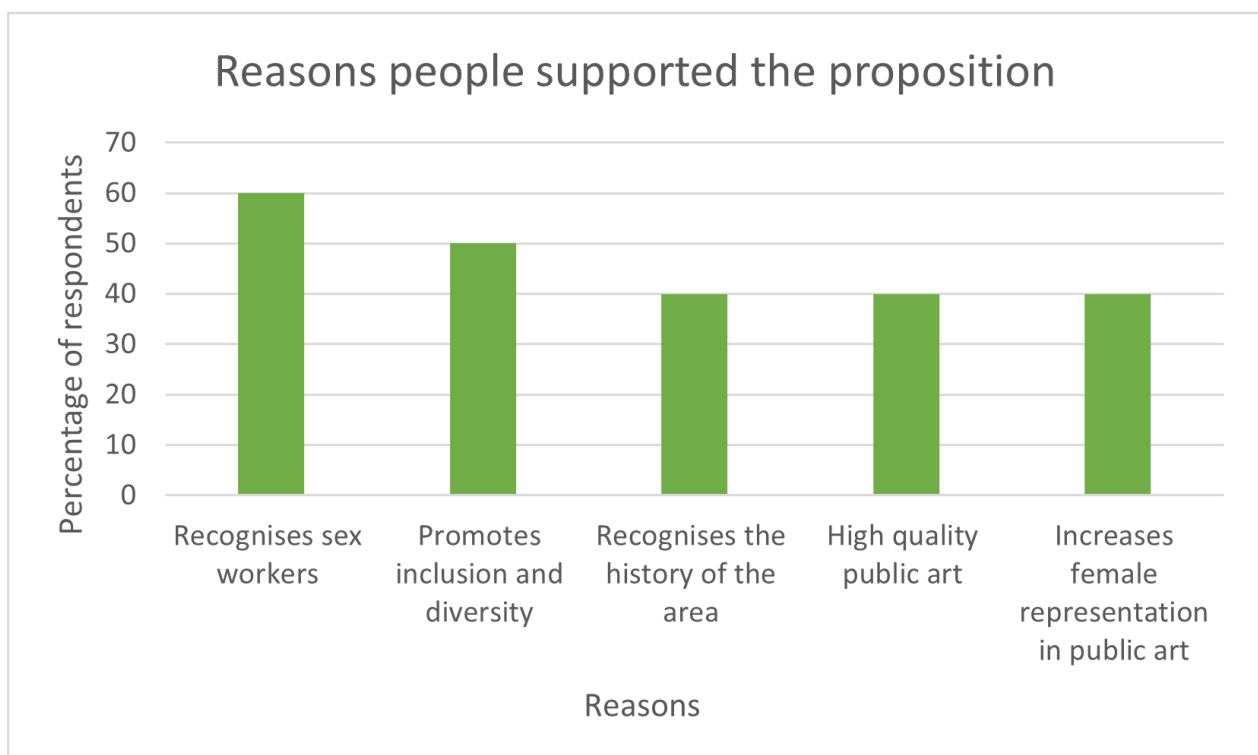
The sentiment of people who supplied written submissions has been included in the overall sentiment figures supplied earlier in this report.

Sentiment specific to written submitters is also included below:



Reasons for support

Of the 10 written submissions that supported the return of a replica of the sculpture the most commonly given reasons for this support were as follows:



Recognises sex workers and/or sex work (60%)

As well, the fact that 'Joy' represents a sex worker provides an opportunity for the community to reflect on the heritage and history of Darlinghurst. As I am sure you are aware, sex workers and the sex industry more generally played an important role in the economy and society of this part of Sydney over many decades. A mature society should be prepared to include this aspect of its past alongside other, perhaps less controversial, elements of its history. There was a time when Australians preferred to forget their convict past but few would harbor such feelings today.

"NO more if's or buts please just enable Joy's return she is much loved by many in the community and more widely. She is particularly loved of course by sex workers as she is a kind of metaphor for our intrinsic humanity often denied and ridiculed. She is also loved by business owners and others who know their neighbourhood - East Sydney - has some significant history much of which

has included sex work, and tourists come to them asking about this history... And, Joy can showcase the heroic role of sex workers fighting back against corruption and the protection of themselves and others at the outset of the HIV pandemic. All worthy of a statue (in the form of Joy) I say.”

“Making individuals ‘seen’ through public representation confirms their place in the community, and their right to a voice within it. In a 2003 article advocating for representations of sex work in Australian public history, Simon Adams and Raelene Frances commented that: ‘The exclusion of certain subjects and groups in museums and galleries has implications for our status as citizens. A more inclusive approach to the history of sex work thus has political implications, especially for those currently engaged in the sex industry.’”

Promotes inclusion and diversity (50%)

“The Statue of Joy is significant, not just because she represents a woman in a city where statues of men abound, but because she represents a more diverse, inclusive and respectful portrayal of the lives of sex workers in the City of Sydney.”

“This will help demonstrate that Council agrees that the human rights of sex workers should be recognised by society, not least as part of improving their somewhat precarious safety.”

Recognises the history of the area (40%)

“The statue addresses a significant aspect of Sydney’s social, economic and legal history that deserves to be remembered and acknowledged. Public forms of history like statuary should represent the diversity of historical experiences, including complex and contested histories.”

“I wish to express my firm support for the plan to reinstate the Joy sculpture, as both a piece of street art but more importantly to commemorate the local history.”

High quality public art (40%)

“...We suggest that the statue of ‘Joy’ is an engaging piece of art that would add interest to Sydney’s public spaces. It would be a drawcard for tourists and provide a platform for education.”

Increases female representation in public art (40%)

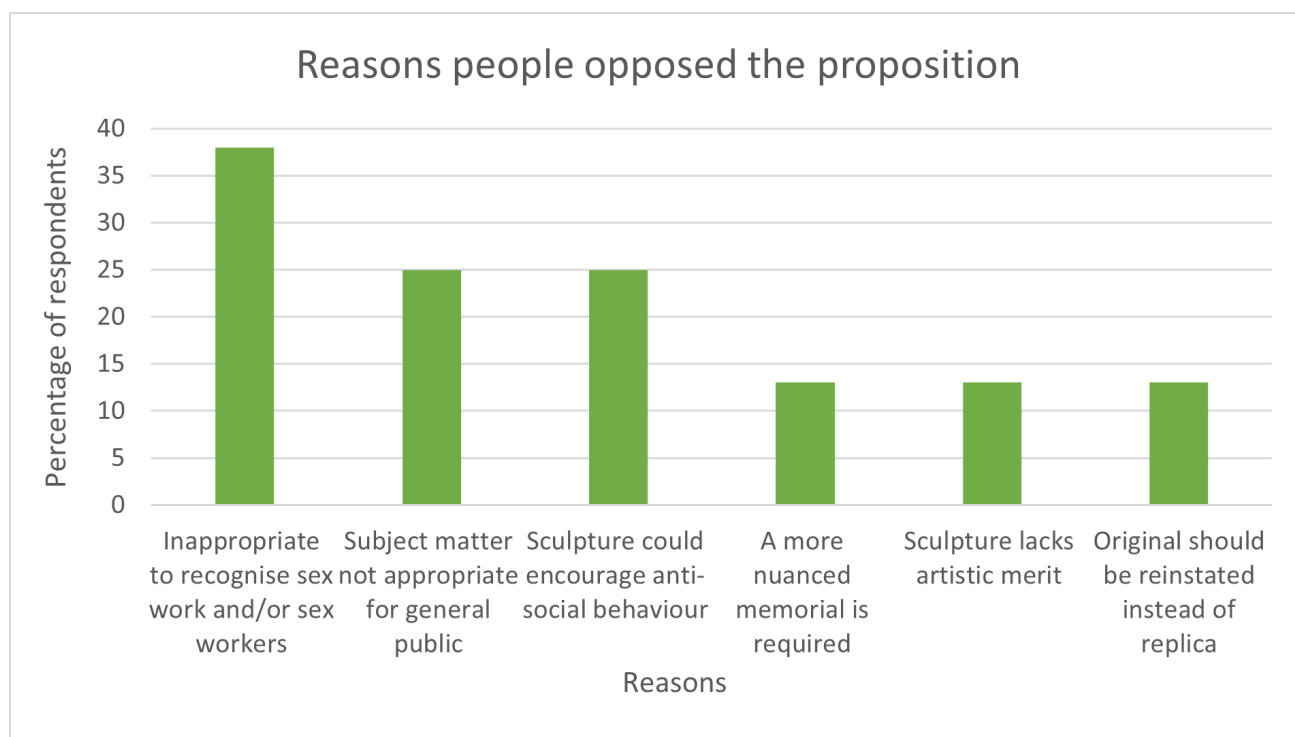
“At a time when equity in public art and statuary is being called for as highlighted in the project - A Statue of One’s Own, joy is a perfect fit, showcasing ordinary hard working women, albeit in the oldest profession, who once lived and worked and supported their neighbors through many hardships in the neighborhood in which Joy once proudly stood.

“The return of the statue will increase public representations of women’s history, which are currently severely under-represented in the statues and memorials installed in Australian cities.”

"We believe it is important that public art attempt to represent a broad spectrum of society. As it stands, statues of women form a very small percentage of statues in public spaces in Australia, and especially in Sydney. Representations of women workers are an even smaller percentage of these, so reinstating the statue of 'Joy' would be an ideal opportunity to help redress this imbalance."

Reasons for not supporting

Of the 8 written submissions that opposed the return of a replica of the sculpture the most commonly given reasons for this support were as follows:



Inappropriate to recognise sex work and/or sex workers (38%)

"Where are the statues of the labourers? Of the women who raised their children on a shoestring budget? Of the migrants? Of the artists? Of all those who lived here and worked hard to make something of their lives? Instead, Council proposes to use ratepayer funds to idolise prostitution. What's next, a shrine to drug users? Give me a break."

"An inappropriate location for a statue of a prostitute suggests it was a zone for sex workers but that was in the 1980s!"

"Thank you for asking us to comment on the imposition of a prostitute statue near our home. The community generally is very opposed and think that the time for this stunt is long past. Our aged care facility is the wrong place for this..."

Subject matter not appropriate for general public (25%)

"Every day the Public Buses pass by this particular spot each way every 15 minutes. The same Buses pass by the young ladies Girls School SCEGGS at the south end of Stanley Street - a place of education and joy - hope and safety with its own story. The Ladies of the Night

that is depicted in the “Joy” sculpture depicts “working women” who were used and abused by their Owners - mainly male brothel owners and pimps who “OWNED THEM “ and used them for monetary gain and the exercise of the power they had over them - and discarded them when the prostitutes had reached a use by date or were addled by the drugs supplied to them by their “ minders”. At our current time in the Darlinghurst community when the rights of all females are being respected more fully and movements for changes in our society being implemented to protect vulnerable women - the unfortunately named “ Joy” sculpture is not in anyone’s interest to be exposed to the general public in such a public space.”

“The statue’s proximity to Sydney Grammar School students at early age of 7 or 8 are dropped off at this location. The Australian Museum has young children passing by regularly.”

Sculpture could encourage anti-social behaviour (25%)

“Residents stopped our area from becoming a red light district and we don’t want a return to the past.”

“Are we fortunate to live here? With this being returned it could attract attention and could succeed in letting people think that East Sydney is still the red light district. It sets a tone that doesn’t exist any more. It doesn’t reflect the values of this community.”

A more nuanced memorial is required (13%)

“The work very crudely celebrates the profession, yet for a huge percentage of sex workers it was a dire need that drove the profession and could be considered a form of slavery. Having experienced the community upset of JOY the first time do we really need to go through this again, It became a calling sign for curb crawlers in the area, it triggered grief in the mothers who had lost daughters to prostitution and drugs. A sex worker was murdered in front of my house, hence I find this very upsetting, even the title JOY is inappropriate. We should not white wash the history of Darlinghurst but why Stanley Street, surely it could be in Kings Cross or Taylor Square, or in a Darlinghurst pocket park. Surely there could be a more nuanced memorial to the dark history of Darlinghurst.”

Sculpture lacks artistic merit (13%)

“I do not think this sculpture has merit on artistic grounds. It’s simply not very good.”

Original sculpture should be reinstated instead of replica (13%)

“I wish to add my voice/vote to those that are advocating that the statue of JOY be returned to its original location. Too much of Sydney’s history has become photographs or words. We need history recorded/documented/displayed where it happened.

Let Macquarie University have the replica with a plaque.

To those locals who remember the city that JOY represents, Macquarie Uni is a world and a lifestyle away, completely sanitised, and bears no recognition to the area JOY came from.

Please have her returned.”

Appendices

Appendix A: Communications overview

The following is a snapshot of outcomes from marketing and communications activities undertaken to support the consultation. Activities reached a range of audience segments existing City of Sydney channels.

Activity	Outcome
Sydney Your Say webpage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1232 views
CEO letter	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To 2541 properties (Owners / Businesses / residents) on 27 March.
Notification email to stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To 16 unique recipients on 28 March.
eNewsletters Sydney Your Say November edition	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 6659 subscribers sent on 11 April 2024

Appendix B: Communications activities

Sydney Your Say webpage

Proposed works & maintenance

Have your say on the return of the 'Joy' sculpture

Darlinghurst East Sydney

Under review

Contributions to this consultation are closed for evaluation and review. The project team will report back on key outcomes.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION PERIOD
26 March 2024 to 26 April 2024

What we're doing

We invite your feedback on a proposal to reinstate a replica of the sculpture *Joy* to the original location in East Sydney.

Joy was displayed on a plinth at the corner of Yurong and Stanley streets in Darlinghurst for 18 months in the 1990s.

The artwork is a life size sculpture of a sex worker. Artist Loui Fraser's intent was to pay tribute to the women who historically were sex workers in the area.

The sculpture created a lot of controversy and many people were opposed to it, while others were supportive.

In 1997 the sculpture was removed at the end of its agreed installation period. *Joy* was acquired by Macquarie University as part of its sculpture collection in 1997 and it does not wish to part with the original. It will support a replica of the artwork.

Gareth Jenkins

SENIOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
COORDINATOR - CITY ENGAGEMENT

[Show details](#) v

Claire Morgan

PROGRAM MANAGER SPECIAL PROJECTS
PUBLIC ART

[Show details](#) v



© The sculpture *Joy* by Loui Fraser.

Digitisation of original artwork *Joy* in the original location.

Why we're doing this

In November 2023 following representations, Council resolved to consult our communities on whether there was support to reinstate the sculpture.

Your feedback will help Council make an informed decision on this proposal.

How you can give feedback

Consultation closes at 5pm on Friday 26 April 2024.

① Complete our feedback form

[Online form](#)

② Email or post your feedback

You can give your feedback by email to sydneyyoursay@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au or post to:

Gareth Jenkins
Senior Community Engagement Coordinator, City Engagement
City of Sydney
Town Hall House, Level 7, 456 Kent Street
Sydney NSW 2000

On-site signage:



Plinth at the corner of Yurong and Stanley streets in East Sydney (original location of sculpture).

Notification via eNews

Inclusion in [Sydney Your Say eNewsletter](#) on 11th of April



Your say on the return of the 'Joy' sculpture

We invite your feedback on a proposal to reinstate a replica of the Joy sculpture to the original location in Darlinghurst.

Review what's proposed and have your say by Friday 26 April.

[Read more](#)

Letter from the CEO: sent to 2541 properties (Owners / Businesses / residents) on 27 March



City of Sydney
Town Hall House
456 Kent Street
Sydney NSW 2000

+61 2 9265 9333
council@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au
GPO Box 1591 Sydney NSW 2001
cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au

26 March 2024

Have your say on the return of the *Joy* sculpture

We invite your feedback on a proposal to reinstate a replica of the sculpture *Joy* to the original location in East Sydney.

Joy was displayed on a plinth at the corner of Yurong and Stanley streets in Darlinghurst for 18 months in the 1990s.

The sculpture created a lot of controversy, and many people were opposed to it while others were supportive.

In 1997, the sculpture was removed at the end its agreed installation period. *Joy* was acquired by Macquarie University as part of its sculpture collection in 1997 and it does not wish to part with the original. It will support a replica of the artwork.

Why we're doing this

In November 2023 following representations, Council resolved to consult our communities on whether there was support to reinstate the sculpture.

Your feedback will help Council make an informed decision on this proposal.

How to give feedback

You can give your feedback at sydneyyoursay.com.au by 5pm on Friday 26 April.

Feedback can also be posted to:

Gareth Jenkins
Senior Community Engagement Coordinator
City of Sydney
GPO Box 1591
Sydney NSW 2001

If you have any questions contact senior community engagement coordinator Gareth Jenkins on 02 9265 9333 or at sydneyyoursay@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P. M. Barone".


Monica Barone PSM
Chief Executive Officer

The City of Sydney acknowledges
the Gadigal of the Eora Nation as the
Traditional Custodians of our local area.



Artist's impression of a replica *Joy* by Loui Fraser on the plinth at the corner of Stanley and Yurong streets, East Sydney.

Appendix C: Consultation materials

CITY OF SYDNEY 

Have your say on the return of the 'Joy' sculpture

We invite your feedback on a proposal to reinstate a replica of the sculpture *Joy* to the original location in East Sydney. *Joy* was displayed on a plinth at the corner of Yurong and Stanley streets in Darlinghurst for 18 months in the 1990s. The sculpture created a lot of controversy and many people were opposed to it while others were supportive. In 1997 the sculpture was removed at the end of its agreed installation period. *Joy* was acquired by Macquarie University as part of its sculpture collection in 1997 and it does not wish to part with the original. It will support a replica of the artwork.

In November 2023 following representations, Council resolved to consult our communities on whether there was support to reinstate the sculpture. Your feedback will help Council make an informed decision on this proposal.


*** 1. Do you support reinstating a replica of the sculpture *Joy* in her original location?**

Yes

No

[NEW QUESTION](#) ▼

or Copy and paste questions

CITY OF SYDNEY 

Have your say on the return of the 'Joy' sculpture

2. Please explain the reason you selected Yes.

[NEW QUESTION](#) ▼

or Copy and paste questions

Have your say on the return of the 'Joy' sculpture

⊕ PAGE TITLE



3. Please explain the reason you selected No.

⊕ NEW QUESTION ▼

or Copy and paste questions

Have your say on the return of the 'Joy' sculpture

⊕ PAGE TITLE

4. You can also upload your submission here

Choose File No file chosen

⊕ NEW QUESTION ▼

or Copy and paste questions

Appendix D: Selected written submissions

Australian Centre for Public History, UTS

Submission from the UTS Australian Centre for Public History regarding the return of the ‘Joy’ statue to Darlinghurst

23 April 2024

Joy, a life-size sculpture of a sex worker created by artist Loui Fraser, stood at the corner of Yurong and Stanley Streets in Darlinghurst for 18 months before its controversial removal in June 1997.

The Australian Centre for Public History, based at the University of Technology Sydney, supports the proposal to reinstate a replica of the sculpture to its original location on the following grounds:

- The statue addresses a significant aspect of Sydney’s social, economic and legal history that deserves to be remembered and acknowledged.
- Public forms of history like statuary should represent the diversity of historical experiences, including complex and contested histories.
- The return of the statue will increase public representations of women’s history, which are currently severely under-represented in the statues and memorials installed in Australian cities.

We expand upon each of these reasons below.

The significance of sex work to Darlinghurst’s history

Sex work has been present in Darlinghurst since at least 1860, when Police Inspector Charles Harrison informed a Select Committee on the condition of Sydney’s working classes about a recent raid on a brothel in a laneway between Liverpool Street and South Head Road (today’s Oxford Street).¹ By the 1890s, the large number of boarding houses operating in Darlinghurst provided convenient locations for sex work to flourish as the severe economic depression of these years saw a growing number of women turn to sex work to survive.² The association of Darlinghurst with the trade had solidified by the late 1920s when the suburb was dubbed ‘Razorhurst’ due to the frequent violence between competing gang leaders seeking control of organised crime in Sydney.³ One of these leading underworld figures was Tilly Devine, who operated a string of brothels in Palmer Street, still remembered in the suburb today as the namesake of the wine bar Love, Tilly Devine in Crown Lane.

Darlinghurst remained the centre of Sydney’s sex trade into the mid twentieth century. Kings Cross was the upmarket area, populated by well-dressed brothel-workers charging premium prices, with the shabbier and cheaper establishments in Surry Hills. In the middle were Darlinghurst’s laneways of small terrace brothels.⁴ As motor cars became more prolific,

¹ NSW Legislative Assembly. “Select Committee of the Legislative Assembly on the Condition of the Working Classes of the Metropolis – Report.” *NSW Parliamentary Papers* vol. 4 (1859-60), p. 1463.

² Raelene Frances. *Selling Sex: A Hidden History of Prostitution*. Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2007, p. 125.

³ Alana Piper. “Underworlds, Everyday Offending and Darlinghurst.” *My Darlinghurst*, edited by Anna Clark, Gabrielle Kemmis and Tamson Pietsch. Sydney: NewSouth, 2023, pp. 199-212.

⁴ Roberta Perkins, “Being and becoming ‘working girls’: an oral history of prostitutes in Sydney 1935-1985.” *All our labours: Oral histories of working life in twentieth century Sydney*, edited by John Shields. Kensington: New South Wales University Press, 1992, pp. 170-192.

street solicitation overtook brothels as the main form of sex work, congesting the night-time traffic around Darlinghurst's suburban streets across the 1970s and 1980s.⁵ When local sculptor Loui Fraser spotted an unused sandstone plinth near the Yurong Street Reserve in the 1990s, she knew straight away 'what type of sculpture would be appropriate for the site, given the prominence of street workers in East Sydney'.⁶

For more than a century, sex work flourished in Darlinghurst despite its illicit status under the law. During the nineteenth century, sex work itself was technically not illegal in NSW, although morality objections to the trade meant police routinely used vagrancy charges to deter sex workers from street solicitation, decreasing the industry's public visibility.⁷ Brothel-keeping was illegal, but prosecutions were relatively rare, as the existence of quietly-run brothels was seen as preferable to open street solicitation. Street solicitation itself was made an offence under the *Vagrancy Act 1902*, the provisions against it strengthened in the *Police Offences (Amendment) Act 1908*. That Act also made it illegal for men to live off the earnings of prostitution, creating the conditions that helped madams like Tilly Devine emerge as major figures in Darlinghurst's underworld by the 1920s. The law was amended so that both men and women could be prosecuted for living off the earnings of another's prostitution under the *Vagrancy, Disorderly Houses and Other Acts (Amendment) Act 1968*, which likewise strengthened laws against brothel-keeping and street solicitation.

Rather than eliminating the trade, its illegality simply left sex workers vulnerable to abuses by clients, madams, pimps and even police. The legislation introduced in the early twentieth century transformed the industry from one in which most women operated independently out of their own lodgings, to one that was largely controlled by organised crime figures able to pay the fines that sex work now attracted, or pay off police to prevent arrests from happening.⁸ Sydney's sex trade was instrumental in facilitating the rife police corruption that existed in NSW into the late twentieth century, a fact established beyond doubt in 1986 by a NSW Select Committee investigation into prostitution.⁹ The Select Committee was a result of increasing pressure on the NSW government to protect sex workers by liberalising the trade. Darlinghurst was by this time at the centre of an alliance between sex workers, feminists and civil rights advocates advocating for decriminalisation to protect sex workers from exploitation.¹⁰ In 1995, the same year that Loui Fraser created the statue *Joy* and installed it in Yurong Street, NSW became the first state or territory in Australia to fully decriminalise sex work. The statue, if returned to its proper home, can thus be considered a fitting testament to those who bravely advocated on this civil liberties issue across many decades, and more generally to an industry once synonymous with Darlinghurst that comprised a significant chapter in the city's history.

⁵ Catherine Freyne. "Red Light, Green Light", *Listening to Darlinghurst*, 2022.

<https://www.yirranmaplace.com/listening-to-darlinghurst/red-light-green-light>

⁶ Loui Fraser quoted in Paul Ashton. "From Gaol to *Joy*: The Getting of Heritage." *My Darlinghurst*, edited by Anna Clark, Gabrielle Kemmis and Tamson Pietsch. Sydney: NewSouth, 2023, p. 163-164.

⁷ Judith A. Allen, *Sex and Secrets: Crimes Involving Australian Women since 1880*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1990, p. 20.

⁸ Judith Allen. "The Making of a Prostitute Proletariat in Early Twentieth-Century New South Wales." In *So Much Hard Work: Women and Prostitution in Australian History*, edited by Kay Daniels, 192-232. Sydney: Fontana Books, 1984.

⁹ Paul Ashton. "From Gaol to *Joy*: The Getting of Heritage." *My Darlinghurst*, edited by Anna Clark, Gabrielle Kemmis and Tamson Pietsch. Sydney: NewSouth, 2023, p. 163.

¹⁰ Eurydice Aroney and Penny Crofts. "How Sex Worker Activism Influenced the Decriminalisation of Sex Work in NSW, Australia." *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy* vol. 8, no. 2 (2019): 50-67.

The importance of acknowledging diverse historical experiences in public history

While the past is stuff that happened, history is something we do in the present to make sense of these past happenings. This history-making is never a neutral process, as it is inevitably influenced by contemporary attitudes about which histories are worth remembering.¹¹ In the past, histories tended to be largely celebratory and nationalistic. This was especially true of histories intended for general public consumption, such as statues, memorials and museum exhibitions.¹² By the late twentieth century, such approaches to the past were being increasingly questioned. Historians pointed out that sanitising the past by concentrating only on its positive or uncontroversial aspects led to flattened, simplistic accounts that ignored the complexities and diversities of historical experience. More recently, public histories have widened to acknowledge ‘uncomfortable histories’, thereby becoming an important site for facilitating public acknowledgement and discussion of troubling aspects of the past.¹³

Public history can illuminate difficult histories and contested issues by placing them within the wider context needed to understand them. Darlinghurst’s history of sex work needs to be understood within the context of the limited economic opportunities historically available to women. When the suburb’s association with the sex trade started to develop in the late nineteenth century, the few jobs available to working-class women involved low wages, long hours and gruelling working conditions.¹⁴ Sex work sometimes provided a necessary supplement to earnings from other occupations, and was comparatively well-remunerated. For instance, in 1895 – at the tail end of a major economic depression – one Darlinghurst prostitute charged a man 15 shillings for a single night’s services, which was at the upper end of what a domestic servant might earn in a week.¹⁵ Police officer Harry Rasmussen described how many women in Darlinghurst ended up using sex work to survive during the Great Depression of the 1930s:

‘Things get tough, he’s lost his job. His wife complains to him all the time. He walks out and leaves her. She’s left with a couple of children. She’s possibly unskilled. The only thing, she applies the old trade to get a few extra bob.’¹⁶

Sex workers interviewed by sociologist Roberta Perkins in the 1990s about their experiences in East Sydney across the 1930s to 1980s likewise revealed that their entry to the trade was propelled largely by economic factors. Some described resorting to sex work after job loss or relationship breakdown left them without reliable means of support, while others spoke more

¹¹ Anna Clark. *Making Australian History*. Sydney: Vintage Books, 2022.

¹² Graeme Davison. "Paradigms of Public History." *Australian Historical Studies* vol. 24, no. 96 (1991): 4-15.

¹³ Amy McKernan. *Uncomfortable Histories: Learning with contested and confronting history in Australian museums*. PhD thesis, University of Melbourne, 2016.

¹⁴ Beverley Kingston. *My Wife, My Daughter and Poor Mary Ann: Women and Work in Australia*. Melbourne: Thomas Nelson Australia, 1980, pp. 29-31.

¹⁵ Hilary Golder and Judith Allen. "Prostitution in New South Wales 1870-1932: Re-Structuring an Industry." *Refractory Girl* vol. 18 (December 1979), p. 21.

¹⁶ Geoff Weary. Interview with Harry Rasmussen. ‘Slashartist’ Darlinghurst Oral History Interviews, 1982-83. City of Sydney Oral History Collection.

positively of choosing to engage in sex work as a pathway to an economic stability and independence they would not otherwise have been able to achieve.¹⁷

The diversity of historical experiences referenced by the *Joy* statue are also not limited to those of sex workers themselves, but others who were impacted by the industry's presence in Darlinghurst. These impacts range from negative to positive, from neighbours who were annoyed by the sight of long lines of men waiting outside the brothels in Woods Lane in the 1930s,¹⁸ to others growing up in Darlinghurst at that same time who remember figures like Tilly Devine as a 'very kind-hearted woman' who generously supported local people in hardship.¹⁹ Police officer Bill Mowbray recalls how one of Devine's brothels provided a home to an elderly, bedridden woman discharged from St Vincent's Hospital with nowhere to go. She lived there for three years before her death, with the brothel-workers paying for her funeral through Darlinghurst undertakers Kinsellas.²⁰ When sex workers started to become more politically vocal from the 1970s, they not only advocated about their own issues, but others facing the Darlinghurst community, such as the decriminalisation of homosexuality and HIV/AIDS prevention. During the first Mardi Gras parade in 1978, it was local sex workers who warned gay, lesbian and transgender protestors of approaching police, and joined the marchers in resisting the subsequent violent arrests.²¹ Historical intersections and alliances between local LGBTQ+ groups and sex workers were the subject of a display titled 'Fair trade and fancy tricks' which formed part of the recent *Pride (R)evolution* exhibition at the State Library of NSW.²²

The long presence of sex work in Darlinghurst has also had a substantial impact on the cultural life of the suburb. Darlinghurst's underbelly has provided inspiration to many writers. Henry Lawson alluded obliquely to its reputation in his 1910 poem "William Street", describing how it 'runs down sadly/Across the vale of sin'.²³ Kenneth Slessor dedicated an entire poetry collection to the topic with his 1933 volume *Darlinghurst Nights*. The neighbourhood's sex trade made multiple appearances in the volume, such as Slessor's representation of its exploitative nature in his poem "Cannibal Street".²⁴ Slessor's contemporary Ronald McCuaig, living nearby in Potts Point, likewise described the cruelties of the area's sex trade in poems such as 'Pretty Kid' and 'They Also Serve Who Only Stand and Wait'.²⁵ Decades later, musicians Paul Kelly and Stephen Connolly's song 'Darling It Hurts', a play on the suburb's name, told the traumatic story of Kelly's drug-addicted ex-girlfriend turning to prostitution. It reached number 25 on the Australian Singles Chart in

¹⁷ Roberta Perkins, "Being and becoming 'working girls': an oral history of prostitutes in Sydney 1935-1985." *All our labours: Oral histories of working life in twentieth century Sydney*, edited by John Shields. Kensington: New South Wales University Press, 1992, pp. 170-192.

¹⁸ Geoff Weary. Interview with Bill Mowbray. 'Slashartist' Darlinghurst Oral History Interviews, 1982-83. City of Sydney Oral History Collection.

¹⁹ Geoff Weary. Interview with Bob Bartholomew. 'Slashartist' Darlinghurst Oral History Interviews, 1982-83. City of Sydney Oral History Collection.

²⁰ Geoff Weary. Interview with Bill Mowbray. 'Slashartist' Darlinghurst Oral History Interviews, 1982-83. City of Sydney Oral History Collection.

²¹ Kate Iselin. "The hidden history of sex workers at Mardi Gras," news.com.au, 2 March 2019 <https://www.news.com.au/lifestyle/relationships/sex/the-hidden-history-of-sex-workers-at-mardi-gras/news-story/e435c85651554621b00b6529d3f0ae77>

²² State Library of NSW. *Pride (R)evolution*. (Exhibition dates 18 February – 9 July 2023), Sydney.

²³ Henry Lawson. "William Street," 1910 <https://www.ironbarkresources.com/henrylawson/WilliamStreet.html>

²⁴ Kenneth Slessor, "Cannibal Street," 1933 <https://allpoetry.com/Cannibal-Street>

²⁵ Mandy Sayer and Louis Nowra. *In the Gutter... Looking at the Stars: A Literary Adventure through Kings Cross*. Milsons Point: Random House Australia, 2003.

October 1986. The suburb's connection to sex work thus has a cultural significance that deserves commemoration.

Under-representation of women in public heritage and statuary

Making individuals 'seen' through public representation confirms their place in the community, and their right to a voice within it. In a 2003 article advocating for representations of sex work in Australian public history, Simon Adams and Raelene Frances commented that:

'The exclusion of certain subjects and groups in museums and galleries has implications for our status as citizens. A more inclusive approach to the history of sex work thus has political implications, especially for those currently engaged in the sex industry.'²⁶

Despite more than twenty years having elapsed since this call was made, not only do sex workers remain absent from public histories, but women in general remain under-represented.

This is particularly apparent in relation to the nation's public statues. Only 17 per cent of statues in Australian capital cities depict women. There are currently more public statues of animals than women in Australia.²⁷ Sydney has just six public statues of women, including two of Queen Victoria.²⁸ As the advocacy group A Monument of Her Own states:

'We need monuments to women's courage, vision, tenacity, obstinacy and resolve — qualities that have, without doubt, benefited our nation. We want our cities and our towns and our suburbs and our federal capital to build new statues to new heroes, those who have been previously discounted from our nation's story...'²⁹

Joy is a testament to an important gendered story that has until now been discounted from public versions of Australia's and Sydney's history. Her restoration to her proper place in Darlinghurst will go some way to addressing the current androcentric view of history provided by the city's statuary.

Dr Alana Piper

On behalf of the Australian Centre for Public History

University of Technology Sydney

15 Broadway

ULTIMO NSW 2007

Email: public.history@uts.edu.au

CC: alana.piper@uts.edu.au

²⁶ Simon Adams and Raelene Frances. "Lifting the Veil: The Sex Industry, Museums and Galleries." *Labour History*, no. 85 (November 2003): 47-64.

²⁷ James Vyer. "Women are under-represented among public statues across Australia, but the tide is turning." *ABC News*, 22 September 2023 <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-09-22/statues-of-women-in-australia-too-few-but-change-happening/102886476>

²⁸ Rafqa Touma. "Sydney to put up more statues of women after its public art labelled a 'sausage party'." *The Guardian*, 25 March 2023 <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2023/mar/25/sydney-to-put-up-more-statues-of-women-after-its-public-art-labelled-a-sausage-party>

²⁹ A Monument of Her Own. "What do we want?" Accessed 11 April 2024. <https://www.amonumentofonesown.com/whatwewant>

Julie Bates AO (from the Bring Joy Back Committee)

NO more if's or buts please just enable Joy's return she is much loved by many in the community and more widely. She is particularly loved of course by sex workers as she is a kind of metaphor for our intrinsic humanity often denied and ridiculed. She is also loved by business owners and others who know their neighbourhood - East Sydney - has some significant history much of which has included sex work, and tourists come to them asking about this history.

People living in some of the old, now restored, terraces proudly announce to their dinner party guests that their homes were once brothels so there is no denying the history of this neighborhood. When Joy is back they say they will be able to point to her and let Joy tell the story - from the whore or horse's mouth so to speak. They believe, quite rightly, the return of Joy will bring more tourists to the neighborhood which in turn will bring them more business, particularly important as they get back on their feet post COVID.

Then, if that is not enough. At a time when equity in public art and statuary is being called for as highlighted in the project - A Statue of One's Own, joy is a perfect fit, showcasing ordinary hard working women, albeit in the oldest profession, who once lived and worked and supported their neighbors through many hardships in the neighborhood in which Joy once proudly stood. And, Joy can showcase the heroic role of sex workers fighting back against corruption and the protection of themselves and others at the outset of the HIV pandemic. All worthy of a statue (in the form of Joy) I say.



Australian
National
University

24 August 2023

Councillor Linda Scott
City of Sydney Council

Professor Rae Frances, AM, FASSA
Emeritus Professor of History

College of Arts and Social Sciences
Email: rae.frances@anu.edu.au

**Australian
Society for
the Study of
Labour
History**

Dear Councillor Scott,

Re: Proposal to bring back the statue of 'Joy' to Darlinghurst

I am writing on behalf of the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History to express support for the proposal to restore the statue of 'Joy' to its original place in Darlinghurst.

We believe it is important that public art attempt to represent a broad spectrum of society. As it stands, statues of women form a very small percentage of statues in public spaces in Australia, and especially in Sydney. Representations of women workers are an even smaller percentage of these, so reinstating the statue of 'Joy' would be an ideal opportunity to help redress this imbalance.

As well, the fact that 'Joy' represents a sex worker provides an opportunity for the community to reflect on the heritage and history of Darlinghurst. As I am sure you are aware, sex workers and the sex industry more generally played an important role in the economy and society of this part of Sydney over many decades. A mature society should be prepared to include this aspect of its past alongside other, perhaps less controversial, elements of its history. There was a time when Australians preferred to forget their convict past but few would harbor such feelings today.

Finally, we suggest that the statue of 'Joy' is an engaging piece of art that would add interest to Sydney's public spaces. It would be a drawcard for tourists and provide a platform for education.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Rae Frances
Emeritus Professor of History
President, Australian Society for the Study of Labour History

1 | ANU COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES



Cr. Linda Scott
C/O- Bring Joy Back Campaign Committee and Julie Bates
City of Sydney
GPO Box 1591
Sydney 2001
LScott@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au

24 August 2023

Dear Councillor Scott,

We write to you on behalf of the Australian Historical Association (AHA). Founded in 1973, the AHA is the peak national organisation of historians working in all fields of history. We have over 900 members drawn from all over the country. We are academics, postgraduate students, public and professional historians, archivists, museum curators and history teachers – a cross-section of the history world in Australia. Some members are also Fellows of the learned academies: the Australian Academy of the Humanities and the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia.

We write to express our appreciation of and support for your commitment to the Bring Joy Back Campaign Committee and its advocacy for the restoration of the Statue of Joy in Darlinghurst. The Statue of Joy is significant, not just because she represents a woman in a city where statues of men abound, but because she represents a more diverse, inclusive and respectful portrayal of the lives of sex workers in the City of Sydney.

The AHA understands that you have long been concerned about the lack of representation of women in the art and statuary of the City of Sydney. Your commitment to identifying new opportunities to commemorate women in Sydney's public spaces, including in a figurative and less traditional manner, is admirable. Moreover, Council's collaboration with the work of A Monument of One's Own is of vital importance in this effort. The City of Sydney's resolution of 13 March 2023, passed unanimously, is an eloquent statement in support of activist efforts over recent years to redress the gendered imbalance of historic statues in Sydney.

In writing to you, we urge Council to act on the Bring Joy Back Campaign's petition when it is delivered to you.

Thank you again for your engagement on this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Frank Bongiorno
President, Australian Historical Association

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Frank Bongiorno'.

Michelle Arrow
Vice President, Australian Historical Association

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Michelle Arrow'.

'Joy': Memorialisation and the Limits of Tolerance

By Rae Frances (Monash University) and Julie Kimber (Monash University)

Abstract

While there are a growing number of 'counter-hegemonic' monuments in Australia, the numerous workers' memorials commemorating heroic male figures - coalminers, truck drivers, timber workers and wharf labourers – retain the exclusionary characteristic of traditional or 'institutional' memorialising. Many such memorials nourish a masculinist, albeit working class, vision of Australia's nation building efforts, while commemoration of the lives of women – beyond 'the exceptional' – is rare in the public sphere. This article examines one such rarity: the statue of 'Joy' commemorating the lives of women who worked as prostitutes in the 'red light' district of East Sydney, an urban environment then in the later stages of gentrification. 'Joy' is a memorial resembling the more recent tradition of 'new genre' public art; art that 'seeks to disrupt prevailing conceptions of the city'. When the larger-than-life cement, marble dust and steel statue took up her position on the street in East Sydney, New South Wales, it elicited widespread controversy. It is these different responses that are the subject of this article. They provide a snapshot of late-twentieth century Sydney views on prostitution and history.

Download the full article [HERE](#)