

Councillors views on Rolf Harris mural

Description



The debate is yet to really begin about the future of the Rolf Harris mural in Warrnambool.

This is the full text of responses from elected councillors on the future of the Rolf Harris mural in Warrnambool. See [the related Opinion piece here](#).

Cr Michael Neoh: “Council will discuss the matter as a group. I would respectfully say that it is appropriate to address issues in a considered manner and not to not act in haste to meet external deadlines.

“As you would be aware the painting has been fully covered and we were awaiting for any indication of an appeal processes which seems unlikely now. The acting CE and I recently discussed raising it in a

future briefing and I assume it will be an item, like many others, on a briefing agenda in the near future.”

Cr Kylie Gaston: “I think we do something like put a white ribbon over the perspex. I don’t like destroying art and, if we remove it completely, the opportunity to convey a message about violence toward women has been lost.”

Cr Peter Hulin: “Quite clearly it should be painted over unless Harris is successful in any appeal to his conviction. If there is no appeal. Remove it. (If it remains) it could send a message that we condone this child predator’s behaviour. This is a very serious matter and council as leaders of the community need to show the leadership this issue demands.”

Cr Jacinta Ermacora: “My personal view is that, in the first instance we should show respect to victims of violence who live in our community. We should no longer celebrate his art work as he used his notoriety to abuse children and women. This dynamic is not uncommon in our community and represents the ‘abuse dynamic’ which as a community we sign on to if we take no action.

“I believe that as the piece belongs to the Warrnambool City Council and thus belongs to the Warrnambool community, there should be a discussion with relevant stakeholders and community as to what to do with it. I believe that the voices of victims ought be given significant weight in this matter. I also believe that there is no ‘right’ answer in this, except to show recognition to the feelings of people in our community that have also experienced sexual abuse as a child or adult.”

Cr Peter Sycopoulis: “Considering that the artwork is painted directly on to the wall of the Lighthouse Theatre, I believe at this point in time, my preferred option would be to completely cover and fasten the artwork in question with some form of solid panelling.

I believe that a plaque could be mounted beside it to serve as a reminder that underneath lies a painting by Rolf Harris who was convicted of (sexual assault charges) and that our society has chosen to show our disapproval of this type of predatory behaviour by not publicly displaying his works.”

No reply from Cr Brian Kelson or Cr Rob Askew.

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