

Marri Grove Primary School  
Larson Road, Byford

MARRI GROVE



Marri Grove is the second Ministry of Education primary school in Western Australia to have a "per cent for art" applied as part of the West Australian Government's public art strategy. The Per Cent for Art Scheme is administered by the Building Management Authority in partnership with the Department for the Arts, and is advised by the Public Art Taskforce.

This partnership reflects the Government's dual goals of creating excellence in its public facilities and increasing awareness of contemporary art and its value to people.

The Marri Grove Per Cent for Art Project has been completed in collaboration with Marri Grove Public Art Project Committee and with the close co-operation and assistance of the children and staff of the school.



As you walk up the path to Marri Grove Primary School, you know, in a quiet sort of way, that you are on a journey of discovery. The artworks created for Marri Grove Primary School are subtle. They are a celebration of the physical landscape of West Byford and the passing of time.

The school sits at the base of the Darling escarpment. Rural farmlands, clumps of trees, and the curve of hills surround the play ground and school buildings, but may in time be changed by urban growth. These artworks are an invitation to the children, the parents and teachers to experience the treasures of this landscape and its ancient histories.

Set into the walkways is a series of sand engraved granite circles edged in square frames of honey-coloured stone. The designs are full of movement. They introduce the children to the animals, birds and insects of their region with the occasional interruption of a solitary farm element. This reminds us of the impact of people on the natural order of the land.

Garden beds become an echo of the topography and geology, once a shelf of rock below a shallow sea. Retaining walls, which are layered and stratified in laterite and quartzite, curve beside the covered walkways the children use to move around the school. Here the artist has inset and sculpted silhouettes and extrusions of fish and amphibia. Planting in garden beds is orderly and symbolises people's cultivation of the land.

Not only is this a geology lesson in itself, but these sculpted fossil reminders invite the children to touch, observe and be constantly surprised.

The courtyard offers an even more subtle experience. There is an arc of honey coloured stone spreading like a pool across the bluish grey courtyard floor. It seems like a shadow of the scarp itself.

Metal tree grates re-introduce the animals and birds of the scarp to the courtyard area in positive and negative silhouettes.

Throughout this project the artist, Malcolm McGregor, has worked closely with the design team and the school to achieve artworks of meaning and pleasure. For students and staff, each day revealed another aspect of the artwork as it gradually unfolded.

*"Patterns of wind and water, the movements of animals and the effects of ploughing, planting, fencing etc have left traces on the landscape that speak of its natural and human history.*

*It is through an evolutionary tale of animal species that I seek to highlight the nature of the changing landscape. Migratory birds trace invisible paths across the school, while small reptiles seek shelter from the heat of the midday sun. The story continues."*

**Malcolm McGregor**



These artworks, which will grow and mature with the site, are about layers of experience and time, and as such may be added to as the school grows.

#### **Marri Grove Design Team**

**Malcolm McGregor**  
*Artist*

**Glen Robinson**  
**John Sunderland**  
*Architects*  
*Building Management Authority*

**David Smith**  
*Landscape Architect*  
*Building Management Authority*

**Nick Pollard**  
*Project Leader*  
*Building Management Authority*

