

Media Release

Media contact Renée Fry **Date** 25 February 2016
Phone 07 5581 7980 **Mobile** 0417613663
Email rnfry@goldcoast.qld.gov.au

Embargoed 10pm Thursday 25 February 2016

Urban Oasis in the city: final five

It's down to the final five in the search for an artist to deliver an Urban Oasis in the heart of the Gold Coast's bustling tourist precinct.

An independent jury selected the five finalists out of a local, national and international pool of more than 50 submissions.

In another sign of the cultural evolution on the Gold Coast, local entries featured strongly, comprising a quarter of submissions to deliver the city's first major public art commission.

Jury chair, Robyn Archer AO, the City's Arts and Culture Strategic Advisor, applauded the high calibre applicants.

"We were so happy to find so many terrific artists had made the effort to apply and similarly delighted by the stimulating concepts they had offered," Ms Archer said.

The finalists include Alex Pentek, Buchan Group, Brian Robinson, Dr Chris Bennie and Kuuki. All five have been invited to further develop their designs.

Irish sculptor **Alex Pentek** is no stranger to Australia, having represented Ireland at Ten Days on the Island, International Arts Festival, in Hobart in 2007. He was one of two international finalists for a landmark public sculpture for Kangaroo Point, Brisbane, in 2010. Pentek brings 19 years' experience producing large scale work nationally and internationally to the design competition.

With an office just around the corner, global architecture firm and multi-disciplinary design practice, the **Buchan Group**, are a local submission. Previous work includes designing the Hilton, Surfers Paradise, Q1 Gold Coast and Robina Town Centre. The group has also presented several works at Sydney's *Vivid* festival.

Cairns-based artist **Brian Robinson** has delivered significant public art installations across Queensland - in Brisbane, Mackay, Cairns and Port Douglas as well as Wickham, Western Australia. He's working with Brisbane-based agency CREATIVEMOVE.

Gold Coast artist **Dr Chris Bennie** is working with Urban Art Projects. Dr Bennie has won acclaim for his work at the Gold Coast Swell Sculpture Festival and most recently took out Brisbane's Clayton Utz art prize. He has held exhibitions in Melbourne, Canberra and Sydney.

Artists **Priscilla Bracks** and **Gavin Sade** collaborate as Brisbane-based art and design studio **Kuuki**. They bring traditional art forms such as sculpture, illustration, photography and fashion, together with digital technologies. Kuuki has delivered public artworks in Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney and exhibited work in France, Ireland, Singapore and Taipei.

Urban Oasis will be installed later this year at the intersection of Surfers Paradise Boulevard and Elkhorn Avenue. It will signify the pivot point between Surfers Paradise as a precinct and our city's future cultural heart in Evandale.

The final artwork is expected to reflect the character of the coast, engage with the audience and ignite the imagination of locals and visitors.

The jury, a cross section of industry and stakeholder representatives, will select the winning entry for endorsement by Council with an announcement expected by June 2016.

Information: moregoldcoast.com.au/publicart