

The Partnership

The Table of Knowledge was conceived through a partnership between the City of Greater Dandenong, Vic Health and RMIT University. Community groups in Springvale played a valuable role in this project. *The Table of Knowledge* is a reflection of ideas and concepts offered through discussions and the sharing of knowledge and information.

@ 55 Youth Services - Springvale Community Health Service
 Merle Mitchell
 Multicultural Prime Timers
 Springvale Adult Migrant Education Service-AMES
 Springvale Asian Business Association
 Springvale Community Aid and Advice Bureau
 Springvale Community Health Service
 Springvale Drug Action Committee
 Springvale Indo Chinese Elderly Association
 Springvale Neighbourhood House Adult Literacy Centre
 Springvale Traders Association and Communities
 Westall Primary School

The Artistic Team

The artist Geoff Hogg was commissioned to create a public artwork, which would provide a catalyst for future activity, interest and dialogue focusing on art, health and wellbeing. The artwork was created using a collaborative process including Geoff Hogg, Greg Box, Rosemarie Iera, Craig Haire, Mario Petri, Aslam Akram, Ruth Lyon and Mark Apperly.

Further Information

Launch: 12 March 2003
Location: The Table of Knowledge
 298 Springvale Road
 Springvale
Interdisciplinary Team: Cultural Planning
 Urban Design
 Health Planning
 Community Development
 Economic Development
 Community Safety
 Capital Improvement and Maintenance

For further information about this project please contact Cultural Planner, Jenny Pemberton-Webb, on 9239 5131 email culture@cgd.vic.gov.au or Urban Designer, Matt Slavin, on 9239 5282 email: msslavi@cgd.vic.gov.au

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Health and Public Space

Public spaces mirror the community. They publicly reflect the values, beliefs, diversity, ideas, aspirations and identity of the people who live there. Public spaces have the power to uplift, challenge, inspire, celebrate and unite. *The Table of Knowledge* creates such a space.

The Table of Knowledge has been undertaken as part of a much larger urban design initiative (spanning five years) to create a distinctive retail environment in Springvale.

The Table of Knowledge is a unique public art installation, conceived following a series of discussions with local community groups. The final artwork is symbolic of community ideas on the important factors that help to sustain health and wellbeing. These include family, culture, faith and food.

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The Project Site

The Table of Knowledge is located in the retail heart of Springvale on a small stand of land occupied by the Springvale Community Health Centre. Prior to the project the space was a gap or void that was drab and unattractive. Despite this the site was well used and the through access provided excellent exposure to both pedestrians and vehicles travelling along Springvale Road. The project aimed

to find a creative solution that would animate the site, provide a notable point of interest and successfully link the Health Centre into the streetscape



Maintaining health often relies on connections with people. These social connections are central to healthy living.



The Design

The design process for any work of art is a complex undertaking. Each work poses its own set of difficulties, solutions and interpretations. When working in the public domain these issues are amplified. In developing the design, artist Geoff Hogg brought together disparate elements and materials to activate the site both visually and physically.

The site is filled with three major structures that represent table

forms. The 'table' is symbolic in most cultures as a place to sit and eat, converse, meet, negotiate and celebrate important moments in people's lives. It is a central point of contact and communication promoting connectedness between people.

The tables are covered with angular tablecloths, featuring enlarged relief patterns resembling ancient calligraphy. The words cannot be read.

Rather, they are an artistic interpretation of text, to symbolise the importance of communication.

On top of the tables are a series of smaller bronze sculptures. The sculptures, including spheres, bowls and beads, represent a selection of the ideas presented by the community. Together these objects symbolise universal connections between food, faith, culture, health and migration.

Community Ideas

The ideas-gathering phase of the project provided an opportunity for community involvement with a broad cross-section of the Springvale community. People were asked to tell a story and offer an object to the project that symbolised individual views on how to keep healthy and happy. Most people referred to their spiritual health, mental health and general happiness and wellbeing. Personal responses focussed on connections made with

family, culture, faith and country of birth.

Simple gatherings with friends and family that involved sharing food and joining in cultural celebrations were described as ways that people stayed happy and healthy.

"Traditional Cambodian music and dancing is important to my happiness. I love to sing and dance, especially at special family events." Leak Mom.

"My mother bought me this pendant from Vietnam, it makes me feel safe and lucky." Huynh Bao.



*The objects are a symbol of offering brought to the project and ultimately to *The Table of Knowledge* to be shared with the entire community.*