

Work on the reinstatement of the mural, *Peace Justice and Unity* on the walls of Pilgrim House, Pitt St Sydney, commenced on Monday 18th August 2003. The 24m x 13m mural had been absent for 2 years after adorning its lofty CBD site from 1984 to 2001, a period of 17 years.

THE PEACE WALL

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TISQUAD

"PEACE JUSTICE & UNITY
CAN SERVE AS A STATEMENT
FROM THE PEOPLE
OF SYDNEY TO AUSTRALIA

& THE REST
OF THE WORLD."



Following 6 months of hard work, David Humphries from Public Art Squad - one of the original artists - gained support from the NSW Premier's Department and the City of Sydney to reinstate the much loved mural. Along with the State and City support, there have been contributions from the Uniting Church and donations from the wider community. Generous corporate support has come from Multiplex Developments (NSW) who donated the scaffolding and Amazing Paints and Solver assisted by contributing the paint.

David Humphries says, "Prominent art works like *Peace Justice and Unity* help shape the character of the city and are often viewed by the public with great affection. There is a genuine recognition of the importance of this mural in the community and I believe the desire to have it reinstated was wide"

The Premier, Bob Carr, cited *Peace Justice and Unity* as an outstanding example of mural art of the period. "The scale of the mural and its enduring themes of peace and racial harmony will once again be a reminder of the kind of community in which we all strive to live. I congratulate Public Art Squad on their efforts to engage the community in the restoration of a work of considerable artistic merit and public appeal."


The Lord Mayor of Sydney, Lucy Turnbull, said the City was pleased to support the re-establishment of this "evocative and influential mural" to its former glory. She looks forward to it regaining its former significance in the City's streetscape.

Peace Justice and Unity was originally painted on the wall of Pilgrim House on the corner of Pitt & Park Streets Sydney in 1984 and officially unveiled by Helen Colman AM, General Manager of the Arts Council of NSW. The mural was the result of workshops chaired by Rev. Dorothy McRae-McMahon, the Minister of Pitt St Uniting Church, together with the artists of Public Art Squad (David Humphries, Rodney Monk and Ashley Taylor) and the tenants of Pilgrim House, who represented organisations such as the Church Council, Pitt St Uniting Church, Amnesty International, Freedom from Hunger, Community Aid Abroad, The Tea Co-op and committed members of the Sydney CBD community.

It was originally funded by the NSW Ministry for the Arts, Sydney City Council and Pitt Street Uniting Church, with donations from Solver Paints, Instant Scaffolding and many individual supporters. The Criterion Hotel next door, provided illumination for the mural, enabling it to be seen 24 hours a day and thus maximising its impact. And in 1989, when the Parish refurbished the mural, Public Art Squad donated its time and labour.

Public Art Squad (PAS), under the direction of artists David Humphries and Rodney Monk, pioneered the Mural movement in Australia. They co-authored the Mural Manual, a guide to community murals in Australia, which to this day is the standard text for schools and community groups. Prolific in the 1980s, PAS murals included the Opera House 10th Year Celebration Mural, a series of mural panels in the Devonshire St Subway, Bondi Pavilion

and many other community murals across Australia. Public Art Squad was responsible for the art direction of the original Harbourside Festival Marketplace in Darling Harbour and Skygarden in Sydney's CBD. They were awarded the 1985 Sulman Prize for their mural in Redfern, which was commissioned by Sydney City Council.

In 2001, the Parish had to undergo maintenance due to damp penetration of the walls. Until work was actually begun, the full extent of the maintenance was unknown. The walls had to be coated with a waterproofing membrane, which necessitated covering over the mural. The cost of saving the mural was considered in this process but at the time finances were not available to restore it. Now, however, the original team of artists have painted *Peace Justice and Unity* again, almost 20 years since it was first designed. The driving force behind this reinstatement was David Humphries - one of the original artists - who, together with the Church's support for his initiative and endorsement, undertook the task of assisting with fundraising. David believes "the message that the *Peace Justice and Unity* mural originally conveyed is even more relevant today." "In the wake of September 11, the Bali Bombing, the Iraqi War and the on-going heightened tension from global terrorism, the mural's themes are more important than ever."  27

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