

Heritage listing for Haring mural

By Rachel Kleinman

ARTWORK created in Collingwood by late American artist Keith Haring is set to be heritage listed.

The mural, which adorns a wall at NMIT's Johnston St campus, showcases the New York street artist's eye-catching style.

Yarra Council has nominated the artwork for a listing with Heritage Victoria because it is the only Haring mural in Australia and one of only a handful around the world.

The artist was invited to Australia in 1984 by then director of the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, John Buckley.

As well as the Collingwood piece, Haring created a temporary mural in the glass water windows at the National Gallery of Victoria.

Haring emerged as an important member of the New York art scene in the early 1980s, drawing on graffiti and hip-hop culture.

Haring was a vigorous campaigner for acceptance of people with HIV and AIDS at a time when it was first emerging as a major health issue.

He died of the disease in 1990 at the age of 32.

Cr Judy Morton said Yarra was fortunate to have a work of this significance and scale in the municipality.



Keith Haring's mural in Collingwood.

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She said if granted the heritage listing would provide extra protection for the mural.

"A number of community groups have expressed interest in preserving the piece and we would strongly support that," she said.

The upper half of the mural depicts the influence of technology and television on popular culture, while the lower half reflects the rap and hip-hop movement of the time.

Collingwood Historical Society

spokeswoman Janet Taylor welcomed the council's pro-active approach to preserving the mural.

She said Haring was a significant artist and the mural was "something special".

Submissions close on February 16 and can be made directly to Heritage Victoria at 80 Collins St, Melbourne 3000.

If there are no objections, the nomination will be forwarded to the Heritage Council for formal sign-off.