

RESPONSE TO PETITION

Petition Number: 738
Petition Sponsored by: Mrs Beverley McArthur MP, Member for Western Victoria Region
Directed to: Minister for Planning
Tabled on: 28 July 2026
Petition Grievance:

The petition of certain citizens of the State of Victoria draws to the attention of the Legislative Council the current removal from public display the Harold Freedman OAM's Geelong regional history mosaic mural at 30 Little Malop Street, Geelong. The mural has been hidden by an opaque screen for the last 15 months.

The heritage listed mural is the second largest after the Australian War Memorial mural. Created during Harold Freedman's tenure as the Official State Artist of Victoria, it's the only work of its kind incorporated into a government building. The mosaic took many talented artists three years to complete. The distinguished Scientist and Historian, Dr Roy Lang, oversaw the content. No one has ever contested the historical accuracy or integrity of the work. It traces a cavalcade of people and important events in the Geelong region and Western District. It is visual history and aimed to be as inclusive as possible. It has an immediacy not possible with other mediums and speaks directly to all who have the opportunity to view it. It is an iconic and much loved unique work of art serving as a tourist magnet and educational asset for the people of Victoria and tourists to Geelong.

Petition Action:

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Council call on the Government to return the Harold Freedman Geelong regional history mosaic mural to unimpeded public display as soon as possible.

Reply:

I thank the Member for Western Victoria Region and her constituents for raising this matter.

The State Government office at 30 Little Malop Street, Geelong has been included on the Victorian Heritage Register as a significant example of Brutalist architecture. The mural is recognised as an important artwork, hence its recognition in the registration documentation.

Like any building of its age, there is work required to ensure it remains fit for purpose and meets the needs of the building occupants, including security upgrades and fitout works, which impact the ground floor lobby where the mural is located.

In October 2024, Heritage Victoria issued a permit exemption for a temporary hoarding to be placed over the mural to protect it from damage during construction works which are ongoing.

Extensive works at the State Government Offices at 30 Little Malop Street will continue this year and through to 2027. These include roof works, lift replacements, lobby and entrance works, rectification works, additional security works, hydraulic works, and fit out works on all levels of the building. It is expected that the hoarding will remain in place until works are completed.

The community will be updated as these works progress. While the hoarding remains in place, the Department of Transport and Planning can facilitate viewings of the mural on request.


Hon Sonya Kilkenny MP
Minister for Planning

17/8/2026