

# Robert Burns statue



CORANGAMITE  
SHIRE

## Who was Robert Burns?

Robert Burns was born in 1759 in Alloway, Ayrshire. As early as 1774, Burns was composing poetry and blending lyrics with music. His first volume of 44 poems was published in July 1786. His income from poetry was never enough to live on, which saw him become an excise officer in 1789. He died in 1796 - achieving more fame posthumously than in life with many poems and songs becoming international favourites. Around the world, many cities have erected Burns monuments and communities continue to run Burns societies.

## The history of our statue

Created by the eminent sculptor John Greenshields in Scotland in 1830, Camperdown's Burns statue is the only one to have been based exclusively on the earliest known portrait of Burns, painted from life, by artist Peter Taylor around 1786. Displayed in London in 1859 by William Taylor at the Crystal Palace Exhibition (celebrating the 100th year of Burns' birth), the statue was inherited by his son, William Andrew Taylor, who was an early settler of the Western District of Victoria. W.A. Taylor gifted the statue to the community of Camperdown in 1883 and it was erected in the Camperdown Public Park (Botanic Gardens) where it remained for more than 125 years.

## Vandalism attacks

The statue was already in need of restoration when in 2009, it was vandalised resulting in Burns' dog Luath losing his front legs and Burns losing part of his hat's brim. Following the attack the statue was moved to a secure location by Corangamite Shire Council and conservators, Cathedral Stone, so that its restoration and future protection could be assessed.

## National Trust appeal

Classified by the National Trust of Australia (Vic) in 2009, the statue of Robert Burns is now considered to be the oldest outdoor Burns statue worldwide. The Trust has launched a tax-deductible appeal to support the Camperdown community in its efforts to restore the internationally significant statue in the 250th anniversary year of Burns' birth. This internationally significant public monument to Burns now awaits restoration. The Trust estimates this will cost approximately \$100,000 - including its remounting. To assist the community of



Camperdown in restoring the statue in this the anniversary year, the Trust is seeking public support. The National Trust has more than 60 tax deductible appeals in Victoria, however this is the first appeal launched for a statue.

## Our opportunity

Thanks to the National Trust's appeal, which is expected to gain internationally attention, the opportunity exists for much of the required funding for the restoration to be donated. The restoration of the statue and the publicity it will generate both nationally and internationally offers the region a welcome tourism boon. The National Trust believes the statue has the potential to draw visitors, particularly from Scotland, to Camperdown.

## Consultation

The community will have the opportunity to provide input on where the statue will be displayed. Corangamite Shire will embark on a public consultation process to hear from the community on issues including the future security of the statue and sites that will maximising its benefits to Camperdown both aesthetically and economically.