



PATRON OF THE FRIENDS

Susan McCulloch, OAM

Website: <https://mprg.mornpen.vic.gov.au/FRIENDS>

email: mprgmembership@gmail.com

Welcome to the 2025 Summer issue of our Friends newsletter.

We wish all members a happy, healthy and successful year and look forward to enjoying more time together at various Friends and MPRG events throughout this year. Ongoing support of our gallery and for each other is important. In this issue we highlight two events, held late last year, that capture the creative use of words, and the commitment and hard work of volunteers. The first was the popular Poetry Reading that focussed on poems and readings reflecting the world of today, and the second was the celebration of 30 years of volunteering at MPRG. Both events were thought provoking and fun as reflected in our reports and photos.

We continue to appreciate the kindness and encouragement from Friends as we plan a range of interesting events for everyone this year. Our first fundraising and social event for 2015 is a visit to McCrae Homestead in February. This promises to be an interesting and fun day exploring our local area, so please note Monday, 24 February in your diary. More information on page 5 of this newsletter. As a valued member, if you have any ideas or feedback you would like to share with the Friends Committee please contact us at mprgmembership@gmail.com



In 2020 the MPRG exhibition *With a little help from our Friends* showcased 34 works the Friends of MPRG had purchased for the Gallery since 1996.

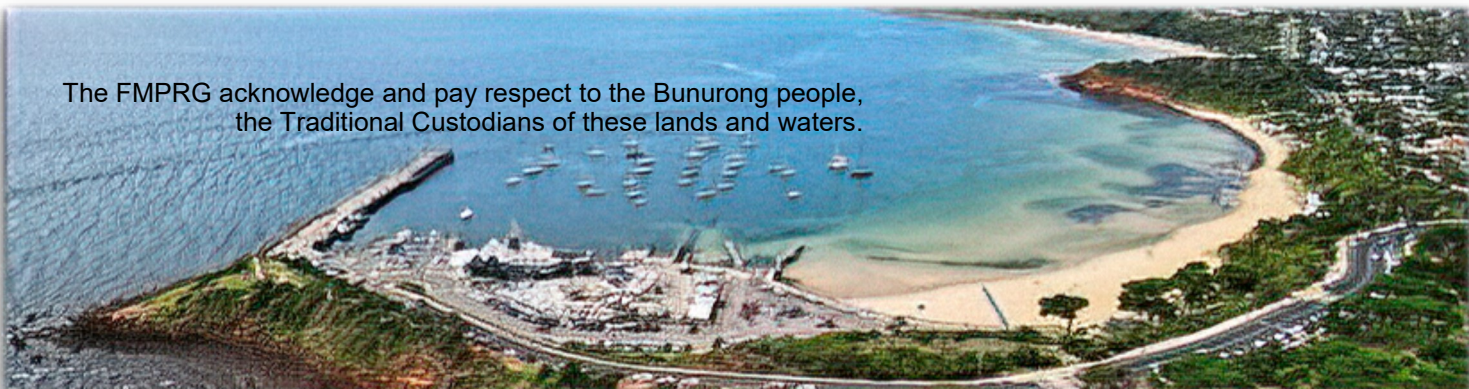
To view the exhibition catalogue and get an insight into how the Friends support the MPRG, click on the image or the link.

Alternatively you can type

<https://issuu.com/morningtonpeninsularegionalgallery/docs/a-little-help-from-our-friends>

into your address bar

Thank you to our members and donors for your ongoing support of the Friends of the MPRG without which we would be unable to assist the MPRG to purchase permanent acquisitions for future generations to view and enjoy.



The FMPRG acknowledge and pay respect to the Bunorong people, the Traditional Custodians of these lands and waters.

Carole Reed in Conversation with Leah Ferguson

It was a real pleasure to spend time chatting with Leah Ferguson recently.

Leah has a deep love of literature and the stories and experiences behind people and objects, so I was keen to learn more about her own story.

Leah has been employed at MPRG since March 2022 and during this time she has embraced various gallery role and management changes with a sense of calm and confidence.

She was delighted when she was successful in securing the position of Visitors Services and Operations Officer early in 2022. It not only provided her with a valuable opportunity to utilise her administrative skills in the day-to-day operations of the gallery but allowed her to engage with gallery visitors upon their arrival. MPRG is an integral part of the Mornington Peninsula community and Leah recognises the importance of first impressions and making people feel welcome and genuinely connected to the gallery.

So what is Leah's story prior to arriving at MPRG?

Her love of literature led her to work in a number of public libraries after completing a Bachelor of Arts in Literature and German Cultural Studies at Monash University. She then continued a six week Intensive Language Study in Germany during which time she gained a deeper understanding and respect for the writings about art history and the written work from art critics.

After returning to Australia she commenced work at Mornington Library but was keen to learn more and completed a thesis at Monash University about the links between history, culture and the modern era. It was during this time that Leah became more aware of the strong connections between history, culture and art. She was working at Mornington Library when COVID took hold and like many people, Leah started to reassess her own working life.



*Leah Ferguson
Gallery Support and Assistant Curator - Projects*

She commenced an Art Curatorship at Melbourne University and couldn't believe her luck when the MPRG position was advertised, as she believed her administrative skills and experience would be a good fit for the role.

She was right! Leah continued with her Curatorship studies and six months after commencing at the gallery she was offered a change in role by MPRG Director, Danny Lacy, to include Assistant Curator. It was also during this time that Leah and fellow work colleague, Lachie Petrie, commenced the zine PRISMS written publications about the highlights within MPRG and its dynamic art scene. She was loving the stimulation and opportunities that MPRG offered.

Not long after, Dunja Rmandić commenced at the gallery as Curator of Exhibitions and asked Leah to curate the Both Body and Not Exhibition during Winter 2024. Leah was in her element as she curated over 30 collection works depicting ideas of body, community and universe. She loved the experience, especially the unique story behind each piece.

Leah's family has always encouraged her to be curious about art by looking at and understanding how people express themselves. Curating has proven to be an enriching experience allowing Leah to put her love of writing, developed from studying literature, into good use when writing about art.

Leah succinctly sums up her belief and respect about art by saying:

"Art is a space for expression about the most complex things in life that are hard to put into words"

Thank you Leah for sharing your story with us.

We wish you all the best as you continue to enjoy learning, engaging with others and following your creative dream.

Celebrating 30 Years of Volunteering at MPRG



Ken
Volunteer

Shirley
Volunteer

Denise
Volunteer

Vivienne
Interviewer

Ainsley
Volunteer/Staff

Rosalie
Volunteer

Wasyl
Volunteer

THE Friends of MPRG share a long and proud history and this was reflected at the volunteer celebration last November. The Friends event, held at the Rose Garden, acknowledged the commitment and hard work of dedicated members who have volunteered at MPRG for 30 years. What an achievement!

It was a pleasure to listen to their interesting and often humorous stories as they shared their personal memories and insights as a volunteer at the gallery during their 30 years. Vivienne Nicholson, a passionate historian and previous Friends Committee member, chaired the event and kept the conversation flowing. The result was an afternoon filled with interest and laughter that highlighted the loyalty and confidence people have towards the gallery and its members. It also highlighted just how resilient members are as they continue to adapt and adjust to the ongoing changes as a gallery and Friends volunteer.

Many thanks and congratulations to Wasyl Abrat, Rosalie Fyffe, Ainsley Gowing, Denise Hassett, Shirley Green and Ken Parker for not only sharing their stories but for contributing to the ongoing success of the gallery.

Members were welcomed to the Rose Garden to the bright and cheery saxophone tunes played by Neil Chapple and a glass of bubbly and delicious afternoon tea prepared by the Friends Committee.



Undoubtedly, this event was a great reminder about where we have come from since the early days with Alan McCulloch, and where we are heading as a strong capable team supporting the future of the gallery. Well done everyone!



Poetry at the Rose Garden



Rob Wallis

Ann de Hugard

Philippa

Vivienne



WE NEED TO BE BETTER

WE NEED TO BE BETTER

There are droughts and peril to plants, animals and the land.

WE NEED TO BE BETTER.

Some need to heal.
Some need to help.

We all need healers to heal the wounds and scars we've inflicted.

WE NEED TO BE BETTER.

Our future is pale.
So we link arms to heal the damage we gave.

WE NEED TO BE BETTER.

To rebuild our Earth,
Our Planet,
Our Ecosystems,
Our Land.

WE NEED TO BE BETTER.

To heal our forests and lakes.

We Protest.
Place Laws

And work together as much as we will.

We need to say YES.

YES to mend the scars and tears that we have inflicted.
YES to work together to mend the destruction.

WE NEED TO BE BETTER

This poem was written by Arthur Bicknell, age 11
From Red Hill Primary School

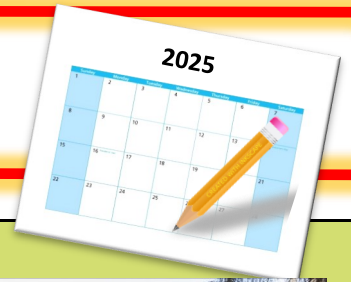
THE Friends of the MPRG hosted an October evening of poetry readings at the Mornington Botanical Rose Garden.

Castlemaine poets Ann de Hugard and Rob Wallis presented very autobiographical anecdotes from their lives.

Ann called her excerpts poetry of the human world and featured the life of a German relative, T. (Theo) Scharf from his young days in Munich, 1923 through to later visits to Australia. Theo died in 1987 and his last work was a delightful illustrated children's pull out book : 'Bächlein auf der Reise' (the journey of the river) a parable of his life. Rob Wallis details in his sonnets and poems, often funny, irreverent but sad, his perceptive view of people and their choice of lifestyles. Both poets gave us strong, poignant topics to ponder and a relevant look at the world today. Thanks to Neil Chapple for serenading us with his saxophone melodies; wine and finger food well received so a successful evening enjoyed by all.

Report by Val White





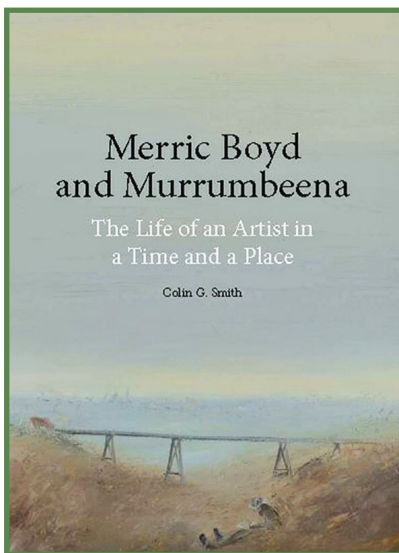
Monday
24th February
Leave MPRG at 9.30am

Bus trip and Guided tour of McCrae Homestead and Burrell Gallery



Lunch at Wildflower Café, McCrae

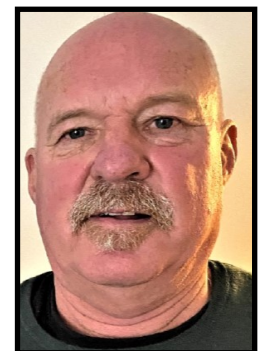
\$40 per person for return bus trip and
homestead entry (lunch is not included in cost)



In **March** we hope to welcome back **Colin G Smith** to the gallery to share his knowledge about the interesting life of **Merric Boyd**.

Two years ago Colin gave an engaging and informative presentation about the life of **Penleigh Boyd** to a packed house.

More information soon.



An excursion in **May** to **Geelong Gallery** is planned to enjoy the exhibitions of artists Roger Kemp, Yvonne Audette and Prints by Australian Women Artists from 1900s-1960s.

More information soon.

THE COFFEE CART AT MPRG



Nuno's serves up great coffee, sandwiches and tasty comfort food with a home-town Texas flair

Thursday-Sunday at MPRG

8.30am - 3.00pm

Earlybird coffee from 7.30am



Enjoy people and pet friendly service



Your hosts Thomas and Rani

Join Us at the Friends

Join Friends of MPRG and become part of the vibrant cultural life of the peninsula. Members are part of a social network that organises events and raises funds to support the continued growth of our great Gallery.

Benefits:-	Membership cost	Membership type	Annual	3-year
		Single	\$35	\$90
		Concession/Students	\$30	\$75
		Family/Duo	\$55	\$140

- Receipt of the MPRG quarterly Gallery Program brochure, which provides information about the Gallery's exhibitions.
- Discounts when enjoying talks and excursions organised by the Friends.
- Invitations to exhibition openings featuring guest speakers, artists and curators. Meet new friends and enjoy refreshments.
- The MPRG new members annual morning tea and a behind-the-scenes tour hosted by Gallery staff and Friends' representatives.
- Discounts on Gallery activities such as guest speakers, workshops, excursions and master classes.



Like us on Facebook

Check out the link for up-to-date information

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100091463713533>