

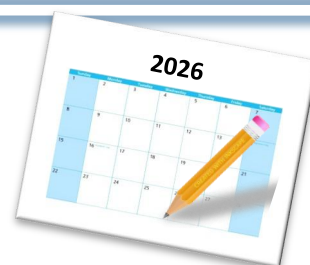
FRIENDS OF MPRG Winter Newsletter

June
July
August



PATRON OF THE FRIENDS
Susan McCulloch, OAM

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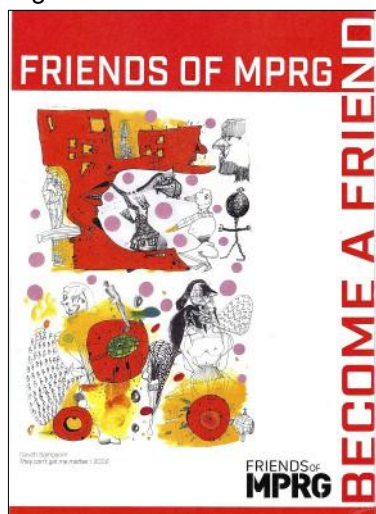


Welcome to the Winter issue of the Friends newsletter

Thank you all for your continued support of the FMPRG

Your Friends of MPRG Committee have put together several interesting coffee morning guest speaker talks, and excursions that help raise funds, enabling the Friends to achieve their vision and purpose for the Gallery.

Our beautiful new Become a Friend Brochure is now showcased on the main desk in MPRG, and in the 11 businesses offering our Membership discounts, and in both Mornington and Hastings Libraries.



Please make sure you **show your current Friends membership cards** when frequenting these businesses. I could not be more impressed with our local business community, who recognize the importance of the Arts on their doorstep.

The self drive excursion to Mulberry Hill was sold out in a flash, and we were very sorry to disappoint so many

members. Unfortunately the venue could not host a large group, so please remember to book as early as possible.

I have finally finished organising our 15 June excursion to the NGV's **CARTIER Melbourne Winter Masterpieces® 2026**. Limited places will apply for this bus trip, so again, please book as early as possible. ([Book here](#))

On 27th July we are hosting a coffee morning/conversation at MPRG. **The Power of Regional Galleries** begins with a delicious morning tea, before we sit down to hear **Anne Robertson** CEO of Public Galleries Association of Victoria discuss the **Importance of Regional Galleries**, followed by our Patron **Susan McCulloch** OAM speaking of **The Significance of The MPRG**. **Dunja Rmandić** MPRG's director will then discuss **MPRG Now and Into the Future**. We have invited **Paul Pingiaro** Tanti Ward councillor, and acting mayor of Mornington Peninsula Shire to cover **Council's vision for our wonderful Gallery**.

On 17th August popular author Colin Smith is back speaking about his latest book **Lucy Boyd Beck : life and art**.

The **2026 NWOP** is one of the leading art awards and exhibitions in the country, attracting Australia's foremost contemporary artists working with paper.

The Friends will once again be contributing \$25,000 to acquire artworks for MPRG's permanent collection on behalf of our Membership.

Watch out for Digby Smyth who will be presenting - **Re-Considering Margaret Preston** at the MPRG.

I look forward to welcoming you and your friends to FMPRG's events and excursions in the near future.

Sandra Olulich - President



Come, Sit and Colour an Insect!

Unfolding was a major exhibition celebrating the diversity and dynamism of works on paper by First Nations artists which featured prints, drawings and paintings on paper from the Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery (MPRG) permanent collection, located on Bunurong Country. The exhibition revealed the many ways First Nations artists engage with paper as a medium. During this exhibition, visitors were invited to contribute to the collaborative artwork, called **Unfurling** designed by Taungurung artist Sammy Trist.

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

Image: Ralph Powell

Regional arts vital, but neglected, community resources

Australia has a unique network of regional art galleries which attract tourism, help local businesses thrive and contribute to overall regional development.

Yet they suffer from accusations of being mere playgrounds for the elite, an attitude reflected of afterthought in multi-purpose government departments and the vagaries of local council elections.

When I was writing my book on Victoria's regional art galleries (*Art for the Country: The story of Victoria's regional art galleries*, Australian Scholarly, 2019), the main theme that emerged was a conflict over spending public money – on roads, footpaths, sports fields, etc versus the so-called “elitist” arts. It was a clash led by those who wanted a quality of life beyond the everyday practical concerns and those who thought local rates would be wasted on frivolities such as art. The latter could not see how a creative city, which welcomed diversity and innovation, would attract tourism, business and population growth. It was the mundane versus the adventurous, a narrow view of life versus the stimulus of challenging ideas and difference.

It is thus with a sense of déjà vu that I now read about reduced funding for many NSW galleries and battles over the proposed building of a new gallery (costing \$50 million) at Hamilton in Victoria's Western District, where the current gallery holds more than 10,000 valuable items, but can display barely 1% of them to the public because of inadequate space. As in the past, some elected local councillors can see the value to tourism and local business such an attraction would hold; others (motivated by populist vote-catching) plug the old line that such spending only benefits the “elite”, that “ordinary people” just want better local services such as garbage collection, childcare centres, improved footpaths and the like. The Hamilton decision to go ahead was made after extensive community consultation, yet people still complain.

Short-term funding means galleries cannot plan long-term for future exhibitions or guarantee continuity of staff.

The underlying problem is the confused nature of funding, some from each level of government and (if lucky enough) from interested philanthropists. Local councils are elected every three years and (as Victoria's history shows) often lose their arts champions to those who scaremonger about likely increased debt and rate hikes. At both federal and state levels, the arts portfolio is not standalone, but lumped in with sports, regional development of all kinds and suffers from relative neglect. The federal Minister Tony Burke is personally interested in the arts (as, no doubt are most of the states' Arts ministers), but he also carries the more time-consuming responsibility of Home Affairs, Immigration and Citizenship and Cyber Security, and is Leader of the House of Representatives. Not much time left to devote to the arts!

At both state and federal level, sports funding seems to take priority, even though attendance at and involvement in regional art galleries outstrips that in the major sports. In Victoria, for example, in 2016, its 50 public galleries presented 723 exhibitions, 2152 public programs and 1426 education programs to more than 5.4 million visitors. They held over 753,000 items in their collections with a combined worth of \$4.8 billion. As well (an added value not often mentioned in assessing gallery impacts) they collected, commissioned and exhibited the work of some 3505 visual artists, a huge contribution to the sustainability of working artists themselves. All this is done by an average gallery staff of five, a level of “productivity” unmatched by most businesses and other public organisations.

Beyond such monetary arguments lies the inherent cultural value of fostering creativity, education of children in the arts beyond the school curriculum and the challenge of seeing the world through different eyes, the broadening of cultural horizons and appreciation of varied ethnic and artistic approaches to life beyond the mundane.

The most successful galleries are those led by directors with the ability to convince local councillors and their wider community of the gallery's contribution to social life. They offer free entry, lively children's programs, often have a café space and do not scorn amateur local artists. They plan for travelling exhibitions, so it's not just the original collection on show, and proselytise for the importance of the arts in general. They do not present the gallery as an elite, snobbish place to be seen, but build themselves into a wide range of community activities, public meetings and musical events, as broader “arts centres”. Such directors manage to attract interest from philanthropists whose donations help mitigate the fear of increased rate burdens.

This fits well with the stated aims of their overarching federal arts ministry: “connecting Australians; enriching communities; empowering regions”; to “create culturally vibrant communities, a thriving arts sector, protect and celebrate the culture, heritage and languages of First Nations people”. But the federal arts budget of \$306.6 million compares poorly with the \$753.1 million budget for sports. And it includes support for film, literature and special festivals, with a Regional Arts Fund of only \$6 million a year. There is no specific focus on regional art galleries as such, even though they hold major collections of historical and indigenous art.

State budgets reflect a similar bias against the visual arts in favour of sport and are, overall, less aware of the key role of the arts to regional development.

NSW, through its inaugural Arts and Cultural Funding Program, seems to have got part of the message. It claims the shift to two-year funding will reduce administrative paperwork, but galleries such as Broken Hill (NSW's oldest regional gallery) argue it will limit longer-term exhibition planning. The new program will support more than 6000 artists and cultural workers, fund an additional 22 organisations, provide about \$600,000 per annum for four First Nations arts and cultural organisations, to deliver powerful and meaningful outcomes for NSW Aboriginal artists and communities; \$985,000 per annum invested in eight Western Sydney organisations; \$2,985,000 per annum directed to 23 organisations in metropolitan Sydney (an anomaly in terms of regional needs?): fund an additional 104 creative projects made up of 83 individual artists and 21 organisations; support a total of 1296 local artists and arts workers across art forms to bring their exceptional creative visions to life; plus in regional NSW, 268 artists across 31 projects.

Funding for Western Sydney will engage and empower more than 236 artists to connect audiences from diverse communities. As in Victoria historically, the definition of “regional” (at first aimed at restricting proliferation) has morphed into funding areas of outlying suburbia as well.

The unique claims and needs of country areas are in danger of being swamped, reflecting an overall bias towards metropolitan demands. (Victoria's galleries thrived in the 1960s-70s because its premier — the arch conservative Henry Bolte — listened to his rural constituents who demanded their rights over already well-catered-for city-dwellers.) The fortunes of art galleries depends too much on the fickle attitudes of local government. Distance makes visiting some regional galleries difficult, but if local councils link them to other aspects of tourist highlights, the message is “build it and they will come”. Towns such as Mildura, in the far northwest of Victoria, exemplified this in the 1960s with its Sculpture Triennial events, bringing sculptors into the national picture and thousands of visitors to the city. It had visionary local leaders and a brave gallery director who could see the wider value of the arts to a remote community.

Country people have the right to see and learn to appreciate the best art of the past and present; galleries are not there for a supposed “elite”, but for everyone, an essential part of every child's education and the cultural enrichment of community life. Arts ministers need to rethink their priorities. ■ By Dr. Donald E. Edgar OAM

Friendly Visits

Mulberry Hill

Imagine living with a room full of Rupert Bunny paintings and a house crammed with an eclectic collection by Australia's foremost early twentieth century artists!

This was the inspiring treat enjoyed by the Friends who gathered at Mulberry Hill for an escorted tour by the National Trust guides.



Daryl and Joan Lindsay first saw the run down Baxter farmhouse in 1922 returning home after their marriage in London and they fell in love with the position and the established Mulberry tree in the garden.

Having persuaded the McCubbin family to sell to them, they called on renowned architect Harold Desbrowe Annear to redesign the house into the much grander place we see now and which remained their home for over 50 years.

The story of their life together reflects the social history of the times and arts and culture in



Melbourne. It was a place to visit for the many famous illustrious names for the generous hospitality offered: artists, actors, business men, and politicians. Keith and Elizabeth Murdoch at Cruden Farm were neighbours and firm friends.

There are many of Daryl's paintings of horses, how he made his bread and butter, still life of flowers many from their garden, and ballet dancers from the Ballet Russes which company was famous at the time. Many of Joan's

beautiful possessions gathered during their travels to Europe and the USA are still on show.

She was a writer, artist, passionate gardener and interested in spiritualism and all of life's curious things.

Some of Joan's paintings are featured and it was in the main bedroom overlooking the mulberry tree that she typed "Picnic at Hanging Rock".

Both Joan and Daryl were instrumental in launching the National Trust in Australia and he left the house to the Trust in his will.



After our inspiring tour the Friends then enjoyed coffee and lunch at Sages Cottage nearby in Baxter. Time to reflect on an extraordinary life lived to the full and how lucky we are to still have the opportunity to share this story.

Report by Val White

Everywhen Gallery - Shoreham

On a rather bleak Friday 17th April 32 Friends attended a talk by Susan McCulloch OAM at her Everywhen Gallery.

Susan gave a fascinating history lesson on her parents Alan McCulloch and his wife Ellen's peripatetic lifestyle throughout Britain, Europe and the United States, their purchase of Whistlewood and subsequent development of the property as their home.

She described an idyllic childhood surrounded by art and contemporary artists who regularly visited the McCullochs.

The origin of the gallery title was also explained as being based on first nations people's non-linear concept of time where past, present, and future are interconnected.

Susan then spent some time discussing first nations artworks, their symbolism and the cultural boundaries relating to individual artist's totems regulating what they can and cannot paint.

Several of us then proceeded to Flinders, joining other Friends for a pleasant lunch at the Village Café & Wine Bar before heading home.

Report by Ralph Powell



Susan McCulloch discusses My Country, 2024 by Michelle Pula Holmes



What's On



June 15th 8.30am—3.00pm

Winter Masterpieces of the NGV

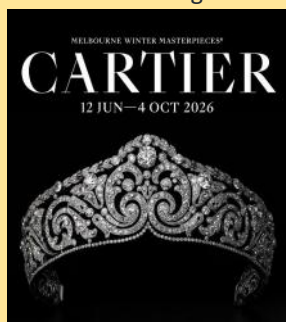
Cost \$75.00 includes Transport and Entrance to NGV

Lunch: will be at your own expense

(Don't forget to bring your current Membership card for Cafe/
Restaurant and NGV Design Store discount)



400+ Masterpieces:



Global Exclusive

July 27th

"The Power of Regional Galleries"

Convenor and Facilitator

Ken Parker OAM

Speakers

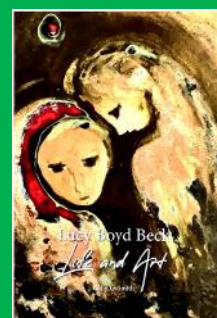
Anne Robertson (Public Galleries Victoria)

Everywhen Gallery Director Susan McCulloch OAM

MPRG Director Dunja Rmandić

Councillor Paul Pingiaro

August 17th



Coffee morning with talk by Colin
Smith about ***Lucy Boyd Beck***

September



Discovering the Impressionists:
Paul Durand-Rue

September

- Annual General Meeting -

October

"Re-Considering Margaret Preston"



Talk by Digby Smyth

Let's Be Friends

FRIENDS OF
MPRG



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.

Membership cost

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



Like us on Facebook

Check out the link for up-to-date information

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

Membership Benefits:-

- Invitations to new exhibition launches, featuring guest speakers, artists and curators, which includes complimentary canapés and Mornington Peninsula wines upon presentation of your current Membership Card *



* additional glass of wine can be purchased for \$8 a glass

- Reciprocal benefits when visiting the National Gallery of Victoria and select member galleries of the Public Galleries Association of Victoria (PGAV)
- Receive the Friends of the MPRG quarterly newsletter

Please make sure you show your current FMPRG membership card to receive discounts from the following select Mornington Peninsula retailers:



THE FRIENDS' SUPPORTERS



5% discount
Beleura House & Garden
 03 5975 2027
beleura.org.au
 1 Tallis Drive
 Mornington VIC 3931



10% discount
Antipodes Bookshop
 03 5984 4217
antipodesbookshop.com
 138 Ocean Beach Road
 Sorrento, VIC 3943



10% discount
Luup
 03 5977 0718
Luup.com.au

Shop D7 HomeCo. Peninsula
 1128/1132 Nepean Hwy
 Mornington VIC 3931



10% discount
The Framers' Workshop
 03 5975 3674
theframersworkshop.com.au
 68 Main Street
 Mornington VIC 3931



10% discount
Rivette and Blair
 03 5976 8759
 Shop 5/68 Barkly Street
 Mornington VIC 3931
 Women's clothing and accessories



10% discount
Leisa Wharington Glass Studio
 545 Mornington-Tyabb Road
 Moorooduc VIC 3915
 Mon-Fri 9:30-4.00
 Weekends 10:00-3.00
 Closed Tuesday



10% discount
Petersen's Bookshop
 03 5979 8233
 Unit 1/103 High Street
 Hastings VIC 3915



10% discount
Senior Art Supplies
 03 9783 6044
 4/72 Dandenong Road West
 Frankston VIC 3199

10% discount
Peninsula Luxury Drive
 0434 440 647



10% discount
National Gallery of Victoria
 St Kilda Road,
 Melbourne VIC 3006



20% discount
George & Matilda Eyecare
 03 5974 4000
Mount Martha Optical Shop
 2/2 Watson Road
 Mount Martha VIC 3934

