

# Wild Dog artists take Gippsland on tour

by Emma Ballingall

Wild Dogs from Down Under last week held an official opening for its first group exhibition titled "Gippsland" at the West Gippsland Arts Centre on Tuesday, August 8, in front of about 300 people.

Wild Dogs from Down Under is made up of a diverse group of six professional contemporary artists who reside in the Baw Baw Shire, including Kerrie Warren, Gary Miles, Jenny Murray-Jones, Laurie Collins, Leonie Ryan and Eileen Harrison.

This distinctive new collection of conceptual and visual art comprises indigenous and non-indigenous oil and acrylic paintings, metal sculpture and sculpted photography. The exhibition concluded on Saturday.

Artist Kerrie Warren, on behalf of the artists, thanked their supporters and those attending the opening for experiencing "our passion, our love for art and our love for Gippsland".

The exhibition was officially opened by Baw Baw Shire mayor Ian Clark, who said the large crowd was a testament to the wonderful artists and their work.

"It's a pretty special night indeed," said Cr Clark. "I shouldn't be amazed by the work. It is wonderful to see such diversification in the room tonight."

Cr Clark said the six wonderful artists all had different talents, were diverse and all had something special to offer.

Cr Clark said that following the exhibition at the West Gippsland Arts Centre, the exhibition will travel to the Meeniyan Gallery and Burrinja Gallery before heading to Melbourne and the Baw Baw Shire sister city Jiujiang, China for a cultural exchange.

At a later stage, it is hoped artists of Jiujiang will reciprocate by holding a cultural exchange exhibition in the Baw Baw Shire with their artworks.

"It's a daunting

prospect, but what an opportunity to showcase the wonderful talent in this area," said Cr Clark. "It's an opportunity to showcase Baw Baw and break new ground for you as artists. There is a wonderful hum of activity around the arts in this area."

Guest speaker Graeme Stapleton described the exhibition as "exciting and diverse".

He said it was fantastic to see the artists and Baw Baw Shire working together on the project, congratulating both groups for their forward thinking.

Mr Stapleton noted that a number of Jiujiang exchange students and teachers who were able to attend the opening, would also have the opportunity to view it again in China.

He said all artists will benefit from the project and it would be a fantastic cross-culture experience.

As part of their Wild Dogs from Down Under commitments, Mr Sta-

pleton said the group of artists would also be holding active workshops and talks in local schools.

Mr Stapleton then introduced the great-granddaughter of the late landscape artist Sir Hans Heysen, Caroline Heysen.

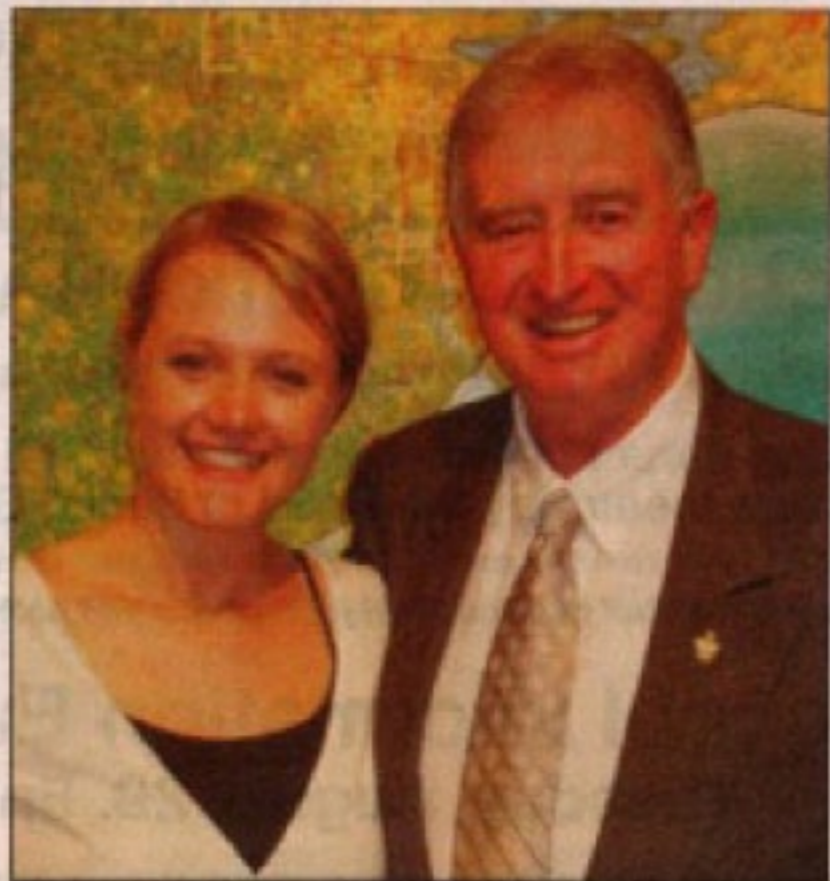
Ms Heysen said the exhibition consisted of some "magnificent works". She added that although the artworks were very different from what her great-grandfather had painted, they all shared the theme of love for the Australian landscape. She said he would have been proud to see his love of the landscape carry on.

The opening night also featured Nicholas Mofatt playing the didgeridoo and Peter and Hedy Kirkbride playing African/Latin-Flamenco rhythm music.

For further information on Wild Dogs from Down Under, visit [www.wilddogsdownunder.com](http://www.wilddogsdownunder.com).



Above: At the official opening of the Wild Dogs from Down Under's first group art exhibition "Gippsland" is the artists (from left) Leonie Ryan, Laurie Collins, Eileen Harrison, Kerrie Warren, Gary Miles and Jenny Murray-Jones.



Right: Warragul resident Graeme Stapleton and Caroline Heysen, the great-granddaughter of the late landscape artist Sir Hans Heysen, spoke at the official opening of the Wild Dogs from Down Under exhibition titled "Gippsland".



Playing African/Latin-Flamenco rhythm music at the official opening of the Wild Dogs from Down Under first group art exhibition is (from left) Roger Terrill, Peter Kirkbride, Hedy Kirkbride and Adele Richardson.