



**MEDIA RELEASE**

**9 December 2020**

## **WANGARATTA AND EAST GIPPSLAND GALLERIES SUPPORTED TO DELIVER CREATIVE RECOVERY PROJECTS FOR BUSHFIRE-IMPACTED COMMUNITIES**

Wangaratta Art Gallery and the East Gippsland Art Gallery, along with the Public Galleries Association of Victoria, will share in \$140,000 as part of the latest announcement of State Government Creative Recovery funds.

The Creative Recovery Program, a partnership between Regional Development Victoria, Bushfire Recovery Victoria and Creative Victoria, and delivered by Regional Arts Victoria, supports community connection, engagement and resilience for communities impacted by the 2019-20 bushfires in regional Victoria.

Wangaratta Art Gallery will appoint a Public Program Officer and deliver a tailored program for people in the north east of Victoria affected by the bushfires. The funding will enable the gallery to commission an art therapist to assist in the development of a specialist program over an extended period to address the trauma of the bushfires and deliver longer term recovery.

“Healing through the arts can be a powerful process,” noted Simone Nolan, Director of Wangaratta Art Gallery.

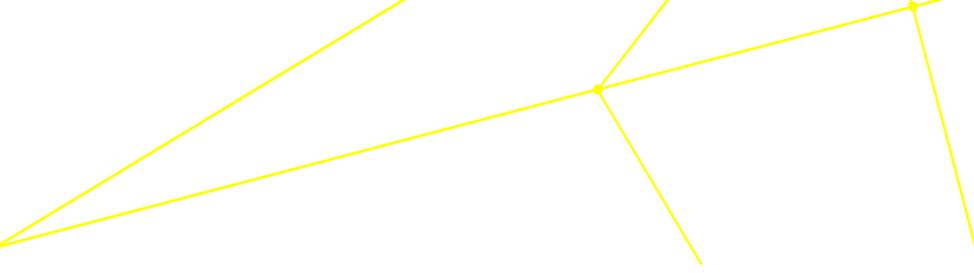
“Through this role, we look forward to offering experiences of making, reflecting and engaging through arts programs that will help our community tell their stories and experiences of living in a part of bushfire affected Regional Victoria. We are excited by the possibilities and engagement our gallery will be able to offer as a result of this funding support.”

“The 2019 summer bushfires may feel like long ago, but as the summer heats up, our collective memory of last year’s traumatic period returns. Although Wangaratta was not directly flame affected, the reality of evacuations, relief centres and intense smoke was a time of unrest and upheaval for many families and individuals in our community.”

“Wangaratta Art Gallery is extremely grateful to the Creative Victoria Recovery Program and Regional Arts Victoria for this important resource that will be dedicated to the Rural City of Wangaratta and our surrounding communities.”

East Gippsland Art Gallery will expand its highly successful "Regenerate, RestART, Renew" program, a bushfire recovery initiative for the region of East Gippsland.

Gallery Director Crystal Stubbs reinforced the power of the arts in recovery.



“The therapeutic benefits of making and creating is well documented,” said Stubbs. “With the support and generosity of Gandel Philanthropy we have worked with arts therapist Andrea Farley to develop the Regenerate, RestART, Renew program. Financial support from Creative Victoria through the Creative Recovery Program will ensure the program is extended to much needed areas within communities dotted around bushfire affected areas.”

“The East Gippsland bushfires were devastating - and will continue to be devastating for many years. As people who live in and are a part of this community, the gallery team was gutted by the absolute destruction of homes, land, and livelihoods that so many had endured. Trauma, that only the people who had lived through the fires, could understand.”

“I can’t thank Public Galleries Association of Victoria, Regional Arts Victoria and Creative Victoria enough for their support.”

Public Galleries Association of Victoria will commission a conservator to develop and deliver a Disaster Preparedness Program which integrates the impacts of Climate Change (bushfires, drought, floods) as part the recovery program.

Projects are underway now.

For more information on funded projects, contact:

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