

MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday 20 February 2019

Connecting People and Places in regional Victoria

Regional Arts Victoria are pleased to announce the successful applicants of our 2019 Community Presenter Mentorship program as part of the Connecting Places program: **Tallarook Mechanics Institute** and **Bruthen Arts & Events Council (BAEC)**.

Over the next 12 months, mentee representatives **Libby Webster** and **Judy Heil** will work closely with experienced Community Presenters and professionals in the field to extend their skills and knowledge in a chosen area.

Libby will be focusing on the technical planning for the rebuild of the Tallarook Mechanics Institute and local community hall after it tragically burnt down in May 2018.

“The aim of the committee is to rebuild a state-of-the-art venue for presenting all forms of art including theatre, music and visual arts,” Libby said.

“We want a centre of culture for the region, providing the best outcomes for the community, the audiences and the producers of theatre.”

The Tallarook committee will be working with **Fiona Brandscheid** from Birregurra, Victoria.

Fiona is a freelance graphic designer and writer, working mainly with financial institutions, and was also working as Arts Development Project Manager for Birregurra’s Small Town Transformations Project, supported by Regional Arts Victoria.

Fiona has seen how important the positive impact arts has had on the whole community and has firsthand experience rebuilding to meet the needs of a community.

“I feel very strongly that small towns like ours deserve it as much as folks in the big smoke,” Fiona said.

Fiona has also established Common Thread Arts, which connects small towns and communities to great live art.

Judy from Bruthen will work through strategic and marketing planning with the local hall committee, focusing on re-branding their events sub-committee and development of a three year strategic plan.

“BAEC’s events are all about the community, about offering opportunities for locals to try something new, about providing local performers the chance to be a part of the shows, and about bringing something to our district that people of our regional area might not otherwise be exposed to,” said Judy.

“Our aim is to continue to present great inclusive events that are accessible to individuals from these remote communities who may not be able to afford to travel further to see them.”

The BAEC and hall committee will work closely with **Graham Coffey**, who is currently managing the Small Town Transformations initiative.

This project saw him manage and work with six towns across regional Victoria over the past two years to bring long lasting arts initiatives to these communities.

Graham has been assisting with community consultation, strategic planning, people resourcing, committee management and succession planning for each town.

“Bruthen Presents is a very exciting initiative. I’m looking forward to the exchange between our shared knowledge and experiences to develop a sustainable model which can expand the offering of quality, accessible and unmissable events to their region,” says Graham.

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Connecting Places is Regional Arts Victoria’s community touring program, supporting Community Presenters to develop their audiences and build arts participation.

Community Presenters are arts councils, halls and mechanics’ institute committees, regional festivals and local shire councils wishing to share high quality performances in their communities.

Regional Arts Victoria is the peak body for regional artists and arts organisations in Victoria and the leading organisation for regional creative practice in Victoria. We are inspired by arts across the state, and through partnerships, programming and projects, we develop creative practice all over Victoria.

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Mentors and mentees available for interview upon request.

Media Contact: Catherine French 03 9644 1802 | cfrench@rav.net.au