



PORT STEPHENS COMMUNITY ARTS CENTRE NEWSLETTER

February 2026



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President's Report

President's Report

Welcome back! I hope the holiday break left you refreshed and ready to create. Our 2026-2027 calendar is brimming with inspiration, from the bold "**Modern Contemporary**" to "**In the Mist**" the realm of ethereal beauty. These will be followed by our exciting **Fibre and Thread Exhibition**. Something for everyone to work on. Let's embrace this vibrant year of artistry together and push our creative boundaries. Welcome back to our stimulating community!

Meryl

East Asian Australasian Flyway

Art Competition 2026 - Core

Concept: *Banners for the Birds*

Port Stephens Community Arts is collaborating with *Port Stephens Sister Cities* that received funding from Port Stephens Council to launch an *Annual Threatened Species Festival* each September. The proposed festival aims to highlight the importance of protecting threatened species, and in particular migratory shorebirds that rely on the internationally significant wetland habitats of both Port Stephens and Kushiro. Each spring, these birds undertake an epic journey along the East Asian Flyway, linking our communities and ecosystems across thousands of

kilometres.

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NSW School Holidays

Tuesday 7 April to Friday 17 April
2026

PSCAC Holiday Closures

Good Friday 3 April CLOSED
Easter Saturday 4 April OPEN
Easter Sunday 5 April CLOSED
Easter Monday 6 April OPEN
Anzac Day Saturday 25 April
Morning CLOSED, Afternoon OPEN
28 April CLOSED for changeover

People's Choice Award

Congratulations to Christine Leaming and her artwork '*Gorilla*' which was voted winner of the People's Choice Award for the exhibition period ending 2 December 2025, entitled '*Just Wild*'.

Runners up were Dave Briskham for his Raku pottery and Kim Reilly for her mosaic item (111). There were 59 votes in total spread over multiple activities including embroidery, jewellery and spinning and weaving.

The second exhibition period entitled '*Monochrome*', ending on 13 January 2026 was won by Peter Nosti with his artwork '*Dark Majesty*', with eight votes. Second was Sylvia Heath with five votes for '*A Touch of Greece*'. Third was Jenny Dobbie with four votes, for '*Crocodile*' and fourth was Gil Ward with '*Maggies*' and three votes. A whopping 84 votes were counted in total – can we beat it this display period?

Mel Delaney

Port Stephens Community Arts Centre Newsletter

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organisations including Hunter Bird Observers, Port Stephens EcoNetwork and Mambo Wanda Wetlands Conservation Group, will bring together residents, visitors, conservationists, and families for a series of engaging events and activities.

To give the artists some perspective a 'mini carnival' at Apex Park will be held on Sunday 8 February. PSCAC has a gazebo at this festival, and **volunteers are needed to promote the Art Competition from 11am – 1pm** please put your name on the roster in the Westralia room if you can help on the day.

At the festival there will be amongst other activities, an opportunity for participants to talk to members of the Hunter Bird Observers Club about this Flyway phenomena and for the children engagement in a pavement chalk art project and to make Godwit puppets as well as have an idea of the magnitude of the Flyway.



In conjunction with the activities at Apex Park, the Mambo Wanda Wetlands Conservation Group will be hosting walks through the wetlands to celebrate World Wetlands Day. "The Wetlands habitat is crucial to the shorebird's survival, some of which are falling into the

category of threatened species like the Black tailed Godwit (below left)."

The Prize: Art on Display

Winning artworks will be transformed into high-profile street banners to be displayed annually around the Tomaree Peninsula from September 2027 in the lead-up to National Threatened Species Day (7th September). Imagine your artwork celebrating conservation for all to see!

Prizes

| | |
|--------------------|---------|
| Overall | \$2,000 |
| OPEN 1st | \$1,500 |
| OPEN 2nd | \$1,000 |
| HIGH SCHOOL 1st | \$ 800 |
| HIGH SCHOOL 2nd | \$ 650 |
| PRIMARY SCHOOL 1st | \$ 400 |
| PRIMARY SCHOOL 2nd | \$ 300 |

To Enter visit:

<https://pscac.org.au/east-asian-australasian-flyway-art-competition/>



Fusion Group

FUSION ended the year with a luncheon gathering on our last day in the Centre for 2025. Majority of the ladies were able to attend with each bringing a "plate to share" and a hand-made item for the "Kris Kingle" lucky dip.

Our ladies are slowly returning from the Christmas/New Year break from January 7, with 5 to 7 participants each week.

Our Team Leader for the past couple of years, Jan O'Neal, has handed the reins over to Sue Emmerson and Colleen Maloy who will be sharing the role. We thank Jan for her superb role.

To date our days, since returning, have been filled with "Brainstorming" for ideas, with the Fibre to Thread Exhibition in mind.

Colleen Maloy



Port Stephens Community Arts Centre Newsletter

Painters Exhibition Team

Exhibition Update: New Theme Announced!

A huge thank you to everyone currently participating in **Coastal Treasures**. The sheer variety of expression on display is a true example of the exciting direction our community is taking. We have received wonderful feedback from visitors who are finding plenty of reasons to explore and purchase artworks throughout the Gallery

Thank you for your continued effort in presenting your exhibits in a professional format—it makes a world of difference.

Upcoming Theme: Modern Contemporary



It's time to get bold! Our next exhibition cycle is all about vibrancy and innovation.

Exhibition Dates: 23 February – 1 April 2026

The Creative Brief: "Let's go bright with this one!"

The Opportunity: With more artists joining our community than ever before, we have a bigger opportunity to explore new methods and interesting ways of viewing the Arts.

Don't forget, we have a specialised Painters Exhibition Team dedicated to arranging your artworks. Once you submit your professionally prepared pieces, our team takes over to ensure they are displayed to their best advantage, creating a high-quality experience for every visitor.

Marianne and The Painters Hanging Team

Spinners & Weavers

The Spinning and Weaving Group returned on 14 January as planned and held our organisational meeting for the year. We decided roles and responsibilities in the group with the leadership of our group being shared by Helen Diemar and Margaret Somerville. We discussed some of the workshops we would hold during the year, which include various ways of dyeing wool, e.g. dip dyeing, microwave dyeing and revisiting crampot dyeing. We also plan to learn about Tunisian Crochet, Weaving with the Rigid Heddle Loom and Inkle weaving techniques. We discussed the Fibre to the Thread Exhibition in April and encouraged the group to be working on items to exhibit for this.

We hope to be welcoming some new members to our group in the coming weeks.

Margaret Somerville and Helen Diemar



Australia Day Celebration

The Spinners & Weavers spent an exciting day representing the Art Centre at the Australia Day celebrations at Fly Point. In this, our fifteenth year, we were once again located at the top of the hill, next to the sheep and alpacas waiting to be shorn and with a great view over the stage and the whole celebration. As in previous years Lyn Grigor was passed some fibre from Drew the shearer as he was shearing the brown alpaca, which she spun and plied and showed to the large crowd of adults and kids watching. As always the kids were fascinated and there were lots of questions, which we endeavoured to answer. Lyn made a particular friend of a baby goat called Pongo. Well done Lyn.

Melanie



Thursday Patchwork Group

Welcome back to everyone and hope you have had a wonderful break. With our Fibre to Thread Exhibition coming up on 29 April, hopefully some new projects are in the planning.

Linda finished a wall hanging that was started by Pam Tate, a valued member of our group who passed away last year. It is now hanging on a wall at Regis Nursing Home in one of the sitting rooms (right).

Denise finished her lovely red and white quilt that is made



up of fabric blocks and embroidery blocks (*Left and below centre*).

Linda has finished another beautiful quilt and this time it is in her favourite colour of BLUE (*below*).

Sally O'Neill



Embroidery Group

Our group have returned after the Christmas break and are enjoying our stitching. We are accumulating pieces for our contribution to the Fibre to Thread Exhibition at the end of April.

Wendy has finished a table cloth that was in her stash for many years (*far right*). I have completed a cross stitch and added it to a cushion (*right*). Noela is completing a crewel embroidery cushion, Nell is completing an embroidered table cloth, Kathy has completed an embroidered Flannel Flower (*below right*), Lyn is working on her embroidered Myall Lake water scene (*near right*) and Sharon is working on her Brazilian Embroidery (*below*).

Brazilian embroidery is a vibrant, dimensional surface embroidery known for its shiny, textured, floral designs, created using high-sheen rayon threads and unique stitches like bullion knots, cast-on stitches, and French knots, relying on stitching and layering.

We have received donations of fabric and threads recently that we are hoping to create into interesting pieces.

Penelope



Gallery Manager

Maintaining Excellence in Art Centre Displays: Addressing recent pottery incidents

During the months of December 2025 and January 2026, our centre experienced several regrettable incidents involving pottery displays. Notably, one pottery item was found missing, and multiple vessels suffered serious damage while on display. The damage went unnoticed by desk members and was only discovered during the January changeover, which highlighted gaps in monitoring and care.

As a community dedicated to presenting art and craft in the finest form, the presence of damaged or unaccounted items undermine both our aesthetic standard and our reputation.

Recommendation for improved oversight: To safeguard the integrity of our display, it is strongly recommended



that desk members increase their vigilance in observing visitors interaction with exhibits. Active monitoring can help identify potential risks or incidents before they result in damage. Additionally, items that show signs of damage or have missing or faded sales tags should be promptly removed from the display. In such cases, the responsible member must be contacted immediately to address the issue appropriately.

By implementing these measures, the Art Centre can maintain the highest standards of presentation and protect its valued displays from harm. Active engagement and swift response are essential in ensuring that our displays continue to inspire and impress all who visit.

Dates for the Diary/ Annex Display

Exploring Art: Current to 24 February 2026

Unsold items are to be taken down on Tuesday 24 February 2026 after 1:30 PM.

Photography: 25 February to 31 March 2026

Photographs are to be delivered by 24 February 2026 and placed in the photography cupboard. Large photographs are to be placed on the top shelf in the painters' room.

The display will be hung on Tuesday 24 February 2026 from 2 PM.

Unsold photographs will be taken down on Tuesday, 31 March after 1:30 PM.

Life Drawing: 1 - 27 April 2026

Drawings are to be delivered by 31 March 2026 and placed in the life drawing cupboard.

The display will be hung on Tuesday, 31 March 2026 from 2 PM.

Unsold drawings will be taken down on Tuesday, 28 April 31st at 10 AM.

Feature Artist/Potter

Current to 24 February 2026 25 February - 31 March 2026

Painter: Nada Yonge

Painter: Elena Leong

Potter: Meri Andric

Potter: Milja Philipson

Featured Member

1 - 27 April 2026

2D: Meryl Miller

3D: Kate Wilkie

Note: Galley will be closed on Tuesday 28 April 2026, in preparation for the Fibre to Thread Exhibition commencing 29 April 2026.



Desk Duty Volunteers: A reminder that for any sales in the gallery for Mosaics, Paintings, Bonsai and Photography groups, please let the Group Leader know so they can place a new item in the spot.

Meri Andric



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Port Stephens Community Arts Centre

MEET THE MAKER

An opportunity to come along, and have a chat with one of our creative members.



MERI ANDRIC
Potter and Artist

Saturday 14 February 2 - 3:30pm

Meri and Elena would love to have your support at these events.



ELENA LEONG
Illustrator and Artist

Sunday 1 March 10am to 1pm

Bonsai Group

Happy New Year to everyone and welcome to our new members. We look forward to another interesting year as we continue working on and refining the trees. There will be some demonstrations by our experienced members and trips to bonsai nurseries.

On the first Thursday a pot and plant exchange table was very successful and provided a chance to pick up something not currently in your collection. There



will be another later in the year.

Our numbers continue to grow and it is good to see such interest in the rewarding hobby of bonsai.

Happy Bonsaiging
Carol



Monday PM Watercolour Painters

Roslyn, Prue and the rest of our group are settling into the routine of painting again. Most of us are recovering after Christmas and New Year visitors and are glad to be returning to some creative 'me time'.

If you are looking to venture into a new creative pursuit such as watercolour painting, why not come and try it out with our group. We'd love to welcome some new members.

Sarah and Roslyn



Newsletter Snippet:

Keeping Our Creativity Safe!

At the Port Stephens Community Arts Centre, our best assets are our people. To keep our workshops and gallery a happy, stress-free space for everyone, we're keeping a renewed focus on "**Safety as we Create.**"

You can help keep the Centre safe by following a few simple steps:

- **Keep it Clear:** Please keep bags and personal items tucked under tables and ensure walkways are clear of trip hazards.
- **Report the "Oops" Moments:** If you notice a spill, a flickering light, or a wobbly chair, please let a committee

member or our H & S Officer know. We'd much rather fix a small problem today than have an accident tomorrow!

Safety isn't about rules; it's about looking out for one another so we can all enjoy our art. Thanks for doing your bit to keep our community safe!

Sarah Locke



Pottery Groups

Surprise Visit Captivates Potters

Look out for pretty little bird flutes in the barn and the gallery!

Thursday and Friday potters were delighted to receive an impromptu visit and workshop from world renowned musician and clay instrument maker Ivan Lavasseur who was travelling around Australia and dropped in to see us.

Ivan enchanted us with his magical music on a variety of clay instruments that he had made. Music evocative of early medieval sounds and yet very much his own, so very lovely and uplifting.

He then generously showed us how to make little bird flutes or ocarinas with clay, these are very early, simple instruments with just four note holes, easier said than done to make accurately.

Ivan is a very thoughtful and knowledgeable person with a unique teaching style, somewhat of a magician! It was a wonderful unexpected time, and hopefully the results of his unexpected offerings will emerge from the kiln soon. Then we have to learn to play them!

Carol Driver



Ivan playing his clay flute



Ivan demonstrating making bird flutes with Heidi and Louise



Ivan's clay flutes



Ivan's Thursday workshop

Social Saturday

The Social Saturday group has been running since the beginning of last year and has continued to provide an opportunity for Members who can't necessarily make weekday activities. We operate in a casual, relaxed environment and welcome all new members with the support of fellow minded artists.

Following the Christmas break we commenced 2026 with an Ink Workshop facilitated by Judy Jones. It was a fun activity enjoyed by 10 people with photos shown (right).

On 27 February, Wendy Lane will be running a **Book Making Workshop**. If you are interested, please enter your name on the Attendance Form on the Social Saturday



Noticeboard. The Workshop cost is \$5 for materials plus the normal \$3 Group Attendance.

Info on future Workshops will be on the Social Saturday Noticeboard.

We look forward to seeing more people attending on Social Saturday.

Judy Jones

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Café News

The cafe planning meeting for 2026 will be held on Thursday 5 February at the Art Centre at 10:00 am for anyone who is

interested in supporting the cafe and working with others from different art and craft groups.

Antonia Creese

Papercraft

We are just starting back our regular group on Thursday afternoons from 1 pm to 3 pm. Some of the group come early to share lunch together first.

Newcomers are welcome.

We have a good stock of materials in the cupboard to help you get started and willing members to assist.

Our plans for the coming year are not confirmed yet but we often have mini demos and workshops with some designed especially for those new to the craft.



WHEN you buy your cards from the art centre you are

- ◆ Supporting our art centre and locals
- ◆ Getting a unique handmade card
- ◆ Usually spending less for a nicer card

Antonia Creese

Garden Group

Welcome to the first newsletter of 2026 and I wish everyone happiness and good health for this year. All is well in our garden with our dedicated workers beaver away to keep on top of everything. So far it has survived the summer and now looking forward to some cooler weather ahead.

We are always on the look out for extra hands so If you want to contribute three hours a month to a patch in the garden, just let me know - ph: 0415 646 060.

Helen



Message from the Maitland Embroiderers Group

Hello Everyone,

This is to let you know that Maitland Embroiderers Group will be holding a Friendship Day on Tuesday 26 May.

Full details will follow shortly, but you can expect the usual highlights, including :

- displays
- sales table
- a wonderful raffle of beautiful items
- delicious refreshments for a reasonable price
- lots of fun and laughter.

We do hope you will be able to attend and ask that you send this out to all your usual networks. If you want any further

information feel free to contact me on 0400 628 875 or our President Jane Hathaway on 0412 705 519.

We will also ask that you confirm your attendance and any numbers from your groups who may attend, but that can come closer to the date. And we will, as usual, be having a mini display in East Maitland Library for the whole of May. The theme for this year is **Fun with Felt**.

All the best, keep cool and keep safe.

Joey Thelander
(Hon Secretary)
Maitland Embroiderers Group Inc

If any PSCAC members are interested and need further information please contact Penelope Highland - Embroidery Group.

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Mosaics Group

I'm not sure where 2025 went but we're back now starting our mosaics in the shed. We still have some of our members overseas, caravanning and boating. Life is fantastic, isn't it?

This year we are concentrating on our display which will be featured in the annex area for January next year. Seems a long way off but it can take months to complete an item.

We have a fantastic group of ladies with a few newbies now joining us.

We are located in the barn, on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday



each month. Anyone interested in this art form are more than welcome to pop in and observe us in action.

Kim Reilly

Christmas Raffle

The winner of the Polymer Clay Christmas Raffle sent this to our Facebook page (*right*). Thanks to all the groups for their wonderful contributions we had a very successful raffle once more.

Polymer Clay Group

Polymer Group meet every second Wednesday afternoon, next group gathering is 4th February. Everyone interested in playing with clay is very welcome, we are only a small group but do have a lot of fun, so come along and get creative. Photo of some of our work on Wednesday.



Port Stephens Community Arts Centre Newsletter

Mixed Media

Mondays: 1pm to 3.30pm

Any early birds are most welcome to have a cuppa before the session begins, meet at 12.30 in the cafe courtyard, BYO food and cuppa.

It has been such a joy to see our Monday sessions filled with so much life lately. Our focus for 2026 is **"Feel Good with Art,"** and seeing the way you've all embraced an explorative spirit is truly inspiring.

Building Our Future Together

We are so proud to see our group growing in numbers. As we flourish, we invite you to share a bit of yourself and your talents to help our wonderful establishment grow even

further. Whether it's a helping hand or a new idea, what you give to our special place will reward you ten-fold in deep friendships and a bright future here at PSCAC.

Next Exhibition: Let's Go BRIGHT!

It's time to get bold! Our upcoming theme is Modern Contemporary, and we want to see your most vibrant, high-energy work.

The Vibe: Bold, vivid, and unmistakably BRIGHT.

Need a hand? If you're feeling a little stuck or need a nudge in the right direction, Bev is right there to guide you through the process.

Let's make this exhibition our most colourful one yet!

Bev Henry



MONDAY MORNING PAINTERS

Refreshed after our break over the Christmas holidays, the Monday morning painters have returned for another year full of creativity, camaraderie and maybe some

cake!! (if Moira remembers to bring it!.)



Claire Wise (for Moira)

Tai Chi/Plein Air

A few of us are having medical problems family or self, consequently have appointments that disrupt the normal course of events. This affects both Tai Chi and Wednesday Plein Air painters. Tai Chi has managed to work around most of the appointments only missing two sessions so is continuing as usual. The seasonal parking problems at most scenic sites adds to the problem for the Wednesday group, our decision has been to postpone our return until mid-February.

Robyn



Featured Potter - Meri Andric

Meri is a multidisciplinary artist with a focus on ceramics and painting. Deeply inspired by her profound connection with nature, Meri's sculptural and decorative pieces capture its resilience, instilling a sense of freedom and belonging in the viewer.

For Meri, working with clay is a meditative practice that allows her to engage with the earth, transforming raw materials into compelling objects and sculptures. She embraces her creative process without preconceived expectations, valuing the journey more than the final product. To bring her vision to life, Meri enhances her creations with various surface textures, slips,

Community Arts Centre, where she collaborates with other likeminded artists. Her mission is to share her passion for art, inspire broader audiences, and encourage others to expand their boundaries, explore new experiences, and follow their dreams.

Meri's ceramic works have been showcased in multiple galleries throughout New South Wales, including Gallery Lowe & Lee in Newtown, Crack Pot Gallery in Freshwater, Broadhurst Gallery at Hazlehurst, Newcastle Art Space, Back-to Back Gallery in Newcastle, and Nelson Bay Community Arts Centre.

Instagram @madmadart



underglazes, and glazes, all aimed at reflecting the beauty of nature, the theme of metamorphosis, and the interconnectedness of all living things.

Meri's formal education in visual arts began with a Diploma of Visual Arts from Nepean Art & Design Centre/ TAFE NSW in 2020, where she was introduced to clay and hand-building techniques. Seeking further challenges and experimentation, she pursued a Diploma of Ceramic at Gympie Ceramic & Design Studio/TAFE NSW, graduating in April 2022.

Now based in Nelson Bay, Meri has found a vibrant artistic community at the Port Stephens



Featured Artist - Nada O'Loughlin-Yonge

I have been painting for many years now, experimenting with and using many different mediums to achieve the results that appeal to a great variety of people. Being mainly self-taught, I have used watercolours as my favourite medium and I am well known for my rich, vibrant paintings of Australian flora and fauna and our beautiful ocean scenery. My subject matter now depicting the many moods of the ocean, Australian bush, wildlife, flowers, Venice water ways to name a few.

I have benefited over the past years from participating in workshops with other inspirational artists and have travelled extensively throughout NSW and overseas in search of new and exciting subjects to inspire my painting topics. I also enjoy my involvement at the Port Stephens Community Arts Centre, and love sharing my knowledge of the watercolour medium with others.

I have been involved in many successful exhibitions throughout my artistic career, and am represented in private collections throughout Australia and overseas. I now live and have my studio at Corlette, Port Stephens, N.S.W. with my husband Geoffrey.

