



PORT STEPHENS COMMUNITY ARTS CENTRE

NEWSLETTER

April 2026



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President's Report

President's Report

A sincere thank you to the 29 members who attended our General Meeting in March. These meetings are more than just administrative updates; they are a vital opportunity to hear what has taken place and a fantastic chance to meet fellow artists.

To our new members, I warmly encourage you to attend these meetings in the future. It is the best way to immerse yourself in the life of the Centre and find inspiration across different disciplines.

Upcoming Exhibition: Fibre to Thread

The energy in the Centre is palpable as we build up to the *"Fibre to Thread"* exhibition, starting on 29th April. This showcase promises to be an incredible display of skill and texture. It perfectly highlights the diversity of our craft groups, featuring work that ranges from intricate embroidery and patchwork to traditional

spinning and weaving.

The Future Needs You

As we look ahead, we must focus on leadership continuity. A Presidential transition is scheduled for 2027, and preparing new committee members now is essential for a smooth and confident handover. Stepping forward for the Management Committee allows you to:

- Guide the future direction of our arts centre.
- Bring new ideas, skills, and energy to support our growing programs.
- Ensure succession planning so the Centre continues to serve the community for decades to come.

Shared leadership makes these roles manageable, rewarding, and supported through mentoring. If we value this arts centre, we must also be willing to help lead it. Even a small commitment helps secure our future.

Meryl



Some samples of what to expect in the upcoming Fibre to Thread Exhibition.

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 Gallery
changeover

Secretary's Desk

Welcome to our 8 newest members — Kathy Blackmore, Lee Galloway, Liz Hevia Coaes, Pat Johns, Phil Johns, Maggie King, Karen Rowen and Alison Winn!

We're so pleased to have you join us. Please make them feel welcome — not just within their group activities, but as part of our wider creative community. A friendly hello or a quick chat can go a long way in helping new members feel at home.

New members bring fresh ideas, energy

and inspiration. It's wonderful to see our community continuing to grow — we've already welcomed 8 new members in the first 8 weeks of 2026! By comparison, we had 36 new members join in 2025, 28 in 2024, and 27 in 2023.

Every member plays an important role in making our Community Arts Centre such a vibrant and supportive place.

There are many ways to get involved and contribute. If you'd like to lend a hand, please contact our Secretary, Jane Parker — we'd love to hear from you.

Free entry to Art Competition: Banners for Migratory Birds!

Entries are coming so in don't forget to commit to this free Art Competition. Are you ready to see your artwork transformed into high-profile street banners across the Tomaree Peninsula—and make a real difference for our planet? This isn't just an art contest; it's a movement to protect some of the world's most incredible travellers.

- **ART WITH AN IMPACT:** Our local wetlands are vital stopovers for migratory shorebirds like the **Far-Eastern Curlew** and **Latham's Snipe**. By entering, your art becomes a powerful voice for conservation:
- **Raising Awareness:** Your designs will educate thousands about the **"Sister Wetland"** connection between Port Stephens and Kushiro, Japan.

- **Protecting Habitats:** Highlighting these species reminds our community of the urgent need to preserve the fragile ecosystems they depend on for survival.
- **Global Connection:** Celebrate a journey that spans hemispheres, proving that local action has a global reach.

Prizes

Overall	\$ 2,000
OPEN 1st	\$ 1,500
OPEN 2nd	\$ 1,000

To Enter go to:

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



Critical Need: Roster Coordinator

We are urgently seeking a dedicated volunteer to manage our gallery rosters. This role is essential for our daily operations and co-ordinating our team.

Join the Desk Duty Team

Be the face of our gallery! We need reliable volunteers for desk duty. This is a vital role that supports our members and welcomes our visitors.

Security Upgrade

The alarm and all smoke detectors were upgraded in March. Changing monitoring providers to Port Stephens Security for enhanced site safety at a cost saving. We are also installing an alarm in the upper building and Group Leaders will receive access codes to activate and deactivate the alarm in the upper building.

Gallery Alarm



TO DISARM ALARM-
Enter Code and
Press OFF until
screen reads
"DISARMED".



TO SET ALARM -

1. Follow the instructions displayed on the screen.
2. Press ON to activate the system.
3. Wait until the screen reads "ARMED."
4. Exit the building promptly and LOCK the front door behind you.

People's Choice Award

Congratulations to Claire Wise and Jenny Dobbie for their respective artworks 'Wisdom' and 'Budgies', joint winners of the People's Choice Award with three votes each, for the display period 14 January to 23 February 26, titled Coastal Treasures. There were also two close runners up with two votes each, Marisa French and Libby Booth, well done ladies.

Congratulations must also go to Nada O'Loughlin who received an astonishing eleven votes over seven separate artworks!

A total of sixty-eight votes were received over multiple categories including pottery, jewellery, photography, fusion and leatherwork. Desk duty volunteers keep up the good work encouraging our visitors to vote for the People's Choice Award.

Mel Delaney



Thursday Patchwork Group

Over the last few weeks the group has been making little zip bags (right). They have made a patchwork panel and then stitch the binding and zip in by hand. Some are still in progress and they are bringing them along on Thursdays to do the hand work.

Francine has made some lovely bags (right) and brought them in for show and tell. She has been trying to reduce her denim



stash. She also showed us a quilt that she had finished for a friend who had lost interest in completing it (left). It's an angel quilt with some lovely sayings.

Wendy has been at it again recycling and creating another wonderful quilt (right).

She constructed it using recycled silk fabric from scarves,

cravats and evening garments. It started as a traditional quilt design and it ended up as a modern quilt. Such a beautiful quilt that looks even better in person.

Sally O'Neill



Fibres to Thread Exhibition

Items to be displayed in the exhibition must be delivered to the Centre on Friday 24 April 26 between 1.00pm and 3.00pm. If you are unable to deliver in person please make arrangements for someone to deliver items for you. Don't forget to complete the entry form by Monday 13 April 2026

and place it in the Newsletter Editor Pigeon Hole in the Outer Office at the Centre. The final meeting for the Exhibition will be on Tuesday 7 April at 10.00am in the Manoora Room interested members welcome.

Wendy Barwick

Embroidery Group

The Embroidery group has been hard at work creating items for the upcoming Fibre to Thread Exhibition.

Margaret will create a couple of biscornu pin cushions (*near right*), we will have a number of scissor keepers (*centre and far right*).

Wendy has completed her 'Tigger' cross stitch (*below right*) and Kathy has embroidered a cute little brooch (*below*).



Sharon has been mastering Brazilian Stitch (*below*). I have made a zippered bag decorated in ric rac braid for the Bag Lotto (*centre right*). Noela has



embroidered a lovely Crewel work cushion which will be part of the Exhibition Raffle Prize. We are all looking forward



to displaying our works in the Exhibition.

Penelope

Fusion Group

Fusion is now back in full swing with everyone having returned from their break. We have three new ladies that we will be welcoming as new Members in the next month as well.

Besides working on pieces for the Fibre to Thread Exhibition our Group have been busy making "Fidget Rugs". The Tomaree Hospital Auxiliary put out a request to make interesting lap rugs for their Dementia Patients. As you can see from the photos, our ladies really excelled with the task at hand.

We presented the finished rugs to Jayne (right) from Tomaree Hospital Auxiliary and she was thrilled with our work.

On an extremely sad note, Mike Francis passed away last week. Not only was Mike a member of PSCAC but Sheila is the founding member of our Fusion Group. Our thoughts are with Sheila and her family.

Colleen Maloy



Port Stephens Community Arts Centre Newsletter

Gallery Manager

Exhibition Update – 1 April to 27 April 2026

We're excited to launch our **2026/2027 Exhibition Calendar**, beginning **1 April 2026**, with a fresh and inspiring theme: **"In the Mist."**

This year, exhibitions will flow across the **Main Gallery, Annex, and Hallway**, creating a richer and more immersive experience for visitors.

Fibre to Thread Exhibition - 29 April – 26 May 2026

A beautiful new exhibition is on its way! To prepare, the Gallery will be **closed on Tuesday, 28 April**.

What's happening on the day?

- **8:00 – 10:00 AM:** All current artworks will be carefully taken down
- **From 10:00 AM:** Installation of the Fibre to Thread exhibition begins

This schedule ensures a smooth transition and gives everyone time to complete their tasks comfortably.

IMPORTANT NOTES FOR MEMBERS

Painters

Your paintings will be taken down from **8:00 AM** and placed in the **Westralia Room**.

Collection is available from **10:00 AM** via the **courtyard back door**.

Potters

Some works will remain on the **Veranda shelves**, while others will be stored in **Room 3** during the exhibition.

Please note: **No new pottery submissions** will be accepted during this period.

Photographers

All Annex photography will be removed from **8:00 AM**.

Small works → stored in the photography cabinet

Large works → placed in the **Westralia Room**

Collection from **10:00 AM** via the **courtyard back door**.

Volunteers Needed

We'd love a helping hand! If you're available to assist with artwork removal between **8:00 – 10:00 AM on Tuesday, 28 April**, please get in touch:

Marianne – 0415 338 165

Meri – 0457 290 200

Your support makes a big difference.

Annex Display – Life Drawing

1 – 27 April 2026

Unsold works will be taken down on **Tuesday, 28 April (8:00 – 10:00 AM)** and placed in the **Life Drawing Cabinet** for collection.

Featured Members

1 – 27 April 2026

2D Artist: Meryl Miller

3D Artist: Kate Wilkie

Please collect any unsold works on **Tuesday, 28 April (8:00 – 10:00 AM)**.

Maintaining Excellence

A friendly reminder for our desk duty members:

A warm welcome and active engagement with visitors, combined with good awareness of the space, helps us create a safe and enjoyable gallery experience for all.

Meri Andric



Tai Chi/Plein Air

Nothing to report regarding the Tai Chi group. Plein Air have changed their venue and will be at Roy Wood Reserve creating wonderful renditions of the views from this park.

R.I.P. Mike Francis sadly missed by all of us.

Robyn

Port Stephens Community Arts Centre Newsletter

Painters Exhibition Team

A big thank you to our dedicated team members. Your hard work has made our latest transition seamless and is deeply appreciated by everyone at the Arts Centre.

Now Hanging: "In The Mist"

Our latest exhibition, In The Mist 3/26, is now hanging across the Gallery, Annex, and Hall.

A Fresh Perspective

To welcome our many new artist members and improve the viewing experience, we have moved to a unified format:

- **Curated Space:** We've featured two paintings per artist to ensure more "white space" and better visibility throughout these areas.
- **Unified Flow:** The exhibition now flows as one cohesive show, rather than two separate exhibitions.



Building Updates & Growth

- **New Spotlights:** Have you seen the new look? Our upgraded lighting is officially live, perfectly highlighting the incredible work on our walls and shelving.
- **Help PSCAC Grow:** We encourage all members to embrace these changes and get involved. Your contribution is what helps PSCAC move forward in such positive ways.

Marianne and The Painters Hanging Team

Spinners & Weavers

We have had another successful crampon dyeing day - great colours and great fun. We are beavering away creating Fibre to Thread for the upcoming exhibition.



Helen and Margaret

Papercraft

Isn't it wonderful to have newcomers to your group.

We have had two this year. Our new members remind us why we enjoy our craft and love sharing it with others. They give us fresh enthusiasm and a new outlook.

Check out our new card contributors on display bringing other techniques and mediums to the card stand. Don't forget to check out the gift tags on the black stand!

If you are contributing cards drop your email address into the papercraft pigeonhole to get an information sheet on displaying cards in the gallery and updates on any changes.

Antonia Creese



Mosaics Group

Mosaics is coming along very nicely with new people showing interest and joining our group on a pretty regular basis. We seem to have fulfilled a need for people with a history in lead lighting as working with glass can take many forms, and this appears to be a very good fit for these folk.

On another note, with Kim having a very full and busy schedule, I have come on board as joint leader with her. She will continue to be her outstanding self at mosaics, when she can of course and between us there will be very little in the way of "gaps" in our availability.

Kim Reilly and Madeleine Quinlan



PSCAC Garden High Tea

May 9th, 2026

Morning and Afternoon Sitzings

Tickets \$45 pp available from the front desk



Tickets now on sale

The Woodies Group

Woodies recently launched a new website which was developed internally using an AI web builder tool! It's been well received and has generated a lot of traffic and enquiries. Have a look at pswoodworkers.com.au and find out all about our activities and aims and objectives. This is our Home Page:



The Woodies have just installed a new kitchen to replace the original one that was installed 31 years ago when the workshop was built and, you might well say, that it was showing its age!

Here are two pictures of the old and the new.



We now have a proper fridge/freezer, a dish washer, hot water to the sink and toilet and a Zip type heater for morning tea. The Woodies stripped out the old one, laid new flooring and installed the new kitchen using Bunnings Caboodle kitchen components, together with an external electrician and



plumber. We obtained a grant from the Men's Shed organisation, some mayoral funds for the appliances and some of our own funds. All Arts Centre members are very welcome to come over for a look see and a cuppa any morning Monday to Friday!

Recently the Woodies hosted a group of 15 people (*bottom*) from the Maitland Woodworkers Guild for morning tea and a BBQ lunch. They don't have their own workshop and only get together once a month, so it was a good opportunity to show off our workshop and woodwork pieces and to exchange plenty of ideas. It was a great morning and we might even get a few new members!.

Roger Delaney

Port Stephens Community Arts Centre Newsletter

Bonsai Group

It's great to see so many familiar faces returning for another year of bonsai, and we extend a warm welcome to our new members. We're delighted to have you join us and look forward to sharing knowledge, creativity, and enthusiasm throughout the year.



Pottery in Bundock, where eight participants each crafted two bonsai pots. It was a highly rewarding and enjoyable experience, and the finished pieces arrived



As the weather begins to cool, we can look forward to our deciduous trees transforming into their brilliant autumn colours. Once the leaves have fallen, it will be an ideal time to refine their structure and shape in preparation for the seasons ahead.

We've recently enjoyed two excellent demonstrations by Steve Royce. One focused on all aspects of fig bonsai, while the other explored the fascinating art of Tanuki*. These sessions were both informative and inspiring, and we hope they encourage members to try new techniques in their own collections.

A highlight for some of our members was a visit to Samarkand

and we are all thrilled with the result. Given the success of the day, we hope to organise a similar visit later in the year.

Carol

* *Tanuki bonsai, or "phoenix grafting" is a technique combining a living, young tree (usually Juniper) with a piece of deadwood to create the illusion of an ancient, weathered specimen.*

Monday Watercolour Painters

We are still missing a few of our regular painters due to sickness and travel so we'd love to welcome a few more members to our group. Whilst we primarily work with watercolours and gouache, we also experiment with other

media. Lately we've produced paintings creating wonderful effects with granulating washes, inks, salt, candle wax, crayon and gesso. Together we share our knowledge - come join us!

Sarah and Roslyn

Port Stephens Community Arts Centre
PRESENTS

MEET THE MAKER

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

KATE WILKIE
Multimedia Artist

Kate has created functional 3D mixed media works featuring the beauty of Australian flora and fauna. She works with timber, palm fronds and found objects to create unique bowls, boxes, baskets, wearables and ambient LED lighting. Her display includes a jewellery range of electroplated cicada wings in 22k gold, copper, and nickel, and rare echidna quill necklaces and earrings.

Meet Kate on Sunday 12 April 10am - 12 noon
The full exhibition runs from 2 April to 26 April

Cultural Close, Nelson Bay - up the hill behind the oval
Free entry Free parking

Port Stephens Community Arts Centre
Presents

FIBRE TO THREAD

29 April to 26 May 2026

Open daily 10am to 4pm

COME AND ENJOY

- Embroidery
- Creative Textiles
- Patchwork
- Quilts
- Spinning
- Weaving
- Bag Lotto
- Hamper Raffle
- Handcrafted items for sale

OPENING SPECIAL
Tuesday 29 April, café will be open 10am - 12 noon serving tea, coffee, and scones \$6

Cultural Close, Nelson Bay - off Shoal Bay Road, behind the oval.
Free entry and free parking

Pottery Groups

Spotlights on our members

The barn's been absolutely buzzing lately, with plenty of chirrups and peeps as bird whistles make their way out of the kilns—such a joy to hear them come to life.



John Selwyn has been hard at work refining his pipe forms, and you can really see his engineering background shining through in his pottery practice. After lots of thoughtful experimenting, his pieces are now producing some lovely melodies—such a great result. Well done, John!

And how special is it to have a studio of your own, alongside all the camaraderie and shared creativity of the barn? Milja Phillipson has been making the most of her beautiful custom-built studio, tucked away in her garden. She's been busy preparing for her 3D artist display at the gallery, and it's all come together beautifully. Her decorative and functional pieces are on show throughout March—definitely worth a look if you're nearby.

Carol Driver



Social Saturday

Saturday mornings at the Gallery continue to be a lovely way to connect, create and enjoy a few relaxed hours together.

So far this year, we've had a wonderful *Ink and Watercolour* workshop with Judy Jones, along with a very popular *Bookmaking* session led by Wendy Lane.

We're sad to share that Wendy will be moving interstate. Over the past 10 years, she has been a much-valued member of the Gallery, generously sharing her many talents, including bookmaking, candle making and quilling. We recently gathered for a farewell lunch, which was a great opportunity to thank her for all she's contributed. Wendy will be greatly missed, and we wish her all the very best for the future.

Coming up next month, we're excited to host a creative workshop titled "From Old to New". If you have dolls, figurines, lamps or any well-loved items that could use a refresh, bring them along and enjoy giving them a new lease on life.



Social Saturday runs from 10am to 1pm and everyone is very welcome—whether you'd like to join in, learn something new, or simply have a chat.

For more information, please speak with me at the Gallery.

Judy Jones

Port Stephens Community Arts Centre Newsletter

Mixed Media

Welcome to our new members! We are so excited to have you join us. We look forward to seeing your creations flourish in an environment of friendship and fun.

I am always here to assist you as you settle in. As you become part of our community, I encourage you to take up a role within the Centre wherever you see fit.

Stepping into a volunteer role—no matter how small—is the

best way to:

- Understand the inner workings of our community centre.
- Build lasting friendships beyond our Monday group.
- Contribute to the growth and success of PSCAC.

Whether it's helping with an event, joining our committee, or assisting with group tasks, your involvement makes a world of difference!

Bev Henry



Exploring Art & Pastel Group

We started the year off with a unit on Movement. After completing a few exercises on how to depict movement in our art work, we finished with our versions of how to represent movement in a wave.

Whether you are a seasoned artist or a nervous beginner, you can produce excellent work through practice and guidance!

We have individual styles and there is no right and wrong.

Excellent work!

Christine Leaming



Port Stephens Community Arts Centre Newsletter



Life Drawing Group

We would like to begin by extending our heartfelt condolences to Sheila Francis on the loss of her husband, our dear friend and colleague, Mike. Mike has been part of the



Life Drawing Group since its very

beginning, and his work truly speaks for itself. Over the years, he has contributed so much to our Arts Centre and was always ready with a helping hand for new members. He took on a number of administrative roles and was a deeply valued member of our community. A true creator and a gentleman, Mike will be missed in so many ways.

On a brighter note, our little Life Drawing Group is growing, and we're all really enjoying the opportunity to create together. Over the past few months, we've been exploring

sketching and mark-making, and we're now preparing for our upcoming exhibition in the Annex, opening 1 April.

The exhibition will showcase the many ways the human figure can be captured—from quick, expressive sketches created during a two-minute pose to more detailed drawings developed over twenty minutes. It's always fascinating to see how each artist interprets the same figure in such unique and personal ways.

Our friendly group warmly welcomes newcomers, including those who may be picking up a pencil for the very first time. We're also incredibly grateful for our experienced models,

whose contribution is such a valuable part of what we do.

If you've ever thought about trying life drawing, why not come along? It's a wonderful way to develop your skills, deepen your understanding of this



age-old art form, and maybe even surprise yourself.

Jenni Salkavich

Featured 2D Artist - Elena Leong



Elena is a freelance illustrator and artist, who grew up in the leafy suburbs of Melbourne, Victoria. A road trip a while back led to the lucky discovery of the beautiful coastal region of Port Stephens. She subsequently said goodbye to the rat race of the big city and moved to Nelson Bay a few years later.

Nowadays Elena takes long daily walks along the waterfront, counting swans and hoping to spot a dolphin or two. She takes inspiration from this magical place, knows that it can only improve and further develop her art.

Elena works in most media - traditional as well as digital, with watercolours and acrylics in a mixed media format being a favourite. She concentrates mostly on fauna and flora in her subject matter, imbuing joy and a little humour in each artwork.



Elena has held several solo exhibitions, as well as participating in many group exhibits. She enjoys sharing her work through her membership and participation at the Port Stephens Community Arts Centre.

You can find more of Elena's work at www.drakon.com.au and follow her on Instagram and Facebook @drakoncreative



Featured Potter - Milja Phillipson

Born in Amsterdam, Netherlands, Milja developed a deep interest in art from an early age—unsurprising given that both her parents dedicated much of their lives to teaching art. Over the years, she has refined



presents a significant technical challenge, even for experienced potters, and these forms serve as the foundation for her intricate surface decoration.

Her decorative process often combines slip work, carving, and freehand brushwork using oxides and stains. This demanding approach requires a steady hand, patience, and many hours of focused effort to achieve the desired results.

Milja has also devoted considerable time to developing her own glazes and slips. To support this work, she completed certificates in both ceramics and photography at TAFE College Tamworth.



After moving to Port Stephens in 1988, she became deeply involved in the local arts community. In the 1990s, she taught pottery classes at Shoal Bay Public School and served as editor of “Centre News” for ten years. She also worked as the Arts Centre’s in-house photographer, producing videos, slide shows, banners, brochures, flyers, and magazine advertisements, drawing on her extensive graphic design expertise.



Over the years, Milja has participated in workshops with renowned Australian potters, including Greg Daly and Pippin Drysdale. She has also drawn inspiration from her father, a well-known potter and art teacher, and from Michael Wein of the Barn Pottery Group, particularly in the area of Raku firing.

Currently, Milja is focusing on creating larger thrown pots, which she decorates in the distinctive, vibrant style she has developed over time.

her skills across multiple disciplines, gaining particular recognition for her photography. As a teenager, she worked as a darkroom technician and went on to win major awards in the field.

Milja has been a member of the Arts Centre since 1990, marking 35 years of active involvement.

Her journey into pottery began after a long career in nursing. Her early ceramic works were experimental, exploring many of the techniques she continues to use today. As evident in her display, she works across a wide range of styles. The creation of her larger pieces

