



MEDIA RELEASE

Regional Arts Australia Volunteer Award Winners Announced for New South Wales

The valuable work that New South Wales volunteers contribute to the artistic and cultural lives of their communities is being recognised with Regional Arts Australia recently announcing the 2010 Volunteer Award winners for each state.

The winner for NSW in the Sustained Contribution Category is Kent Mayo from Uralla and in the Outstanding Contribution Category is Leigh Scott from Cootamundra.

Back in 1979, the derelict but historically significant 1870 McCrossin's Flour Mill, in the township of Uralla in the northern tablelands region of NSW, was slated for 'redevelopment'. Kent Mayo, a local teacher, called a public meeting to which around 30 people turned up, deciding that they would somehow buy and restore the building. This group formed the Uralla Historical Society, to which Kent has devoted so much of his time ever since. Through government grants, fundraising activities, donations, sponsorship and over 8,000 hours of volunteer labour, McCrossin's Mill and Function Centre is now one of the most progressive volunteer owned and operated enterprises in Australia. For over 30 years Kent has been the driving force behind the Society, restoring the Mill, establishing a museum and subsequently buying and restoring two adjacent historical buildings.

Eight years ago a group of people from the small town of Cootamundra on the south west slopes region of NSW persuaded the local council to purchase a disused building to be developed into an arts centre. Leigh Scott took on the role of 'Works Manager' for the Cootamundra Creative Arts and Cultural Centre Committee, managing the volunteer workforce, sourcing building materials and keeping it all within budget, resulting in a centre with two visual arts studios, three music studios, an exhibition space with reception area, office and catering facility, a Men's Shed, a theatre space, and a commercial space that is leased to provide ongoing income for the Centre.

Kent and Leigh now have the opportunity to receive their awards at Regional Arts Australia's national conference Junction 2010 which is to be held in Launceston (TAS) from 26-29 August 2010. Each recipient will receive a commissioned artwork by Tasmanian artist Sonja Hindrum, presented by the Patron of Regional Arts Australia, Mr Michael Bryce AM AE, at the conference dinner.

The total prize package for each recipient is valued at over \$1,800 including the commissioned artwork, a registration to Junction 2010, as well as their travel and accommodation costs.

Board Member of Regional Arts Australia and Chief Executive Officer of Regional Arts NSW, Elizabeth Rogers, says the awards are a real way for the sector to recognise the efforts of the many dedicated arts volunteers from right across the country.

"I would like to congratulate both Kent and Leigh for their wonderful commitment to the arts and their communities" she said.

“Without volunteers many regional arts events simply wouldn’t happen, and Regional Arts Australia is proud to recognise this effort through our Volunteer Awards. I also congratulate the many wonderful candidates who were nominated for this award, we deeply appreciate their individual efforts”.

Registrations for Regional Arts Australia’s national conference Junction 2010 are currently open (early bird registrations close 18 June 2010), see www.junction2010.com for info. For more information on Regional Arts Australia’s activities and the full list of award recipients go to www.regionalarts.com.au

The Regional Arts Australia Volunteer Awards Program is supported by the Australia Council for the Arts, the Australian Government’s arts funding and advisory body, through its Community Partnerships section.

Ends

Information on Recipients and Categories:

NSW

Outstanding Contribution Award

To recognise and reward a regionally based arts volunteer who has made an outstanding contribution to an arts project, event, organisation or community in regional Australia.

Leigh Scott (Cootamundra)

Eight years ago a group of people from the small town of Cootamundra on the south west slopes region of NSW persuaded the local council to purchase a disused building to be developed into an arts centre. Leigh Scott took on the role of ‘Works Manager’ for the Cootamundra Creative Arts and Cultural Centre Committee managing the volunteer workforce, sourcing building materials and keeping it all within budget, resulting in a centre with two visual arts studios, three music studios, an exhibition space with reception area, office and catering facility, a Men’s Shed, a theatre space, and a commercial space that is leased to provide ongoing income for the Centre.

Sustained Contribution Award

To recognise and reward a regionally-based arts volunteer who has made a significant contribution to the arts in regional Australia over a period of five years or more.

Kent Mayo (Uralla)

Back in 1979, the derelict but historically significant 1870 McCrossin’s Flour Mill, in the township of Uralla in the northern tablelands region of NSW, was slated for ‘redevelopment’. Kent Mayo, a local teacher, called a public meeting to which around 30 people turned up, deciding that they would somehow buy and restore the building. This group formed the Uralla Historical Society, to which Kent has devoted so much of his time ever since. Through government grants, fundraising activities, donations, sponsorship and over 8,000 hours of volunteer labour, McCrossin’s Mill and Function Centre is now one of the most progressive volunteer owned and operated enterprises in Australia. For over 30 years Kent has been the driving force behind the Society, restoring the Mill, establishing a museum and subsequently buying and restoring two adjacent historical buildings. All three restorations have won major awards and the McCrossin’s Mill Precinct has become a major attraction for the area providing educational, arts and heritage programs and exhibitions, a meeting and function space for the community and a lasting legacy of conserved heritage buildings for future generations.

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