

6.4 CELEBRATING COMMUNITY ARTS IN MOUNT WAVERLEY

Submitting Councillor: Councillor Rebecca Paterson

MOTION

That Council endorses the proposal to celebrate community arts in Mount Waverley with:

- a letter of appreciation to the Friends of The Highway Gallery, and;*
- the installation of a plaque at Mount Waverley Community Centre thanking artists, volunteers and supporters of community arts, notably at The Highway Gallery, for their longstanding dedication, commitment and significant contribution to local arts and cultural life in Monash.*

INTRODUCTION

This month, The Highway Gallery will close after 40 years presenting community arts exhibitions and activities at 14 The Highway, Mount Waverley. I seek the support of my fellow Councillors to write a letter of appreciation to the Friends of The Highway Gallery and extend a vote of thanks to local artists, volunteers and supporters of community arts in Mount Waverley and the installation of a plaque at the new Mount Waverley Community Centre expressing appreciation for their longstanding dedication and commitment.

BACKGROUND DISCUSSION

The Highway Gallery commenced its first phase of creative activity in the 1970s with the formation of Waverley Arts Society. In 1980, the Waverley Art Gallery was established at The Highway Gallery building. In 1990, the current gallery role was confirmed at The Highway Gallery, intended for local community arts and artists, a role that expanded in subsequent years.

In 2016, Council's decision to establish a gallery at the redeveloped Mount Waverley Community Centre is supported by funding from the future sale of The Highway Gallery. With closure of The Highway Gallery occurring this coming month, I would like to mark the occasion by thanking its dedicated artists, volunteers and supporters.

A letter of appreciation and the installation of a plaque to preserve the legacy of The Highway Gallery for future generations of artists and the community is proposed as an appropriate way to mark this occasion.

The text for the plaque is anticipated to be:

Community Arts in Mount Waverley

Community arts in Mt Waverley has been thriving since the formation of the Waverley Arts Society in 1970, which precipitated the opening of The Highway Gallery at 14 The Highway Mt Waverley in 1980. In the time since, The Highway Gallery played host to exhibitions from local artists and community groups and the warmth and intimacy of this mid-century house that once housed a dentist was a point of difference celebrated by the local arts community. Over its life, The Highway Gallery was supported by a team of volunteers from The Friends of The Highway Gallery who assisted with organising, curating and staffing exhibitions. In September 2018, The Highway Gallery had its last exhibition, with Monash Council having finished a purpose built gallery space at the redeveloped Mt Waverley Community Centre. The name of the new gallery was decided by Monash Council after a community competition to suggest a name. The tradition of community arts in Mt Waverley continues with the opening of the new gallery.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

It is anticipated that \$500 will provide the required funding for the fabrication and installation of a plaque. I urge my fellow Councillors to recognise the importance of marking this occasion, a significant part of local arts and cultural life in Monash.

CONCLUSION

The Highway Gallery has held a special place in the life of the community for over 40 years. Its exhibition program of community artists and arts groups, supported by its program of artist talks, workshops, Coffee Mornings, art and craft markets and events have provided an accessible local place for creativity and participation. I seek the support of my Councillor colleagues to acknowledge this achievement with a letter of appreciation to the Friends of The Highway Gallery and a vote of thanks to the artists, volunteers and supporters of The Highway Gallery and the Mount Waverley community, with the installation of a plaque at the new Mount Waverley Community Centre to mark this occasion.