

Chairperson's Report for Friends of NERAM Inc

2022 – 2023 AGM

On behalf of the Friends of NERAM Committee, I'm delighted to present the 2022-2023 report on our activities during this time. The Friends' Committee had seven meetings and returned to a full programme of events.

Our 2022 AGM was on 27 March 2022. I am grateful to Julia McCosker for generously stepping in and chairing this meeting. Our elected committee has worked hard and with commitment during 2022-2023, each with individual strengths and talents which they generously use to give back to the New England community. Our objectives as stated by the Constitution are:

- raising funds for the benefit of Friends and NERAM,
- liaising with the Director and Board,
- growing our membership,
- organising events and creating awareness and appreciation of the visual arts and associated activities.

As a committee we are committed to NERAM as a significant place of learning in the creative arts and as an iconic institution in the New England. We are keen to contribute to the wider New England community that we value so highly.

Current Committee members:

Debra Kelliher	Chairperson
David Hallam	Deputy Chairperson
Lynne Walker	Secretary
Robyn McCarthy	Treasurer
Merran Pearson	Membership Secretary
Richard Purssey	Member
Trevor Edgar	Member
Deb McKern	Member
Julia McCosker	Member

We are grateful to Robyn McCarthy, who has so ably filled the important role of Treasurer since the 2021 AGM. Robyn is stepping down from the committee and we appreciate her

accuracy and diligence in the Treasurer role as well as her insightful contributions to discussions.

All members of the Committee contribute with dedication and professionalism; however, I wish to particularly thank our Secretary Lynne Walker and Membership Secretary Merran Pearson for their sterling efforts. They are both extraordinarily efficient and because they use their talents across a wide range of NERAM operations, they have a comprehensive understanding of the museum which is invaluable.

Financial:

Income from membership fees, fundraising and donations was \$43,779. Friends were able to give \$15,000.00 to support exhibitions and projects at NERAM and a further donation of \$8,335.00 from membership fees. Our operating result for the year ended 31 December 2022 was a surplus of \$6,037.

Oars Awards

We did not give any Oars Awards in 2022.

Membership

Current membership (including those with Life membership) stands at 273, as at 31 January 2022, This is a slight decline from the 2022 membership of 300.

Activities

Friends of NERAM conducted a range of fundraising activities throughout the year.

The Fundraising Committee catered for seven exhibition openings, providing cocktail food and running the bar as well as providing a warm welcome for guests. Deputy Chairperson of the Friends' Committee David Hallam is often happily manning the bar and serving drinks to the crowds at Friday evening exhibition openings. The Friends' Committee is indebted to the endlessly cheerful and hard-working fundraising team who were consistently unfazed by increasing numbers of attendees and again and again, rose to the challenge.

The White Rhino Film Club continued offering a thought provoking and diverse programme of films at the Armidale Playhouse. Thanks again to the Armidale Dramatic and Musical Society for the hire of the Playhouse which is a very comfortable venue.

Membership of White Rhino now stands at 113 members with 5 casual members. John Wearne and Mike Gibson radiated enthusiasm and knowledge as they presented the films at the once-a-month showings. They were ably supported by Wendy Wearne and Lynne Walker on administration, with once again the Fundraising Sub-Committee running a bar and providing catering. Paul Gaddes generously managed the technology aspect. The International Film Festival in July presented a weekend program of outstanding films which ranged from comedic to heart rending. Film Club organisers also arranged a weekend trip to Bingara which was sold out and provided a range of activities including a showing of the film *The Big Chill*, a tour of the renovated Roxy Theatre and races at the Bingara Cup. Thanks again to John, Wendy and Lynne for all the work which went into this trip.

We continue to examine new solutions for bringing our membership lists and subscription renewal into a simple and convenient format. Thank you to committee members Merran, Trevor and Richard for pursuing solutions to this issue.

Friends of NERAM sponsored an exhibition catalogue for the *Strong Women* exhibition and donated funds in May to support holding the Archibald exhibition at NERAM. This exhibition attracted 2,780 visitors to NERAM. Committee member Deb McKern proposed we distribute 'welcome' cards to new residents of Armidale to communicate the benefits of Friends' membership. The cards were printed gratis for us by UNEDSC and Deb undertook to take them to real estate agents. We thank UNEDSC for their generous contribution and Deb for her creative idea and follow-up.

We finished the year with a Christmas party on 27 November at NERAM with delicious catering by *Six Counties* café so that our 'catering queens' could have a break from catering for members.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to the FON committee members who give their time, talent and enthusiasm so willingly. A very big thank you to the catering team who provide their service so willingly, in support of NERAM.

Rachael Parsons and her staff have consistently been obliging, caring and enthusiastic in working with us. Rachael attends all Friends' Committee meetings where possible and is a wonderful collaborator. It is always a joy to hear of the creative and diverse ideas which

power NERAM and the Friends' Committee is excited by the plans to renovate the NERAM buildings and site in the future.

And grateful thanks to you as Friends' members for your continued support of NERAM and your attendance at events and exhibitions. Your membership enables the institution of NERAM which acts as a gathering place for people, art, culture and connection. The New England is a richer place for NERAM.

Dr Debra Kelliher

Chairperson

Friends of NERAM Inc