



Chairperson's Report for Friends of NERAM Inc

2024 AGM

On behalf of the Friends of NERAM Committee, I'm delighted to present the 2024 report on our activities during this time. The Friends' Committee had ten meetings in 2023.

Our 2023 AGM was on 24 March, held within NERAM, surrounded by the Hinton Collection. Our Friends of NERAM management committee worked hard throughout 2023, supported by the Fundraising sub-committee. 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	
Trevor Edgar	Deputy Chairperson	
Lynne Walker	Secretary	
Stephen Halliday	Treasurer	
Merran Pearson	Membership Secretary	
Richard Purssey	Member	(resigned September, 2023)
Deb McKern	Member	(resigned February, 2024)
Julia McCosker	Member	(resigned February, 2024)
David Rose	Member	



We are grateful to Richard Purssey, Committee member, who resigned from the Committee in September. We thank Richard especially for contributing his expertise to discussion of technological solutions to renewing membership and maintaining membership data.

We are grateful to Committee member Deb McKern who is stepping down from the Committee in 2024, for her enthusiasm, creative ideas and dedicated work on the Friends' bushfire grant application.

Julia McCosker is stepping down from a formal committee role this AGM yet will still contribute to the Friends' fundraising sub committee by assisting with catering. Julia's long experience in the public service gives her a helpful expertise with committee work and she has many practical suggestions for our work.

All members of the Committee contribute their skills with energy and professionalism; however, I wish to particularly thank two Committee members: Treasurer Stephen Halliday who has suggested and applied a range of practical solutions to make operations more efficient and professional and has driven our work to become a registered charity. Stephen's knowledge is invaluable. I also thank David Rose, who has worked tirelessly to bring the Friends of NERAM High Country Autumn Printmaking Workshop to life as well as streamline communications.

Financial:

Income from the 2023 financial year (ending on 31 December, 2023) from membership fees, fundraising and donations was \$61,759.75. Friends were able to give \$30,250.00 to support exhibitions and projects at NERAM. and, consistent with previous years, an estimated \$100,000 in in-kind support (primarily by way of volunteering). Our net profit for the year was \$20,729.88, which together with retained earnings from previous years, meant that Friends ended the year with a particularly healthy bank balance of \$41,802.47.

Oars Awards

We gave two Oars Awards in 2023, to Martha Saw and Julia McCosker. Martha has been a former Chair of Friends and a stalwart member of the Fundraising sub-committee, contributing time, energy and commitment especially in the organisation of wine supplies and purchase of wine for functions. Martha steps into the role of Co-Chair of the Fundraising sub



Committee this year along with Prue Melville. Both Martha and Prue are very active members of that subcommittee.

Julia has been a past Chair of Friends, Acting Chair and Committee member and was an active and effective contributor to the Committee, often with practical suggestions and always bringing humour and warmth to the meetings.

We thank both Martha and Julia for their work for Friends. They are worthy recipients of the Oars awards.

Membership

Current membership (including those with Life membership) stands at 260 as at 31 January 2024.

Activities

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

The Fundraising Committee catered for eight exhibition openings, providing canapes and running the bar as well as providing a warm welcome for guests. The Friends' Committee is indebted to the fundraising subcommittee and catering volunteers who catered for a wide range of events with dedication and sheer hard work. We are grateful to Co-Chairs Lynne Walker and Alison Wright who have stepped down from these roles in 2024. Both Lynne and Alison have been tirelessly cheerful and energetic as they organised food, Friends, events and exhibition openings.

The White Rhino Film Club, a branch of the Fundraising subcommittee, continues to go from strength to strength, filling the quiet Sunday afternoon slot in Armidale with a range of fun and fascinating films at the Armidale Playhouse. Film showings are accompanied by notes from John Wearne and Mike Gibson. The International Film Festival in July presented program of outstanding films which ranged from comedic to heart rending over the weekend of 28th – 30th July, 2023.

Wendy Wearne and Lynne Walker assist with administration, and Paul Gaddes manages the technology. They are a small, committed and efficient team. FON members who are also



members of the WRFC, run a bar and provide catering at the film showings. There are now 122 members of the White Rhino Film Club. During the year White Rhino made a net contribution of close to \$17,000 to Friends of NERAM fundraising activities.

We enjoyed a very successful High Tea in the Hinton gallery on August 21st where we raised a substantial amount of over \$7,500 which went to restoring one of our Hinton treasures “Fine Feathers”. Friends are grateful to members David Rose and Barbie Beynon for their substantial individual contributions towards this restoration.

Another highlight of the year was the NERAMble. Held in the stunning gardens of Harriet Fairfax and Emma and David McCathie on the weekend of 28 – 29 October this display of artists’ work, books and curios, raised around \$11,800 for NERAM. A dedicated FON team provided refreshments, lunches and support.

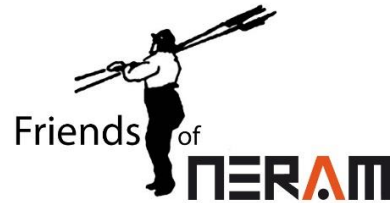
Friends also hosted a memorial event for long-time Friend of NERAM Anne White, wife and loving supporter of artist and member James White. This event took place on November 27th and was a fitting tribute to a much loved and generous Friend of NERAM and a great Packsaddler.

Friend Susie Dunn was awarded an Order of Australia in the New Year’s Honours, January 2024. Susie has a long history with NERAM, a passion for art and generosity in the cause of art. Her enormous enthusiasm for both NERAM and the Armidale community is driven by a commitment to regional communities deserving a high standard of rich cultural experience, despite the tyranny of distance.

Friends of NERAM sponsored both the Inspirations and Iterations exhibition in September, 2023 which marked NERAM’s fortieth anniversary year with a donation of \$10,000 and the Wynne Exhibition in February 2024 with a further donation of \$10,000.

The Committee made preparations for Friends of NERAM Inc to register as a charity. This was due to a change in tax laws in July, 2023 which would mean that income from fundraising was liable for tax unless Friends becomes a registered charity.

Friends of NERAM conducted a member survey which indicated that Friends would like to see more educational events and activities. In response to this, the Committee prepared for a



printmaking workshop to be held April 12 – 14, 2024. Local printmakers and teachers Liz Powell, Lizzie Horne and Leah Bullen will lead three workshops. Committee member David Rose has led this initiative, and we are also grateful to Black Gully Printmakers' President Emily Simson for her guidance and expertise in this area.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to the FON committee members who give their time, talent and enthusiasm so willingly. A very big thank you once again to the Fundraising subcommittee, including White Rhino Film Club who contribute invaluable to Friends of NERAM

We acknowledge NERAM Director Rachael Parsons, business manager Leah Gilbey, conservator Jennifer Taylor, curator Belinda Hungerford and front of house person Emily Simson for their continued professionalism and enthusiasm as staff of NERAM. They all go beyond the boundaries of their roles in their desire for excellence and passion for the business of art.

And grateful thanks are due to all Friends' members for the 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. NERAM adds substantially to the cultural life of the New England.

Dr Debra Kelliher

Chairperson

Friends of NERAM Inc