

PRESS RELEASE

Willowtree Sculpture Garden in Laggan opened with fanfare on Friday night. Officially declared open by NSW MP Pru Goward, with Patron Pam Kensit and a host of notable locals in attendance in the garden's amphitheatre, the inaugural exhibition included over 50 works by leading Australian and international artists. A unique artistic business venture in the Upper Lachlan Shire created by artist Anna Pye and business developer Rachel Mayne, the 2 1/2 acre property is a happy marriage of nature and nurture. Interspersed with the garden's own sculptures by Anna Pye, something extraordinary meets the eye at every turn.

Willowtree Sculpture Garden is open to the public 10 - 4 on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays throughout November. All works - including those sold - are on display.

Anna Pye says, "Willowtree Sculpture Garden is the fulfillment of a vision. After 15 years of hard work, we are not only proud to open our doors but thrilled to have received such warm support from the community and local businesses. Our garden is a place for all corners of the community to connect."

Feyona Van Stom, President of the Australian Sculptor's Society judged the sculptural works submitted. First Prize went to Gabrielle Saville for 'Grass Trees' which was particularly remarked upon for its use of earthy, recycled materials which embody the hard, sharp beauty of the Australian bush. All 'Grass Trees' had sold by the end of the night. Second Prize went to Shannon Hobbs for 'Hot Head', an Easter Island head inspired standalone furnace, perfect for a large rural property. Third Prize went to Stephen Murenza, a South African Shona Tribe artist for 'Love Birds'. Highly Commended Awards went to iconic Australian sculptor Alan Somerville (creator of Sydney's ANZAC Bridge soldiers) for 'Stylish Duo', sculptor Keith Chidzey for 'Memoirs' and South African Shona Tribe artist Tember Nyahemwa for 'Wave'.

But Willowtree Sculpture Garden's inaugural exhibition is as much about extending a hand to people exploring their artistic side as it is about promoting excellence by established artists. Local primary and high school students exhibited their works which were judged by Carol Dival from Gallery on Track in Goulburn.

Willowtree Sculpture Garden opened on one of the finest spring days so far this year. Music played in the amphitheatre encircled by a stone wall inset with Celtic knots created by Goulburn Landscape architect Chris Rowlands, as the sun set over the adjoining Hatherleigh Vineyard, viewed from a perfectly placed viewing platform. The Mary Gilmore Society food platters went down a treat, local wines from both Hatherleigh and Kingsdale wineries were enjoyed and local teens were successful in raising additional money to build a skateboard park in Crookwell. At Willowtree Sculpture Garden, it's about making sure that everyone benefits.

You haven't missed out! Come and visit Willowtree Sculpture Garden between 10 am and 4 pm any Friday, Saturday and Sunday in November. They were pleased to open as part of the Crookwell Garden Festival. Coffee, tea and light refreshments were provided by the Laggan Hall Committee along with a sausage sizzle.. What will you find?

Paths weave through carefully retained mature trees - a nod to the property's history as The Old Presbytery - which have been integrated with a series of planned garden rooms which are, in themselves, a triumph of sustainability and permaculture principles. A poplar grove plays host to 'Illusion' a life-sized yearling in driftwood by Vikki Holik-Blazely. 'Decadence', an opaque lead crystal torso by Peter Lewis, plays with light near the vegetable garden leading to the open air refectory table. Stones carved by various Shona Tribe artists greet you throughout the garden. A solo painting exhibition 'Travelscapes' by Sally Wilson adorn the outer walls of the house.

Experience a garden that has grown from Anna Pye, an artist and her partner Rachael Mayne who are an irresistible force of nature, meeting a bold, immovable pastoral landscape. In a word: unforgettable.

Willowtree Sculpture Garden is open to the public 10 - 4 on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays throughout November.