



Media alert

For immediate release

Australian-first wildlife art museum set for the Grampians

A world-class wildlife art museum and botanical gardens planned for the Grampians in regional Victoria has been welcomed as a major tourism drawcard and economic boon for the area.

The proposed \$22 million Wildlife Art Museum of Australia (WAMA) will be the first dedicated centre in Australia that celebrates the unique relationship between wildlife art and science.

The project is the brainchild of the WAMA Foundation, a group of volunteers comprising professional business and community leaders.

WAMA Foundation Patron Glenda Lewin said the group has teamed up with eminent artists, gardeners and naturalists to help build the proposed museum near Halls Gap.

Their aim is to create a nationally renowned art museum to house a rare and historically important collection of wildlife art, within an architecturally significant building surrounded by a native botanic garden and wetlands.

“WAMA will be an educational, training and interpretative centre for wildlife art in all its forms,” Ms Lewin said.

“The grounds will incorporate sculptures and carvings reflecting Australia’s diverse natural history.

“The entire site will be developed to create a botanical landscape featuring the best of Australian flora, with a covenanted area dedicated to Grampians species.”

Detailed plans for the multi-million dollar WAMA Project will be unveiled at a gala launch in Melbourne on October 15.

Ms Lewin said a soon to be released independent economic assessment of the project, funded by Regional Development Victoria in conjunction with the Northern Grampians Shire Council, found that the proposed complex would provide a major economic boost to the local economy.

The concept of building WAMA is being driven by the WAMA Foundation, which has invested more than \$1.25m on the research and development phase of the venture to date.

Northern Grampians Shire Council Mayor Kevin Erwin said the WAMA project was one of the most exciting and ambitious projects to be introduced to the Council.

“It has the potential to significantly boost the Grampians’ appeal as one of Australia’s premier tourism destinations and help transform the economy of the region,” Cr Erwin said.

He said the Council was committed to supporting the WAMA project for the long-term benefit of the shire and region.

The WAMA site, which has been donated to the Foundation, is on the outskirts of Halls Gap and adjacent to the Grampians.

The University of Melbourne’s School of Design, Architecture and Landscape Architecture Faculties, have partnered with the Royal Botanical Gardens’ *Australia Garden*, Cranbourne, to help create the design concepts for the project.

Ms Lewin believes that WAMA will be recognised nationally and internationally for its role in “awakening us to the world in which we live”.

“This is a truly unique project – nowhere else is there a purpose-built, iconic building surrounded by wetlands and native botanic gardens that houses and displays outstanding wildlife art,” she said.

“WAMA is set to become a must-see attraction that truly complements the eco-tourism experience of the Grampians environment.”

Detailed plans for the WAMA project will be released at a gala launch on October 15 at Sofitel Melbourne on Collins, along with an exhibition of rare wildlife art valued in excess of \$1m and the winning concept designs for the museum and site.

For more information about WAMA, please visit www.wama.net.au

-ENDS-

For more media information please contact:

Laeta Crawford
Soda Communications
T: 03 9863 8416
M: 0418 408 035
E: laeta@sodacommunications.com.au

Richard Watson
WAMA Foundation Director
M: 0402 418 191