



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: VISION TO REALITY

2021/2022 has been a year of many highlights for WAMA

The game has changed. WAMA has been awarded funding of \$6.75 million from the Victorian State Government's Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund, to be matched by \$2.25 million of pledged donations to enable the \$9 million Stage 1 of the WAMA Project to be completed.

WAMA is now prioritising construction of the facility which includes the climate-controlled art gallery, café, multi-purpose conference centre, and retail shop with surrounding infrastructure including parking, visitor access pathways and landscaping to enable WAMA to open in 2024. A challenging assignment, but one not beyond our team.

My deep thanks and appreciation go out to every one of the more than 300 Donors and 100 plus WAMA volunteers who have enabled this fabulous outcome to be achieved.

A Project Control Group has been formed, with DJPR representative Erin Padbury as a member and Ange Turrell appointed Project Co-Ordinator. The design is in the detailed fit-out stage, and recruitment for a Project Manager is underway. Exciting times for all.

In addition to the above, great progress has been achieved on site with the completion of phase 1 of the Grampians/Gariwerd Endemic Botanic Garden, and acquitting of the accompanying grant. The native grasslands continue to flourish, while rabbit eradication within the predator proof fence is proving to be challenging!

The "wet weather" this year has ensured the site looks fabulous, the wetlands are full and overflowing, the native vegetation is thriving, as are the weeds! But eradication plans are well in hand through the upcoming employment of a full-time maintenance gardener.

In the Arts we published our inaugural Art Prize Catalogue, participated in the Halls Gap Grampians Gatherings sound and light outdoor exhibition with an outstanding projection display of 'Where Art Meets Nature'. We also had the privilege of John Wolseley exhibiting his latest works for WAMA titled '*Recent Works of Rivers and Creeks*' which was very successful in raising money for the Project through commission of sales.

In culture and learning, our Nature Play Days were up and running again this year with special guest Yarran Bundle contributing with indigenous smoke ceremony, dreaming storytelling and traditional dance for the children to enjoy.

We have launched our new website and our media presence has magnified, with over 4,000 followers in total on social media and another 3,000 people receive our newsletter.

2023 and 2024 will be exciting as we create the reality that we have all dreamed of and worked hard towards for a decade.

Thank you all, and a special thank you to our donors who have made this possible.

Greg Lewin
Chair: WAMA Foundation