

All in the family for FJ Christmas picnic



Artist Damian McDonald will be joined by his daughter, Minapre, 14, at the Fletcher Jones Christmas Picnic on December 14, in what will be their first stall together. (Sculpture: Tribute to Fletcher Jones by Robert Ulmann.)

Words and photos by Carol Altmann

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] T
[/dropcap]he extraordinary team behind the F Project has again come together to organise a Christmas picnic in the Warrnambool Fletcher Jones factory gardens – the likes of which has not been seen for years.

The garden party on **Sunday December 14** follows the hugely successful spring picnic, which attracted more than 1500 people and coincided with the 70th anniversary of Fletcher Jones becoming a company.

This time, the party revives the annual tradition of a family Christmas party at Pleasant Hill for Fletcher Jones staff: a tradition which ended with the sale of Fletcher Jones in the late 90s.

The F Project president **Dr Emma Charlton** said while the group had been running markets for a few years now, the renewed focus on the FJ gardens in 2014 made it the perfect time to join forces with *Bluestone Magazine*, [Save the Silver Ball](#) and [f_project cinema](#) to celebrate so many achievements.

“The event in September blew all of our expectations out of the water – the music, the markets, the people, the excitement. This second market builds on the September celebration in a bunch of ways: more market stalls, more food, more musicians,” Emma said.

“Not being from Warrnambool, the garden events seemed to me like a thing of legends, and to be a part of something that brings people on mass back into the Fletcher Jones gardens is more than special!”



The Fletcher Jones spring garden party was held in

perfect sunshine and attracted more than 1500 people. It is hoped the Christmas garden party will be even bigger.

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[/dropcap]he garden party will run from 11am to 3pm and include live music, food stalls, a fashion parade, an F Project summer artists' market and, of course, a surprise guest who may have a long white beard and a penchant for red suits.

There will also be a hanging garden installation by Art 4, together with a screening of a short films and a session of Arts on the Grass, where artists produce a work on the spot.

Among the artist stalls will be Warrnambool sculptor, painter and illustrator **Damian "Macca" McDonald** who will be joined by his daughter, **Minapre**, 14.

"I was really *%#*^&! that I was away and missed the last picnic, so this time I am really looking forward to being part of it: to getting my work out there, and being part of the terrific atmosphere in these magnificent gardens," Damian said.



A detail from Minapre's work which will be part of the summer artists market at the picnic.

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[/dropcap]amian will have a selection of his sea-inspired redgum sculptures for sale, together with a range of new drawings (you can read more about Damian's work in [our earlier story here](#) and find him on the web [here](#)).

And while Damian is a seasoned artist, it is Minapre's first outing with her own work. She is not quite sure how to describe it, but after some discussion we all settle on "henna inspired" drawings.

"They are like the sort of designs you can get done as henna tattoos," she explains.

The community picnics have the full support of the new owner of the Fletcher Jones site, **Dean Montgomery**, who has been preparing his own surprises for the event.

One is to have the factory facade – hopefully – repainted in brilliant white by December 14 and the [return of the illuminated cross](#) that once graced the top of the silver ball – it won't be on the ball, but a new garden installation.

[box]The Fletcher Jones Christmas Garden Party is on Sunday, December 14 from 11am – 3pm. Free entry. You can follow the F Project via The Artery page [on Facebook here](#) and keep up with progress on the Fletcher Jones site via the Save the Silver Ball [Facebook page here](#). [/box]

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