

South-west women's art prize offers hope



Among the entrants for the 2015 South West International Women's Day Art Prize was Dianna Heeps, from Hamilton, left, pictured here at the exhibition with friend Maggie Dwyer.

By Carol Altmann

The **South West International Women's Day Art Prize** is fast becoming one of the premier competitions for women artists across the region, with more than \$4000 in prize money for the 2016 event.

Organisers [Women's Health and Wellbeing Barwon South West](#) are offering a \$2000 cash first prize – up from \$1500 for the inaugural event – with the winning work to be acquired by the group and also featured on the cover of its annual report for 2016-17.

A \$1000 cash prize will be awarded to the runner-up, with

another \$1000 cash prize for best emerging artist.

Bluestone Magazine is also, for the first time, sponsoring the People's Choice award of \$250.

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Emily Lee-Ack, Executive Officer of Women's Health, said the response [to the 2015 inaugural event](#) had been "unexpected and astonishing", with the group expecting perhaps a dozen entries and receiving more than 70 that responded to the theme of "Women and Place". (First prize was won by Marion Manifold).

The group is expecting a similar response to the 2016 prize, which has the theme of "Hope".

"Hope is a very broad theme that means a lot of different things to a lot of people," Emily said of the choice.

"It is also a very uplifting and positive theme and we would like to think that there is a growing sense of hope in the community about how things can be changed. Without hope, we are lost," she said.



Flashback: Deb Nicholson, left, with Emma Mahony from Women's Health and Wellbeing Barwon South West at the 2015 women's art prize. The pair are in front of Kate Melican Rollo's work, 'Sapphire Views #2, a family connection' which Deb purchased on the night.

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[dropcap]mily said the prize, which will again be hosted by The Artery, in Warrnambool, demonstrated the commitment of Women's Health to not only advancing women's health interests, but also supporting women more broadly.

"The prize is one way of supporting and promoting women in a really positive way...and making their work visible in the community, not only during the exhibition, but with the winning work finding a permanent home in our space," she said.

"It also reminds us of the great value of women in our community and renders this visible, where they are so often not visible."

In anticipation of the same response to this year's prize, a panel will be chosen to select those entries that will make up

the 50 or so to be exhibited. A guest judge – who is yet to be finalised – will determine the winners.

The prize is open to women living in the councils of W'bool, Colac-Otway, Glenelg, Southern Grampians, Corangamite and Moyne.

[box]The South West Women's IWD Art Prize will run at The Artery from February 26 to March 13, 2016. Entries close on January 28. Detailed information about how to enter will be available on the [Women's Health website](#) from Tuesday Sept 29. For further information you can also contact Emma Mahony: emahony@womenshealthbsw.org.au or phone (03) 5500 5490.[/box]



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