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Increasing the bottom line in New England North West's art industry

The format of a series of "Making Art – Making a Living" workshops to help boost art industry incomes across the New England North West has been announced. The holistic workshops have been jointly organised by the Northern Inland Regional Development Board (NIRDB) and Arts North West. They are part of a collaborative effort to help artists and art gallery operators to improve the financial yield from their artistic endeavours, while forging a stronger artistic or cultural identity for the region, which NIRDB Chair, Meryl Dillon said would have ramifications for locals and visitors alike. Registrations for the workshops are now being sought.

"This initiative has been developed by the Board and Arts North West over the past few years," NIRDB Executive Officer, Don Tydd said. "It shows what can be achieved through co-operation, in assisting and making the region's creative industries so much better."

"Building on what resulted from the first stage of this program; these workshops will bring people together who would normally work in professionally isolated situations. By networking the artists and gallery owners, they will be able to see that they are operating in a similar fashion, facing the same markets and regional challenges – ultimately, I expect they will see there is strength in numbers. I think these workshops will foster greater collaboration within our art industry," Mr. Tydd said.

"A regional approach to enhancing our art industry is so important. It will not only increase opportunities for residents to view and invest in the great art that we have here, it will also encourage visitors to the region," he said. "We've got fantastic artists here. For many, the next step is about marketing them a little more."

The Regional Arts Development Officer for Arts North West, Jack Ritchie explained how the workshops have been organised. "The workshops have been designed to respond to enquires and comments from artists and galleries across the region, gathered through the comprehensive Art as Industry survey we conducted. This was conducted by Isobel Devos, who collated feedback over recent months," he said.

The "Making Art – Making a Living" workshops will be held over four consecutive days, beginning on Tuesday 3rd March in Armidale, at the New England Regional Art Museum; on Wednesday, at the Inverell Art Gallery; on Thursday, at the Moree Plains Regional Gallery; and on the Friday, at the Tamworth Regional Gallery Studio.

"Issues covered will include governance, insurance, the relationships between artists and galleries, promotion, media and marketing. Museums and Galleries NSW, the National Association for the Visual Artists and successful gallery operators from Mullumbimby will be involved in the workshops." Mr. Ritchie said.

Every effort has been undertaken to ensure the workshops are relevant and that artists and gallery representatives participate. “Through funds generated by the Northern Inland Regional Development Board, the workshops are free. We’ve also provided free bus access from Gunnedah and Quirindi to the Tamworth workshop and from Glen Innes and/or Tenterfield, to Inverell workshop,” he said.

“People need to contact Arts North West to register for the workshops. Although they are free, registration is necessary for catering and logistics,” Mr. Ritchie said.

“These workshops represent a great opportunity for artists, galleries and the region, generally, to start cementing relationships with State bodies and each other, then maximising the outcomes across the region,” he said.

To register, contact Arts North West on (02) 6732 4988 or email: artsnw@northnet.com.au

***For further information please contact
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