



**ROTARY CLUB OF HOBART
OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE 36TH ANNUAL ART SHOW
ADDRESS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE CAROLINE WELLS
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
WREST POINT, FRIDAY 4 SEPTEMBER 2026**

It is my great pleasure to be here tonight, and I was delighted to be asked to officially open the Rotary Club of Hobart Art Show.

I'd like to echo that acknowledgement of country by John and extend my respects to the Traditional Custodians and Elders, past and present.

I've attended a number of these events over the years, and I'm proud to say my collection has grown because of it — a number of artworks, and more recently, some beautiful jewellery too.

What I particularly love about this Art Show is that, at its heart, it's about supporting our community and giving back.

A show like this doesn't happen on its own — it relies on the generosity of many people: the artists, of course, the sponsors, and the volunteers who quietly make it all come together. So, sincere thanks to you all.

It was 1990 when Mark Manning, then President of the Rotary Club of Hobart, set the idea of an Art Show in motion. Mark and his fellow club members recognised that while established artists had plenty of opportunities to show their work, emerging artists had far fewer.

That gap is exactly what the Club set out to fill — and it's a focus that remains just as strong today.

In those early years, supporting emerging artists was the Show's whole purpose. The Club offered the winning artist, as judged by the University of Tasmania Art School, a three-month scholarship to Paris — a chance to immerse themselves in the heart of the art world, in Paris and across Europe. What an amazing opportunity!

Though the Paris scholarships are no longer offered, that spirit lived on for many years through the Ted Pool Memorial Award, established in memory of a much-loved Rotarian, and supported by the School of Art. Some truly remarkable artists got their start having been recognised through that award.

Over time, the Show has evolved to also welcome established local artists into the galleries — drawing more visitors through the doors, and in turn, giving greater exposure to the emerging artists whose names aren't yet widely known.

And I think there is something particularly Tasmanian about that evolution.

I've recently had the opportunity to learn more about how we actually brand Tasmania —the Tasmanian brand isn't a logo, or a catchphrase. It's a story.

It's a story about determination, quality, quiet confidence and connection. A story about what we can achieve when we care deeply about what we do.

In many ways, I think this Art Show tells that same story.

It is about people quietly pursuing something extraordinary — artists developing their craft, emerging artists finding their voice, established artists generously sharing their experience, and volunteers giving their time simply because they believe in the value of what they're helping to create.

There is something very Tasmanian about this and it is such a great example of how we 'live our brand' — the quiet pursuit of the extraordinary.

And tonight, we remember two great supporters of this Show who are no longer with us: Joan Humble and Joe Narhars.

Joan Humble was one of the established artists who joined the Show, having won prizes both locally and internationally for her work. Joan believed deeply in what Rotary stands for, and she showed that belief in everything she gave — exhibiting her own work and generously donating a painting to the auction each year. Over time, her donations raised thousands of dollars for the Club.

But Joan gave more than her art. She gave her time and her knowledge, running live painting demonstrations in the gallery. They became one of the Show's real drawcards — a rare chance to watch an accomplished artist at work, to learn from her, and to talk with her about the craft.

In doing so, Joan was quietly nurturing the next generation of artists — the emerging talents this Show exists to support.

Her work lives on with us still through the pieces she left for the auction. Year after year, Joan bridged the gap between our established and emerging artists, and we're so grateful for that.

Joe Narhars was the partner of Rotary Club member Renate Huf. Joe was never a Rotarian himself, but he gave this Show everything he had.

Every Friday morning, as artists arrived with their work, Joe was there with his hammer, making sure every piece was hung just right. He was part of the everyday magic of this Show — turning empty, darkened stalls into a space full of colour and life, in just a few short hours.

Through his local Men's Shed, Joe even organised the making of many of the easels still used today — so in a real sense, his hands are still holding up the very art on display tonight.

Joe brought organisation and skill, but just as importantly, he brought cheerfulness and humour. He is dearly missed.

It's through people like Joan Humble and Joe Narhars — and so many others like them — that this Art Show continues to flourish, year after year.

And perhaps that is another part of what makes Tasmania special.

We have a remarkable capacity here for people to get behind one another, to share their skills, to create opportunities for others, and to do extraordinary things without necessarily seeking recognition for themselves.

That quiet confidence, that generosity, that connection to community — it's something we should be proud of.

And it is wonderfully reflected here tonight: in the talent of our artists, in the commitment of Rotary, and in the generosity of everyone who has contributed to making this Show possible.

So, it is with great warmth and pride that I declare the Rotary Club of Hobart Art Show 2026 officially open.

I hope you enjoy the wonderful work on display tonight — and perhaps, like me, maybe find something beautiful to take home.