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13 June 2025

Cockburn's inaugural Arts Hall of Fame honours 16 inductees

A thriving artistic community has been quietly shaping Cockburn for decades, and some of its movers and shakers have been recognised for their significant contributions.

The City of Cockburn has honoured 16 people in its inaugural Arts Hall of Fame, announced at a Memorial Hall ceremony in Hamilton Hill on 12 June.

Plaques commemorating each artist will be installed at Memorial Hall and information about the inaugural Arts Hall of Fame inductees will soon be available on the City's website.

The inaugural inductees are:

- **Grace Barbé, Seychellois-born singer-songwriter and musician**
- **Ron Bradfield Jnr, Bard Jawa saltwater visual artist, facilitator and advocate**
- **Dave Brewer, multi-instrumentalist and visual artist (painting)**
- **Sharyn Egan, Nyungar visual artist (mixed media)**
- **Jim Fisher, multi-instrumentalist**
- **Simone Flavelle, producer, mentor and advocate for the arts, film and disability arts**
- **George Haynes, visual artist (painting)**
- **Michelle Hovane, co-artistic director and performer**
- **Francis Italiano, co-artistic director and performer**
- **Neta (Juanetia) Knapp, Nyungar visual artist (painting)**
- **Jane Martin, visual artist (painting)**
- **Larry Mitchell, visual artist (painting)**
- **Bill Rogers, multi-instrumentalist and vocalist**
- **Phil Walleystack, Nyungar singer-songwriter, performing artist, musician, dancer and author**

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- **Ruth Vickers (1943-2019), visual artist (textile)**
- **Trevor Vickers, visual artist (abstraction)**

City of Cockburn Mayor Logan Howlett said the inductees' strong practices and links with Cockburn had helped inspire the area's unique appeal and personality.

"Cockburn is a community where the arts and artists have long been active, and we cherish and celebrate their contribution," Mayor Howlett said.

"As we announce the inaugural Arts Hall of Fame we hope it will further encourage fledgling and future artists and supporters of the arts to keep chasing their dreams and aspirations, whether here in Cockburn or further afield.

"The arts play a vital role in all our lives from creating our personal and community identities to enhancing wellbeing. They contribute to a rich inclusive and diverse culture, generating economic and social benefits for all.

"And it is fitting to celebrate this next era in recognising Cockburn's proud and passionate arts community at century-old Memorial Hall.

"The hall celebrates its 100th birthday in July after a century of countless theatrical productions, art exhibitions, dances, fancy dress balls, movie nights, weddings, carnivals, fundraisers, meetings, infant health support afternoons, political addresses, and may there be many more."

City of Cockburn Creative Programs Lead Ella Hetherington said Cockburn should be proud of its artistic diversity and depth of talent.

"Many artists have chosen to call Cockburn home, benefiting from a supportive environment perfect for creativity, with space and freedom to express and evolve art practices," Ms Hetherington said.

"We recognise their contribution to the local, state, national and international arts scene and are beyond lucky to have their positive influence in our community."

The City will update the Arts Hall of Fame every three years.

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Biographies:

Grace Barbé, Seychellois-born singer-songwriter and musician –

Grace is a singer-songwriter from Hamilton Hill who performs with the Afrobeat and psychedelic band of the same name which includes Jamie Searle (guitar, music director and producer) and Hardy Perrine (drums).

She has released three studio albums and is the recipient of 13 West Australian Music Industry Awards, including 10n Best World Act Awards and three WAM Song of the Year awards.

Her third album FANM: WOMAN was nominated for Best World Album at the 2020 ARIA Music Awards. Grace sings in Creole, English, French and Malagasy and her music fuses the tropical rhythms and dances of the slaves with psychedelic rock, afrobeat, reggae and pop.

Since 2022, she has been bassist with jazz/funk band The Cat Empire.

Ron Bradfield Jnr, Bard Jawa saltwater visual artist, facilitator and advocate –

Ron's artistic and cultural contributions have been showcased through various workshops, exhibitions, and storytelling events across WA. Notable presentations of his work include multiple collaborations with the Art Gallery of Western Australia:

He conducted the Let's Not Make Aboriginal Art workshop, challenging educators to reconsider perceptions of Indigenous art within contemporary contexts. Ron's work was featured in the Home Front Exhibition at the Festival of Veterans Arts (FOVA25), addressing the often-overlooked issue of family and domestic violence within the Australian Defence Force community.

As part of NAIDOC Week celebrations at the State Library of Western Australia, Ron led Sharing Yarns with Uncle Ron Bradfield Jr, facilitating storytelling sessions that emphasised the importance of sharing personal narratives to foster understanding and community connection.

SICK AF (Sick Artists Foundation): Ron's artwork, In Plain Sight (2019), was featured,

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exploring personal experiences and societal challenges through visual narratives.

As part of the CAST Research Group at RMIT School of Art, Ron presented the artist talk *So, you think you know me?*, sharing insights into his journey and the significance of personal stories in understanding identity and place.

Through these platforms, Ron effectively uses art and storytelling to engage diverse audiences, fostering cultural understanding and community dialogue.

He is also a champion storyteller at The Centre for Stories, and the founder of Yarns R Us.

Dave Brewer, multi-instrumentalist and visual artist (painting) –

Dave's musical journey began in the late 1960s, first playing drums in his primary school marching band. He later picked up the guitar and developed a deep connection to blues music, performing with Perth-based bands *I Don't Love You Harry* (1974) and *The Elks* (1976).

The Elks toured extensively across Australia in the late 70s before relocating from Perth to Sydney in 1980. After they disbanded in 1982, Dave remained in Sydney and performed with a number of notable blues and soul groups, including *The Champions*, *The Dynamic Hepnotics*, *The Mighty Reapers*, and later, world music ensemble *The Catholics* (led by Lloyd Swanton of *The Necks*).

Throughout the 1990s, *The Mighty Reapers* released five albums and supported legendary artists such as B.B. King, Albert King, Buddy Guy, and Stevie Ray Vaughan. *The Catholics* also released five albums during this period and toured extensively across Australia, Canada, and Europe, with standout performances at the Montreal and North Sea Jazz Festivals.

In parallel with his music career, Dave pursued visual art. Between 1990 and 1992, he completed a Diploma of Fine Arts majoring in painting at the National Art School (East Sydney Tech). From 1992 until his move back to Perth in 2000, he was represented by the Legge Gallery in Redfern, Sydney, where he held six solo exhibitions and participated in 15 group shows. His work is held in the Artbank and Allen, Allen & Hemsley public collections.

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Since returning to Perth in 2000, Dave has remained an active performer. He regularly plays with his own band and has collaborated with artists such as Natalie Gillespie, Lucky Oceans, Jim Fisher, Bill Rogers, The DooDaddies, and others. He has released three solo albums of original music since his return.

The Mighty Reapers continue to perform, prompting Dave to travel to the east coast several times a year for music festivals and gigs in Sydney. While painting has taken a backseat in recent years, he recently exhibited two works in the City of Cockburn's annual Show Off exhibition.

Sharyn Egan, Nyungar visual artist (mixed media) –

Sharyn is a prominent Nyungar artist whose multidisciplinary practice spans painting, sculpture, weaving, and site-specific installations. A member of the Stolen Generations, her art is deeply informed by personal and collective experiences of trauma, loss, and displacement endured by Aboriginal people.

She began her artistic journey at the age of 37, studying at the Claremont School of Art, followed by an Associate Degree in Contemporary Aboriginal Art (2000) and a Bachelor of Arts (2001) at Curtin University.

She works with both traditional and contemporary materials such as ochres, resins, oils, grasses, and other natural fibres, which reflect her connection to the land around the lake systems in Perth's southern suburbs.

Her woven forms include baskets and large-scale sculptural pieces inspired by flora and fauna with totemic significance to the Nyungar people.

Beyond her art-making, Sharyn contributes to her community as a lecturer, curator, and facilitator, working across schools, community groups, and health organisations.

She has been commissioned for several major public art projects in Western Australia, including works at Perth Stadium, Elizabeth Quay, Yagan Square, Scarborough Beach and the City of Cockburn. Egan is also a regular participant in Sculpture by the Sea at Bondi and Cottesloe, where her work continues to engage audiences with its powerful cultural and environmental narratives.

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Jim Fisher, multi-instrumentalist –

A seasoned performer since the age of 14, Jim has left a lasting imprint on WA's musical landscape, most notably by introducing bluegrass and its rich tradition of acoustic instrumentation to Perth audiences in the 1970s.

A self-taught multi-instrumentalist, Jim plays guitar, lap slide guitar, mandolin, fiddle, bass guitar, and more, bringing skill, soul, and energy to every performance. His musical passions lie in bluegrass and blues, his performances reflecting a deep commitment to both.

Throughout his career, Jim has toured extensively across Australia and internationally, sharing stages with renowned artists such as Paul Kelly, Tim Minchin, and The Bushwackers.

He is equally celebrated for his wit and stage presence, particularly through his comedy band, Sensitive New Age Cowpersons, which garnered critical acclaim at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival.

Currently performing with four bands and actively involved in various creative projects, Jim shows no signs of slowing down. As he puts it, "I plan to play music until I can't anymore."

Simone Flavelle, producer, mentor and advocate for the arts, film and disability arts –

Simone is a highly respected producer, mentor, and advocate in the disability arts space, with a career spanning over two decades. She has been instrumental in the development and success of many WA artists, tirelessly advocating for inclusion and ensuring artists with disability have a platform in mainstream arts spaces.

She currently works with My Place WA Ltd supporting independent artists with disability to access studio space, select art and film mentors and identify and develop pathways to arts training and the mainstream art/film sector.

Her dedication has directly contributed to the national and international success of artists like Julia Hales and Patrick Carter (both Creative Australia Artist award

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recipients), helping bridge the divide between disability arts and the broader creative industry.

Through projects such as KAYA BOODJA (with Nyungar artist Patrick Carter and Wadandi/Nyungar Elder Kelton Pell), You Know We Belong Together, (Julia Hales and Black Swan State Theatre Company), the TOGETHER Project, and SMALL STORIES, Simone has championed collaboration, cultural storytelling, and accessibility in the arts.

As a Founding Member and Digital Producer at DADAA (Disability in the Arts, Disadvantage in the Arts, Australia) 1994-2019, she shaped inclusive arts initiatives for over 25 years. Her leadership at Screenwest (2017-2021) and the Screen Diversity Leadership Group advanced diversity and representation in the screen industry.

She has also provided key advice to the Perth Festival Access and Inclusion Advisory Group and is currently working with Creative Australia on best practice methods and further inclusive operations. Simone's commitment to mentorship and advocacy continues through her roles as a Board Member for the Centre for Stories and a committee member for WA Academy of Performing Art's (WAAPA) Bachelor of Performing Arts Honours Course.

George Haynes, visual artist (painting) –

Spearwood resident George Haynes has had an influential, 60+ year career. Born in Kenya in 1938, Haynes arrived in WA in 1962, after studying at the Chelsea School of Art in London. Within two years he exhibited at Skinner Galleries, Perth's first commercial gallery and has exhibited nationally and internationally ever since.

George is one of WA's most significant and prolific living painters, he is a master of light, creating paintings characteristically drenched in colour, demonstrating a keen observation of everyday Australian life and landscape.

A teacher from 1964-85 in Perth, Albany and Kalgoorlie, George has taught some of WA's best-known painters across the decades including Giles Hohnen, Jeremy Kirwan-Ward, Eveline Kotai, Jonathon Snowball, Nigel Hewitt, Ben Joel and life partner Jane Martin.

He has won many awards and accolades during his career including the Art Gallery of

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WA (AGWA) Perth Prize (1963, 66-79), the John McCaughey Memorial Prize Competition at the Art Gallery of NSW (1965), The University of WA Painting Prize (1966), Sir William Angliss Memorial Art Prize" Melbourne (1972), Murdoch University Art Prize (1975), Festival of Perth Invitation Drawing Award (1983 & 1985), Mandorla Art Prize (1985), Fremantle Prize for Drawing and "BP Australia Art Award" AGWA (1986), Sculpture by the Sea Cottesloe Judges' Award (2006-2008), Artsource Lifetime Achievement Award (2010).

His work is represented in prestigious private and public collections, including the National Gallery of Australia, the Art Gallery of NSW, the National Gallery of Victoria, the Art Gallery of WA, Artbank, Bankwest, UWA, Curtin University, Murdoch University.

Michelle Hovane, co-artistic director and performer –

Michelle is a physical performer, somatic practitioner and co-artistic director and founding member of Sensorium Theatre.

She has been a co-devisor and performer on Sensorium Theatre's productions The Jub Jub Tree, Oddysea, Whoosh! and, most recently, Wonderbox.

Michelle led the development of Sensorium's highly regarded Professional Learning program, including a 2022-23 consultancy for Sydney Opera House; and developed Sensorium's Sensory Storytelling program.

Over the past 20 years, Michelle has facilitated and performed with many communities of diverse ability, cultures and identities which gives her a deep ability to tailor each performance to the individuals she encounters.

Francis Italiano, co-artistic director and performer –

Over a 25-year career, particularly as a community artist, Francis has worked as artistic-director, artist-in-residence and principal artist for numerous arts and cultural institutions.

He founded Sensorium Theatre (ST) with Michelle Hovane in 2010 and continues his professional development in Sensory Theatre by collaborating with global leaders, including Oily Cart, Frozen Light, Bamboozle & and Teatro de los Sentidos (Spain).

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Under his direction, Sensorium has toured the Helpmann Award-nominated Oddyssey to the Lincoln Center's Big Umbrella Festival in New York and The Artground, Singapore and created five multi-sensory theatre works including the Perth Festival commission Wonderbox.

Neta (Juanetia) Knapp, Nyungar visual artist (painting) –

Born in Gnowangerup, Neta was taken to Roelands Mission where she was raised away from her family and parents.

A Goreng woman, Neta is an educated teacher, nurse and artist. The long-time Cockburn resident is determined to help change the path for disadvantaged people.

'I can share a path with doctors, lawyers and politicians,' says Neta, who is on three boards at Notre Dame University, and the Reconciliation Board at St John of God Hospital. She is also an active member of the City of Cockburn Aboriginal Reference Group.

Education has been her saviour, and she encourages younger generations to hold tight to their vision and go after what they want to achieve.

In November 2017 as the Notre Dame University Artist in Resident Neta and a group of Aboriginal Students created a mural 'Manjaree Mia Kaart', meaning place of learning, a place of history and a place of spiritual journey and knowledge.

Jane Martin, visual artist (painting) –

Born in Victoria, Jane grew up in the UK before returning to Australia where she studied fine art at Perth Technical College in the 60s as a 15-year-old. With dreams of illustrating book and album covers she instead went on to win the UWA Guild of Undergraduates Prize and Helena Rubenstein portrait exhibition, and has been honing her craft ever since.

Jane is best known for her focus on landscapes and still life, the odd portrait along with largescale colour-soaked woollen cross-stitch projects.

Her work can be found in the Art Gallery of Western Australia, Bankwest, the University

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of Western Australia, Edith Cowan University, Sir Charles Gardiner Hospital, St John of God Health Care, King Edward Memorial Hospital, Royal Perth Hospital, TAFE and the Shire of Roebourne.

Her awards include UWA Undergraduates Prize & Jackson's Art Prize (1960s), Albany Woollen Mills Award (1986), and Cossack Art Award Best Overall (2005) & Best WA (2006).

She is represented by Art Collective WA.

Larry Mitchell, visual artist (painting) –

Self-taught, Northampton born, renowned landscape artist Larry Mitchell moved with his family to Spearwood in the late 80's after a stint living in England. Seeing the changes occurring in the area he undertook a project to record the changing landscape of Spearwood as it transitioned from market gardening to the suburb of today. The idea of capturing change is a common theme throughout his work as he continues to work on landscape projects including The 1 degree C Project which records environmental and cultural change in the Indo/Pacific region; The Pilbara Project for Form Gallery. His current project on Limestone investigates the relationship between biology, geology and culture, echoed by the presence of WA coastal limestone.

He has exhibited widely, both in Australia and elsewhere including Fremantle Art Centre, The Art Gallery of NSW, The Nevada Museum of Art and Agnews Gallery in London.

Bill Rogers, multi-instrumentalist and vocalist –

Bill's musical journey began with a deep love for blues-based music in his teenage years. Inspired by artists ranging from Ray Charles to Bob Dylan, the Beatles, and the Rolling Stones, Bill found his early voice through harmonica and vocals, initially in private, before connecting with fellow musicians in his late teens.

In 1973, he picked up the tenor saxophone and joined his first band, *Roadband*, quickly followed by *Last Chance Cafe* (1974–1978), and a pivotal year with *Dragon* in 1979, which included recording sessions, national tours, and television appearances.

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In the 1980s Bill performed and recorded with a wide range of artists and bands, most notably contributing saxophone to Cold Chisel's hit *Saturday Night*. A lifelong learner, he earned a Bachelor of Music Education from WAAPA (ECU) in 1992 and went on to teach classroom music in the state school system from 1993 to 1997.

In 1993, Bill co-founded *Zydecats*, a popular band that blended diverse musical styles and enjoyed a remarkable 30-year run. Throughout his career, Bill has consistently juggled multiple projects, showcasing his versatility on harmonica, saxophone, piano, percussion, autoharp, and vocals.

Phil Walleystack, Nyungar singer-songwriter, performing artist, musician, dancer and author –

Raised in country WA, Phil's work is deeply rooted in his heritage, and he has dedicated his life to preserving and promoting Aboriginal stories, voices, and traditions—both on stage and behind the scenes.

A gifted performer from a young age, Phil blends music, storytelling, and cultural advocacy to bridge generations and communities. His dynamic musical style fuses country, pop, and rock with traditionally inspired contemporary sounds.

He has toured and performed across the USA, Middle East, Europe, and Asia. He is the host of TV show *Aussie Bush Tales*, where he explores Australia's rich cultural heritage through the art of storytelling. He also hosts award-winning radio show *Indigenous Beats* on Noongar Radio.

The Founder and Managing Director of Aboriginal Shows and Productions, he also established the not-for-profit Phil Walleystack Indigenous Arts Foundation, both working to create meaningful opportunities for Aboriginal artists to showcase their talent and culture on national and international stages.

His international outreach has included meetings with Australian ambassadors, consulate representatives, and global VIPs—amplifying Indigenous perspectives and fostering cultural dialogue worldwide. His contributions have earned him multiple nominations for West Australian of the Year and established him as a role model for the next generation.

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Ruth Vickers (1943-2019), visual artist (textile) –

Born in Cardiff, Wales, Ruth moved to London to study ceramics and printmaking at Goldsmith's College. She also achieving a teaching qualification enabling her to work at Rochdale School of Art, Putney and Spencer Park.

In 1974 Ruth joined her brother Geoff in Perth and began teaching ceramics, drawing and printmaking at Claremont School of Art. There she met her future husband Trevor Vickers, who had returned to Perth following recent success in Melbourne. Together they embarked on a creative life including more than 17 years living and working in England and Europe.

Ruth taught at Brighton College and exhibited her work at Hampton Court Palace, Chapel House Gallery in Basingstoke, Hove Museum and the Grange Gallery.

Ruth settled back into the Hamilton Hill in the early 2000s.

Trevor Vickers, visual artist (abstraction) –

A recipient of the State Living Cultural treasures award in 2024, Hamilton Hill local Trevor is one of Australia's most highly regarded painters, known for a minimalist abstract style characterised by clean geometric forms and a harmonious interplay of colour and space.

His 60-year career spans the seminal 1968 exhibition 'The Field' at the National Gallery of Victoria, active participation in Melbourne's avant-garde art scene in the 1960s and 70s, practice development in France and England in the 1980s and 90s, the release of his first monograph in 2016 and the foundation of Art Collective WA in 2013.

A leading figure in hard edged abstraction, Trevor's distinctive chromatic colour-field paintings have been collected by all of Australia's significant institutions including the National Gallery of Australia, National Gallery of Victoria, Queensland Art Gallery, Art Gallery of Western Australia, Art Gallery of South Australia and Artbank.

He is a founding member of Art Collective WA and serves on its board. It is a highly successful organisation comprising long-term career artists, combatting gallery closures



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and lifting the profiles of some of WA's most important artists.

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