

Speech by Mayor Logan K Howlett, JP

to officially open

'Below the Clouds'

On behalf of local artists Eunice Mitussis and Biruta McLaughlin

At the Atwell Art Gallery, Melville

on

16 March, 2010

Good evening and welcome to the Atwell Gallery on this very auspicious occasion – the official opening of 'Below the Clouds', an exhibition of art that reflects the artistic talents of Biruta McLaughlin and Eunice Mitussis.

I acknowledge the Noongar people who are the Traditional Custodians of the Land on which we have gathered tonight and I pay respect to the Elders both past and present of the Nyungar Nation and extend that respect to other Indigenous Australians who may be present.

I formally acknowledge Biruta McLaughlin and Eunice Mitussis and their family members and friends and other art lovers present tonight.

The phrase, 'Below the Clouds' immediately starts the mind thinking – I'm certain each and every one of us that has flown would have thought; Mm! I wonder what is beneath those clouds.

Occasionally you capture a glimpse of the ground below, a mountain range, a village, ploughed fields or fields awaiting harvest, rivers flowing through the countryside, coastal locations and shorelines.

In my opinion, painting can and does offer the opportunity for the artist to take us below the clouds by applying their individual life experiences to the canvas, of portraying the seasons as they change; images that contrast with the degree of light, or simply colours that are applied to show the depth and richness of nature.

Eunice grew up in the Eastern Wheat Belt and developed a love of the outback. This resulted in her specialising in paintings that reflect the beauty and colour of the Australian bush.

Many of Eunice's paintings have been sold because the images bring back very personal memories and feelings to the viewer about the Australian bush and landscape.

Biruta's approach is eclectic.

She uses colour to convey feelings and mood. Biruta tries to simplify things by focusing on a particular aspect – be it the calm of a local lake, the beauty of flowers, imaginary landscapes or sheer abstraction bursting into colour.

For Biruta "*art washes away from the soul the dust of the every day*" (Picasso) exposing the beauty of the visual world as she sees it through her painting.

Both Biruta and Eunice have exhibited in many group exhibitions as well as having their own solo exhibitions.

They are both founding members and office bearers of Cockburn's artists group, Artzplace as well as members of Atwell artists group.

Ladies and gentlemen, I have great pleasure in official opening 'Below the Clouds' and invite you to join Biruta and Eunice in the sharing of this most important exhibition. Ask questions of each artist, uncover the source of their inspiration and importantly, purchase a painting or two.

Thank you!