



Media Release

19 June 2019

Spearwood's rich history to be captured in artistic murals

Spearwood's disappearing colonial and horticultural history has been revived in brilliant colour with artwork for two 20m long murals painted by celebrated West Australian artist Irene Osborne.

The 22-panel murals commissioned by the City of Cockburn will be installed from today at the intersection of Rockingham Road on Spearwood Avenue.

Coinciding with the City's 40th anniversary in 2019, the murals will add to the artworks and tributes already installed along Spearwood Avenue as part of the City's Friendship Way program.

Completed in Irene's Spearwood studio, the artworks are a tribute to the area's early settlers who worked hard over many decades to build the foundations for today's contemporary community.

After a slow start in the 1870s, Spearwood eventually became a booming market gardening area supplying the district of Fremantle, thanks to its fertile swampy soil.

Due to its close proximity to Fremantle, Spearwood eclipsed the earlier market gardening areas of Jandakot and South Coogee and was connected by railway in 1905. By 1910 the area was booming with successful growers and again after WWI it became a centre of migration for people escaping war-torn Europe.

During WWII, many Spearwood residents were exempted from military service to enable their established market gardens to help feed the army and the nation.

National Service volunteers were sent to the area to ensure the food bowl was able to continue with the important job of growing fresh produce.

By the 1960s, the area's development into a residential hub had begun and by the 1980s the 25 pound five-acre blocks first marketed as Spearwood Gardens in 1897, gave way to a housing boom which continued until the mid-1990s.

After the Watsonia factory on Hamilton Road closed in 2009, the Eliza Ponds estate was released in 2015, continuing the area's transformation into a thriving family community where hints of its rich market gardening history can still be seen.



Media Release

With the help of a band of enthusiastic long time Spearwood residents, including Tony Ravlich, Jeannette Paulik and Len Glamuzina, Irene made public appeals for copies of precious historic and family photos and received about 100 to help inform the acrylic artworks.

Some of the panels depict the early wine and table grape vineyards whose fruit was exported to England as exotic Christmas fare during the 1920s, the lime kiln industry, fruit and vegetable growing, packing and transportation, the steam train and Spearwood rail siding, livestock, local businesses, churches, community life, and the iconic South Fremantle Power Station.

Irene is a multi-award winning visual artist with artworks in private and corporate collections worldwide.

Born in Subiaco, Irene was raised in WA where she has worked for 40 years doing private and public art projects including all types of painting, murals and sculptures that can be found all over WA.

The murals will join other features along Friendship Way including celebrations of Cockburn's sister city relationships with Mobile in the USA, Split in Croatia and Yueyang in China, a creationist sculpture honouring our ancient Nyungar culture, Peace Park (commemorating the atomic bombing of Hiroshima) with its pine tree plantings and the Nobel Peace Prize laureate plaques displayed along the footpaths.

The Mayor will conduct an official dedication of the murals on 27 June.

For more information on the City's agricultural and industrial history visit the new history website: <https://history.cockburn.wa.gov.au/Wartime/Industry-and-agriculture>

Find out more about Irene's artwork at <http://ireneosborneartist.com/>

ENDS

For more information contact:
Media and Communications Officer
City of Cockburn
T: 08 9411 3551
E: media@cockburn.wa.gov.au