

MEDIA RELEASE

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HOPE STREET - An outdoor gallery for the whole community

HOPE STREET is a street art project that aims to create an outdoor gallery accessible to all, representing the community in all its diversity, celebrating creativity and increasing connectivity.

Country Arts SA's Community Arts and Cultural Development Producer Alison Howard and Project Coordinator Public Health Planning, Local Government Association of South Australia Dr Rachel Earl developed the project as a new way of exploring community health with the Murraylands and Riverland Local Government Association (MRLGA) Public Health Planning group.

HOPE STREET is tailored to meet the needs of each local council and their communities. The residency will start on May 1 with workshops to follow.

Stage one of the project will involve three South Australian artists each undertaking a 10-day residency in the Renmark Paringa, Murray Bridge and Mid Murray councils. The artists: Jack Fran (Renmark Paringa), Joshua Smith (Murray Bridge) and Sarah Boese (Mid Murray) will collaborate with local communities to produce a contemporary painted mural responding to the theme of HOPE.

Each residency will kick off with a workshop inviting the community to discover more about street art, learn techniques and gain new skills through this hands-on experience. Consultation through the workshops will also inform the design of the mural each resident artist will create at a specific site in each council area.

Each council will host an official event to unveil the work and celebrate their community.

Ms Howard said: "Active involvement in creative activities can provide a wide range of benefits to individuals and communities as a whole, including the promotion of well-being, quality of life and health, increased levels of empowerment, positive impacts on mental health and social inclusion. The HOPE STREET project provides a great opportunity to celebrate and connect communities across the Murraylands and Riverland region and Country Arts SA are delighted to be partnering with Renmark Paringa, Mid Murray and Murray Bridge Councils on the first stage of this collaborative project."

Dr Earl said: "There is now empirical evidence that engaging in 2 hours or more of arts per week can significantly improve mental health and wellbeing outcomes for the general population (Davies et al., 2016). This supports the proposition that engaging a community in the arts can increase health and wellbeing outcomes. As a medium the Arts can also be a platform to elevate public health issues to the forefront in a provocative and memorable way that can inspire action."

HOPE STREET also aims to draw positive attention to the community wellbeing work of local government and encompass Regional Public Health Plan focus areas such as mental health and wellbeing, suicide prevention, support for aging communities, building stronger and healthier communities and neighbourhoods for all generations.

Country Arts SA delivers a Statewide Arts & Health program in partnership with Country Health SA Mental Health Network and seeks to increase opportunities for social connection using arts and culture as a means to improve health and wellbeing and creating pathways to resilience.



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