



Girls Own Space Project completed in Foster

Another under-utilised public space in South Gippsland has been transformed thanks to the Girls Own Space project. The latest activity involved painting a blank wall at the Foster Showgrounds with an attractive and colourful mural that can be enjoyed by the local community.

Girls Own Space projects encourage young women in South Gippsland to improve public spaces and create safe, inviting and inclusive areas using art. Under the supervision of skilled local creatives, the teams have been working on spaces in Korumburra, Leongatha, Mirboo North and Foster. The project is coordinated by the South Gippsland Shire Council and funded through an \$85,000 Gender Equality through the Arts grant from VicHealth.

The latest project was led by local artist Melanie Caple who worked with a team of six young women from Foster Secondary College to create and paint the mural. Through a series of workshops, Ms Caple asked participants to find and draw a single botanical species from within the Showgrounds that they had a connection with. The mural's composition was then developed from the student's drawings, capturing their botanical collection in paint. It was all-hands-on-deck for the team, including Foster Secondary College staff, who took it in turns to paint.

The project was started earlier in the year but was interrupted due to COVID-19. Once restrictions were lifted, the team worked hard to complete the artwork by the end of the year.

Other projects that are complete or close to completion include a courtyard in Mirboo North that was redeveloped using a clever seating design and landscaping, and a disused railway tunnel in Korumburra that is almost unrecognisable after a Girls Own Space team repainted its walls with a colourful design.

Quote attributable to South Gippsland Shire Council Arts Development Officer, Mary Sullivan

"Girls Own Space has been a great project for young women in South Gippsland of all abilities. South Gippsland was one of only seven councils from across Victoria to receive this funding and the only one located in a regional area. The project has provided a rare opportunity for young women to experience a locally-based contemporary art project."

Quote attributable to Girls Own Space Team Leader (Foster), Melanie Caple

“The Foster Girls Own Space team worked so hard to make this mural a reality. It was very satisfying to be able to work with such enthusiastic young women who were so dedicated to making sure the space they were developing would be one that could be enjoyed by everyone in their local community. We had a great time working through different concepts and it was great to see the project take form. I was pleased to be involved with such a positive project and consider it a privilege to work with such an intelligent and talented group.”

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