

THE CAPITAL REGION – WHICH INCLUDES YASS, QUEANBEYAN, Goulburn, Gunning, Bungendore, Braidwood and the ACT – is one of Australia's only larger regional centres not to have an Indigenous Artists Cooperative or Collective of some sort.

As the Indigenous Employment Project officer with the Capital Region Employment Council, I am working closely with Indigenous artists in the area to form an Indigenous arts cluster and business entity to enable the collaborative and centralized promotion of local Indigenous artists and their art to the wider community.

I have also been working closely with the Yurauna Centre, Canberra Institute of Technology and the Office of Arts and Recreation Training ACT, to foster the formation of an Indigenous artists co-operative and to secure funding for its establishment.

As a way to raise awareness of the project, an exhibition showcasing a wide spectrum of indigenous art from the region

There are a number of practicing and emerging Indigenous artists in the Queanbeyan and Yass regions. **Jim (Boza) Williams**, Ngunnawal Elder, has a permanent piece of work on display at the National Museum of Australia, and his flare for art has been passed onto his son Daniel who is a talented performer of Aboriginal dance and story telling. **Duncan Smith** has painted a number of murals permanently on display at primary schools in Queanbeyan. He is also a performer of Aboriginal dance and didgeridoo playing and he has an Indigenous Youth dance group, the 'Wiradjuri Echos'. After studying Aboriginal art, both contemporary and traditional, for two years, **Wayne Williams** has found his own style of painting and he has been invited to sell his works at various markets and events including Melbourne's Moomba Festival. His art can be best described as blending contemporary style and ideas with traditional designs and stories from the Kamilaroi and Wiradjuri Nations that were passed on to him. **Richard Cross** is an up-and-coming artist who painted a portrait of his grandfather,

Kanberri dreaming

by GAIL KNIGHT



Wayne Williams at the exhibition with works entitled *Koori Art*, *Waa the Crow* and *Night Hunters*

23

was held at the National Museum of Australia in February. The exhibition helped to create awareness of the need and potential for the cooperative; which will enable local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists to work, exhibit, promote and sell their art collaboratively to the wider community. The co-op will also assist fledgling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and facilitate access to affordable studio and exhibition space and shared administrative, curatorial, business and marketing support.

The co-op will develop links and work with existing community arts networks and organisations throughout Canberra and NSW to promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait art and contribute to collateral economic activities such as tourism. It will add a further dimension to the arts and cultural tourism landscape, enriching the wider community with Aboriginal art.

which was well received in the exhibition. A number of local Indigenous students attending the Yass Youth Centre had an opportunity to showcase their talent in photography in the exhibition. Many of them could become excellent photographers should they wish to pursue this as a career.

Once it is registered, the new Indigenous Artists' Cooperative will be run by the members for the members, who must commit to an active voluntary role in it to ensure its long-term viability.

The co-op will be a business that will promote the capital region's Indigenous artists and their art to the wider community. It will directly assist to increase the skills and employment opportunities for Indigenous communities in the ACT and New South Wales and create a pathway to self-employment for some as well. ■

July

27 July

🎵 *Friends Winter Concert*, showcasing Tamworth's young musicians performing and gaining performance experience. Starts 1.30pm Chapel Theatre, **TAMWORTH**. Contact Rob Hurcum Tel 02 6766 7507 or 02 6766 6911

27 July

🗨️ *Poets & Songwriters Salon*. Share and connect with other creative souls. Open to singers, songwriters and poets in the community. **PORT MACQUARIE** Maritime Museum. \$5 entry. Contact Camden Haven Community College Tel 02 6559 6699 Email chace@tsn.cc

31 July - 3 August

🗨️ *Byron Bay Writers Festival* Dinners and lunches, interviews and panel discussions with the cream of the Australian writers. **BYRON BAY** Northern Rivers Writers' Centre Tel 02 6685 5115 Email nrwc@nrwc.org.au www.byronbaywritersfestival.com.au

1 - 2 August

🗨️ *The Hardy Project*, a public reading of a work in process, come and experience the development of a new play by PP Cranney and directed by Kate Wilson. Part of *Merrigong Fringe Festival*. Tickets \$5, Merrigong Theatre Company **WOLLONGONG** Tel 02 4226 3366