

Marvellous Marysville

Looking in the MIRA

ELLEN Pogson is the new centre manager for Marysville's new MIRA arts and information centre. She arrived in Marysville earlier this year as her partner had been offered an opportunity to work with Outdoor Education Group (OEG). She was keen to explore a new country so she came along. They initially stayed at the OEG camp and were looking for rental accommodation. Although they looked elsewhere, they were drawn to Marysville as they were from the Lakes District in the UK and they liked the similarities.

In the UK, she had been working as the business development manager for an organisation called Farfield Mill, an old woollen mill which was converted into an

arts and heritage centre. It ran exhibitions 12 months of the year, and included shop spaces and artist studios. She enjoyed both the team and the environment, so when she saw the opportunity with MIRA she was very keen to apply.

Allie Griffin, the arts coordinator, moved to the Yarra Valley from Melbourne 14 years ago and has been living in Healesville for around 10 years. She's an artist who enjoyed working in all mediums. She described herself as 'an artist of ideas.'

She jumped at the chance to take the job at MIRA as she felt it was "a culmination of all of my backgrounds." She spent over 20 years in advertising as an art director and graphic designer. In the Yarra Valley,

she opened a graphic design business. She bought a building to use as a gallery and graphic design space called Three Storeys in Healesville. It's changed its purpose a number of times, including an artisan store, a workshop space, a café, an arts lecture space, and is currently an art supplies store. She's keen to explore similar options with MIRA.

The new staff are still developing their plans for MIRA, with the keys due to be handed over from the builders later this month. Ms Griffin said that they'll be looking to source the work of various local artists for the retail shop, as well as exhibitions, performances, music, really anything art-related. "If people have ideas we can hopefully work together

and make things happen," she said.

She believes the MIRA opening will be an important milestone for the people of the Marysville and Triangle.

Ms Pogson feels humbled by the amount of time that volunteers have put into creating the arts centre. She wants it to be a vibrant and exciting space, and may go beyond the walls including theatre which moves around park areas, and having arts trails, for example.

The space was made to be flexible, and Ms Griffin is aiming for it to be a cultural and creative space where no particular genre stands out. She's also keen to see hybrid works, such as theatre with film elements, for example.



Ellen Pogson and Allie Griffin. -AR



The keys are expected to be handed over at the end of July. -AR



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The space is an information centre as well as an art space, and will be supporting local businesses in the area. She hopes that the combination of activities will draw in a broad range of people from both the local area as well as tourists. That said, Ms Pogson would like to see MIRA's activities become a draw card, the prime purpose of peoples' visit.

She wants local people to feel welcome to be creative in the space, and inspired by the activities taking place there.

For the moment, they're building networks and pooling resources. The centre will be reliant on volunteers and they emphasised

how important the volunteers are. They also want it to be an exciting place where people will very much want to volunteer and spend their time at MIRA.

They're very much looking forward to getting into the building and getting to work. Ms Griffin recently put out a call for expressions of interest, looking for things to put on the wall as well as something which played through the projector to showcase the potential for the space. They now have to decide on which lucky artist will be the first to have their work in display in Marysville's new art space.



The stage and exhibition space at MIRA. -AR



The view from the kitchen. -S



The visitor centre area. -AR

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