

Volunteer Handbook



An introduction to volunteering at the Gallery

Cowra Regional Art Gallery

77 Darling St

Cowra NSW 2794

Phone: 02 6340 2190

www.cowraartgallery.com.au

(Revised January 2022)

Welcome

Volunteering at the Cowra Regional Art Gallery is a great experience. As a volunteer, you can make new friends, talk with artists and enjoy our artworks – through firsthand experience and through introducing visitors to a range of exhibitions.

The Gallery's volunteers assist with a range of tasks, including meeting and greeting our visitors, reception duties, and installing exhibitions. To volunteer, you will need to be over 18 years. We provide all training.

About the Gallery

Since opening in October 2000, the Cowra Regional Art Gallery has made a significant contribution to the cultural life of the region, energising visual art and craft activity in the Cowra Shire, and attracting visitors from across Australia and overseas.

The Cowra Regional Art Gallery offers a diverse and exciting exhibition program consisting of distinctive state and national touring exhibitions, and in-house curated projects featuring contemporary art and craft practices. Exhibitions change approximately every five to six weeks. During October each year the Gallery presents the acquisitive Calleen Art Award. Special events include artist talks presented in association with the exhibition program as well as workshops for children and adults. The Gallery's permanent collection comprises paintings, works on paper, ceramics, photography, and textiles by leading Australian artists and includes the Calleen Collection and the Miller print collection. Works in the Gallery's collection are periodically included in the exhibition schedule. The Gallery shop offers a unique range of greeting cards from major Australian art institutions, art and local history publications, and selected handmade works including ceramics and textiles. Group tours (including Community groups, Bus Groups or School groups) include self-guided and guided exhibition visits. Educational activities for school groups include floor talks by Gallery staff and guest speakers (if available) throughout the year.

The Gallery volunteers are important to the continued success of the Gallery. We are very proud of the wonderful contribution made by our volunteers during the past 21 years, including general reception and retail duties in the Gallery shop, front of house duties and catering for exhibition openings and exhibition changeovers.

About the Gallery Collection

The Cowra Regional Art Gallery has acquired a number of works over the years through the generosity of the Friends of the Gallery, the Cultural Gifts program and through private donation to the Gallery. Works are usually significant to the region in some way. For example, the Gallery holds several Olive Cotton prints. An acclaimed Australian photographer, Cotton lived around the Cowra area and many of her photographs depict local scenery.

A significant portion of the collection is the Calleen Collection comprised of winners of the Calleen Art Award a \$25,000 acquisitive art prize focussed on paintings of any subject in any paint medium or style.

The Calleen Art Award was established as an acquisitive art prize in 1977 by Cowra resident and art patron Mrs. Patricia Fagan OAM with the prize money coming from the Calleen Trust and "the winning painting to be hung in the Council Chambers to form the nucleus of a collection for a future art gallery

for Cowra” quote from Cowra Art Group minutes. In 2021 the Calleen Collection comprises 49 artworks.

Role as a Volunteer

The Cowra Regional Art Gallery’s volunteers provide services to Gallery visitors and to community groups. Gallery volunteers provide assistance to the Public Programs of the Gallery and its staff and carry out customer service roles within the Gallery. Volunteers are required to provide a high standard of service to the public, welcome visitors to the Gallery and provide accurate, consistent and positive information about the Gallery and Cowra Council, Gallery exhibitions and associated activities.

Volunteers have the opportunity to provide help and support in three main areas i) Gallery Reception/Front-of-House, ii) Exhibition installation iii) General assistance including mail outs.

i) Front-of-House volunteers

Volunteering front-of-house is required at various times, primarily on weekends and during exhibition openings. Front-of-House support is usually required on Saturdays for 1 hour between 12 noon and 1pm during exhibition dates.

Other times may include a week day for a period of 2 hours between 10am and 4pm eg if staff are away from the Gallery or when the Gallery is hosting a major exhibition event with many visitors. During 2022 this includes the Archibald Prize touring exhibition.

Volunteering front-of-house includes assisting with:

- reception duties including greeting visitors and talking with visitors about current exhibitions and monitoring visitors’ experience in the Gallery
- keeping a tally of visitor numbers
- taking phone messages if staff are not available
- customer service including answering questions about products, making sales in the Gallery shop, handling money and writing receipts.
- receiving Friends of the Gallery memberships
- workshop registrations

If you are keen to get involved in the arts, why not become one of our Front-of-House volunteers?

ii) Installation volunteers

If you want to find out what happens behind the scenes of an exhibition, then being an installation volunteer could be for you.

Installation volunteers need to be:

- confident in handling artworks
- be good with a tape measure and drill
- have an eye for detail.

Installation volunteers assist with:

- demounting and packing exhibitions
- unpacking and installing artworks
- working to make the Gallery look perfect for opening night.

We need installation volunteers for a few days every five or six weeks.

ii) **General assistance**

Volunteers can help in one or all of these areas, depending on their availability and interests.

- Catering includes volunteers assistance with the preparation and serving of food and beverages at exhibition openings and special events
- Mail outs include help to labelling envelopes, folding newsletters and fliers, stuffing envelopes and sorting by postcodes.

iii) **Flexibility**

There is flexibility in participation times however it is beneficial to both the Gallery and the volunteer if a commitment is undertaken to cover a period over 3 months at a time.

Selection Criteria

- Knowledge of or interest in the visual arts and art galleries
- Interpersonal skills, including ability to negotiate through effective verbal communication
- Customer service skills
- Willingness to learn about arts and culture
- Enjoy working as part of a team

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please complete the Volunteer Registration Form and return it with a short resume to the Gallery, either in person or via email to cowraartgallery@nsw.gov.au

For further information contact the Gallery Administration on telephone 02 6340 2190.