



bridging history on the murray  
[www.bridgeartsproject.com](http://www.bridgeartsproject.com)

media enquiries & interview bookings:  
jacqueline berthume at picturebook communications  
P: 041618215 E: jacqui@bridgeartsproject.com A: po box 106 moama nsw

P R E S S R E L E A S E

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE : 2 May 2012

### *LOCAL GALLERY - A WORLD-FIRST*

The longest outdoor art gallery in the world? In Echuca/Moama? I'd like to see that!

And so would local timber conservationist Barry Donchi. Together with aboriginal artists and educators, Clive and Judy Atkinson, Yorta Yorta representatives, Damian Morgan Bulled and Neville Atkinson, the local arts community and national cultural experts, the Bridge Arts Project Committee is pursuing a vision for the new bridge to be used as the centrepiece for a multi-million dollar arts initiative.

"The new bridge will run through several kilometres of bushland, and will be elevated by pillars in parts and raised earthworks elsewhere," Barry said. "These structures beneath the bridge and approaches provide blank canvases and a unique opportunity for major artists to interpret history and help build a large, dramatic outdoor contemporary art park."

The central theme of the bridge arts project would be the retelling of the history of Australia's inhabitants, with a focus on our indigenous stories, which have often been distorted, sanitised or not told at all.

"Ours is the oldest living culture on earth," said artist Clive Atkinson, "We have a rich history going back many thousands of years. We would like that story to be told and recognised."

More recently, the collision between local indigenous Australians and Europeans in the 1800's and beyond involved atrocities against indigenous people and led to their demoralisation and marginalization. The world deserves to discover these stories.

Neville Atkinson, chairperson of Yorta Yorta Nation says : "The Yorta Yorta Nation being the traditional owners of the region are keenly interested in social inclusion and contributing to the economical development for the region. We clearly see this project as presenting an opportunity to develop much needed partnerships in the local community ."



bridging history on the murray  
[www.bridgeartsproject.com](http://www.bridgeartsproject.com)

media enquiries & interview bookings:  
jacqueline berthume at picturebook communications  
P: 041618215 E: [jacqui@bridgeartsproject.com](mailto:jacqui@bridgeartsproject.com) A: po box 106 moama nsw

Local aboriginal history will form part of a wider national indigenous narrative that will be sought and featured, making the gallery a national and international drawcard for the region.

The stories of non-aboriginal Australians will also be featured, to reflect the diverse nature of all our peoples' origins. To support the outdoor elements, Barry envisages an indoor contemporary art gallery, cafe, and tour information centre. A sculpture park and fauna park are also in his sights.

The project would add a substantial new dimension to the towns' existing historical attraction, which is based primarily around its river-boat history, and would give a voice to the original custodians, both locally and throughout Australia.

Enthusiastic support and ongoing participation of the Yorta Yorta Nation will ensure strong cultural guidance for the project. Wide-ranging support for the project has also been offered by the Murray Regional Tourism Board, Mirrimbeena Aboriginal Education Group, C4EM, Echuca Moama Tourism, Shire of Campaspe, Murray Shire and the Echuca Moama Arts Initiative. Additional pro-bono support has been offered by Stubberfields Accountants, Dawes and Vary and Brandrick Architects.

On a broader scale, nationally recognised indigenous cultural experts have shown great interest in the project.

"An opportunity like this doesn't come along very often," said Barry. "We are getting the bones of a gallery built for us. It's up to us to put the flesh on it."

Community members interested in learning more about the project should contact the committee via email to [chairperson@bridgeartsproject.com](mailto:chairperson@bridgeartsproject.com)

END .

Committee members are available for interview.

Email [media@bridgeartsproject.com](mailto:media@bridgeartsproject.com) or phone Jacqui Berthume on 0416189215 for bookings.