

## Exhibition reveals stories of recovery after the Black Summer fires

*Mid Stories II* is a multi-artform exhibition by artists Vanessa Keenan and Nat Ord which explores forest regeneration following the Black Summer fires in the Snowy Valley region.

The exhibition will launch Thursday 28 of September at Wagga Wagga Art Gallery, followed by an artist talk on Saturday 7 October.

*Mid Stories II* reveals some of the stories unfolding as the landscape and community heal from the fires that devastated region in late 2019 and early 2020.

Using data and extensive field visits, the works dissect and interpret the destruction, regeneration, and alternate landscapes through various artforms including photography, video, solargraphy, augmented reality, and installation.

Both Vanessa and Nat have lived experience with bushfires; along with her family, Vanessa Keenan sheltered in a bunker in the Maragle Valley for three hours during the Dunns Road Fire on New Years Eve 2019.

On the first anniversary of the fires, Vanessa curated Arbour Festival which was a creative recovery project that ran over 50 days, the same length of time that the fire burned.

Having post graduate qualifications in natural resource management, Nat also worked as a professional forest firefighter in the early 2000s.

“This exhibition is the next step in my three years of examining the impacts of the fires on our landscape and communities through an artistic lens,” Vanessa Keenan said.

Nat Ord added “Being able to bring my experience as an ecologist and artist together, observing the power of both ecological and social recovery is a privilege.

“It never ceases to surprise me how resilient the environment and communities are, despite such adversity.”

*Mid Stories II* is open to the public in the E3 art space 29 September - 15 October, open Thursday to Sunday, 10am - 4pm.

The community is invited to come along to celebrate the opening of *Mid Stories II* on Thursday 28 September at 5.30pm.

Hear from artists Vanessa Keenan and Nat Ord as they discuss the stories behind the exhibition on Saturday 7 September from 11am.

*Mid Stories II* is part of Wagga Wagga Art Gallery's Regional Artist Development Exhibition Program, which supports the development of local artists.

## **MEDIA OPPORTUNITY**

**What:** Hear from the Wagga Wagga Art Gallery's latest artists in residence and their exhibition *Mid Stories II* which explores the Black Summer bushfires in the Snowy Valley Region.

**Who:** Vanessa Keenan and Nat Ord (Exhibiting artists) and Mary Egan (Wagga Wagga Art Gallery RAD Coordinator)

**When:** Wednesday 27 September, **10.15am**

**Where:** E3 Art Space (Wagga Wagga Art Gallery) – entrance via Morrow St

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### **Programs:**

Exhibition: *Mid Stories II*

Thursday 28 September - Sunday 15 October

E3 Art Space

*Mid Stories II Opening Celebration*

Thursday 28 September, 5.30pm – 7.30pm

Free event | RSVP essential

*Artist Talk: Vanessa Keenan and Nat Ord*

Saturday 7 October, 11am - 12pm

Free event | RSVP essential

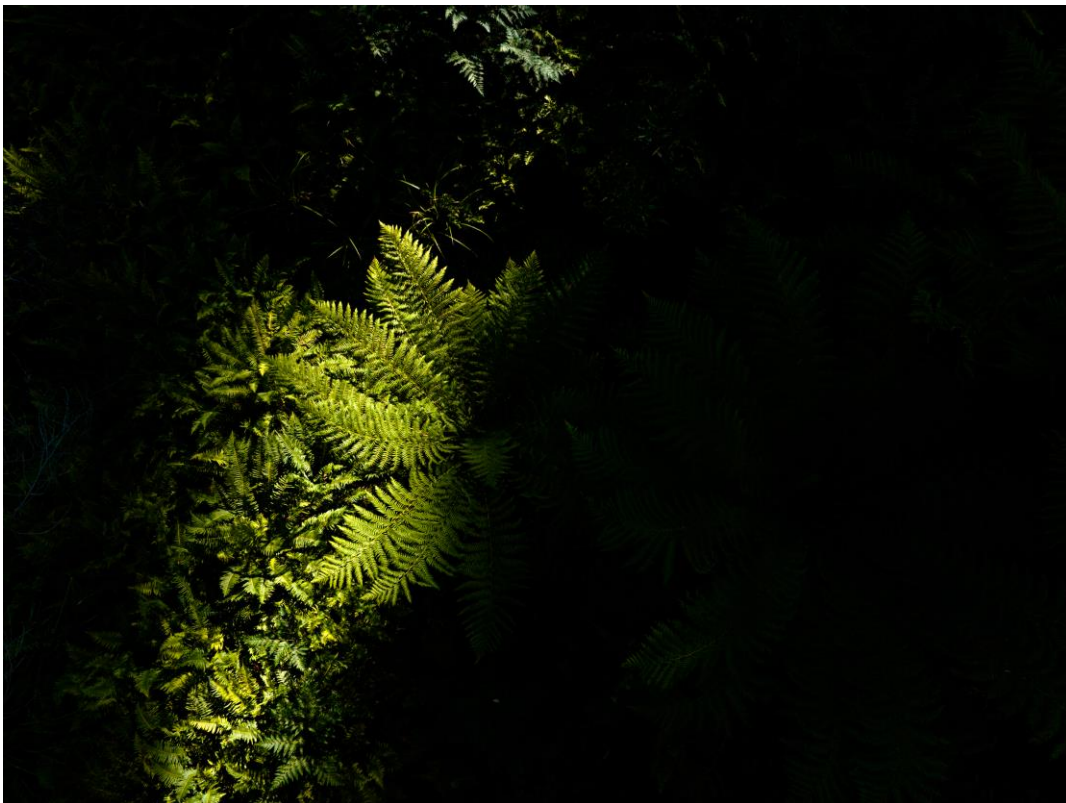
### **Free events, bookings essential:**

<https://waggaartgallery.com.au/whats-on/programs-and-events>

### **Media images:**



Artists Nat Ord and Vanessa Keenan. Image credit Nat Ord 2023



Story #26. Nat Ord and Vanessa Keenan

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## About Wagga Wagga City Council

Wagga Wagga City Council serves more than 68,000 residents across an area of 4825 square kilometres with an overall budget of more than \$236M.

The organisation manages more than \$2.48 billion in assets, including a 2300km road network, Wagga Wagga Airport, Livestock Marketing Centre and the Oasis Aquatic Centre.

Council also provides important community facilities such as Wagga Wagga Art Gallery, Wagga Wagga City Library, Museum of the Riverina and Civic Theatre, as well as maintaining countless parks, playgrounds and sporting facilities to ensure Wagga maintains its reputation as 'the City of Good Sports'.

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