



Ariel Piccles and Libby Walsh at the Cowra Art Gallery.



Margaret Page, Lynne West, Pamela Heikkinen and Jack Mallon at the Cowra Art Gallery for the announcement of the Country Energy Landscape award.

## Richest landscape art prize presented at Cowra gallery

Country Energy's Countryscapes 2010 exhibition, the richest annual prize for landscape painting in Australia, is now on show at the Cowra Regional Art Gallery for the first time.

It features a selection of 41 works by artists from across rural and regional New South Wales, including the landscape prize winner 'Black Soil Country' by Murrumbateman artist Wendy Teakel.

"My winning work 'Black Soil Country' is charged with cultural encoding of rural land," Wendy said.

"The cipher of humans and animals within the farmed environment is evidence of existence, endeavour and even failure.

"It explores ways in which site is physically incised and scarred by the transience of its inhabitants both human and animal.

"My win is an acknowledgement of my practice over the past 30 years and the concerns which drive me to make art."

Ms Teakel thanked Country Energy for their continued and valuable cultural sponsorship of the rural regions which can seem overlooked by the Australian psyche.

"The challenge of this important art prize is to draw the gaze of the art world away from the main cities and focus it on

the space of regional Australia.

"This is no easy feat as most Australians live in the 50kms fringe of land that hugs the coast and most Australians attempt to imagine their identity in places dislocated from their actual physical place."

Country Energy's regional general manager Central West, Chas McPhail, encouraged people to visit the exhibition and see New South Wales' landscapes through different eyes.

"There's a real energy, strength and spirit to all of the 41 pieces," Chas said.

"Each one says something about the landscape-they'll certainly give viewers something to talk about."

Cowra Regional Art Gallery Director Brian Langer echoed Chas' sentiments.

"The finalist chosen this year are a compelling selection of landscape works and I'm sure the local community and visitors to the Gallery will find Countryscapes stimulating."

"It is a unique opportunity and privilege for the Cowra Regional Art Gallery to host the 2010 Countryscapes exhibition," Brian said.

The 2010 Countryscapes regional exhibition will run until January 30, 2011.



Murrumbateman artist Wendy Teakel next to her 'Black Soil Country' artwork which was the winning entry in the Countryscapes 2010 exhibition, now on show at the Cowra Regional Art Gallery.



Jan and Stan Munday and Jennifer Thompson at the art gallery last week.



Lucy Jones was the youngest observer at the Country Energy Landscape award announcement.



Vanda Cassim, Janet Ware.