

Media Release

Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

Thursday 30 October 2014

Art builds resilience of communities affected by climate change

An innovative research project at the University of Tasmania has investigated how art programs can contribute to building the resilience of communities vulnerable to climate change.

The project team led by Tasmanian nominee for Young Australian of the year, Patrick Kirkby, along with Associate Professor Elaine Stratford and Canadian community artist and social worker Hannah Poon, conducted art workshops with the Rakhaine Community of Bangladesh in July this year.

The artworks created at the community workshops will be displayed at a public exhibition on **Friday 31 October, 6pm, at Frankie's Empire Coffee House, 129 Elizabeth Street, Hobart.**

The research forms part of Patrick Kirkby's PhD investigating the role of culture in community-based adaptation to climate change.

Patrick says as a method of reinforcing local values, ethics and belief systems, art is making a real difference to the community.

"Through reflection, storytelling and art making, Rakhaine participants expressed a greater connection with their culture and community," said Patrick.

"They felt empowered by their own inherent strengths and personal capacities to adapt, cope and build resilience to current and future environmental stresses."

"It is evident that the programs have provided an enriching and enjoyable experience for the Rakhaine community members to come together and build relations of trust, cohesion and solidarity", he said.

The event is a celebration of the community art programs, and will feature presentations from the project team along with an auction of Rakhaine artwork to raise funds for future community art programs.

A book capturing the art and stories from the Rakhaine community will also be launched at the event. Titled *Art as Adaptation? Cultural Storytelling from the Rakhaine of Bangladesh*,

the book is a celebration of the community's art and stories, and provides insight into the project, how it was carried out, and what was achieved.

Members of the public are invited to attend the opening on the 31st October, and those who cannot attend on the evening can visit the standing exhibition, which will run at Frankie's until Thursday 6th November.

Copies of the book can be purchased at the event, or by contacting Patrick Kirkby at kirkbypat@gmail.com

The project is funded by the University of Tasmania's Arts Environment Research Group.

Information released by:

University of Tasmania, Communications and Media Office

Phoebe Bobbi

Phone: 6226 6385

Mobile: 0418 229 864

Email: phoebe.bobbi@utas.edu.au