

Toowoomba Visitor Information Centre (TVIC) volunteers eager for Arts Council Toowoomba's *Splashing back* mosaic flood marker project.

Volunteers from Toowoomba's award-winning Visitor Information Centre (Winner 2012 QICA Visitor Information Centre of the Year Award) met recently at Six-Mile Retreat. The guest speaker was Regional Art Australia's Queensland volunteer of the year Jennifer Wright (Summers).

The volunteers at the TVIC were pleased to hear about the *Splashing back* project developed by Arts Council Toowoomba. Jennifer and Mary-Kate Khoo demonstrated how using QR codes in the mosaics or with printed brochures, visitors and residents will participate in an interactive tour of Toowoomba businesses recovering from the traumatic 2011 floods. Video stories of the businesses are being uploaded to Arts Council's website. The volunteers watched Geoff Udy from Quad Country talking about the hydraulics of the saucer-shaped extinct volcano which is the topography of Toowoomba.

Jennifer who is president of Arts Council Toowoomba stressed that the common thread in the stories from businesses is that of people coming together to support each other and something good coming from the trauma. Examples included the Toowoomba Tennis Association's Clubhouse refurbishment and the 106 -year- old business Geo Cossarts in Russell Street moving in a new direction from the classic saddlery in great demand in the early 20th century.

Volunteers said they are often asked about the floods by tourists wanting to know more about what they saw happening in Toowoomba on their television screens.



photo: courtesy Jennifer Wright (Summers)

Photo: front row (l-r) Joanne Bray and Jennifer Wright (Summers), together with volunteers from Toowoomba Visitor Information Centre at Six-Mile Creek Retreat.

Jennifer announced the 18 businesses and artists selected to produce concepts for mosaics for the exterior of their buildings. The concepts, some of which will proceed to fabrication, will visualize the story of what happened at that place in the medium of mosaics, and celebrate how the community came together in January 2011.

Coordinator of the TVIC Joanne Bray said that they are pleased to be involved and that this would add another dimension to what the centre offers visitors. She hoped that their design was one of the 10 selected to be fabricated.

Arts Council Toowoomba Inc (ACT) is very grateful to artists who expressed interest in the project and the Public Art Advisory group members Pamela Armstrong Head of Library and Cultural Services for the Toowoomba Regional Council, Di Baker Curator of the Regional Art Gallery, mosaic artist Bev Ridsdill-Kenny, Sally Johnstone from Creative Regions and ceramics tutor from USQ Alexis Tacey for allocating sites to artists in the Expression of Interest process. The next stage of the process will be at the end of November when the illustrious group selects the ten best designs and Arts Council Toowoomba commissions fabrication.

Arts Council would love to have the budget to fabricate all 20 interested businesses but has the budget to fabricate 10 (ten) by March 2013 when the QR code trail will be tested and ready for the launch.

They would love to hear of anyone willing to fund another business so all these wonderful pieces of art can be offered our visitors and showcase our community's vision and creativity.



photo: courtesy Jennifer Wright (Summers)

ACT's Splashing Back Artists : several of the artists keen to be involved in the mosaic project
front row l-r Jennifer Wright (Summers), Robyn Kirley, Christian Low and Rhonda Jenner
middle row l-r:Gail Dawson, Pixie Roediger, Noelle Hudson and Janette O'Hanlon
back row l-r Mary-Kate Khoo, Denise Chard, Kim Besley Scott, Tim Fry and Linda Clard

For more information contact: Jennifer Wright (Summers) 0415883345, Joanne Bray TVIC 07 4639 6055, Tim Fry (artist selected for TVIC design) 0403213579