

Media Release

The art of opening the gates on farmer health

More than 250 entries from photographic artists as diverse as primary school students to experienced amateurs will celebrate the launch of next week's first National Centre for Farmer Health conference.

Opening the Gates on Farmer Health has brought together a distinguished panel of international and Australian presenters covering every aspect of health, well-being and safety in rural Australia.

NCFH director Sue Brumby says the photographic competition, run in tandem with the conference, has provided an artistic outlet to introduce the conference to as wide an audience as possible. All photos will be on display during the official conference welcome reception on Monday 11th and winners will be announced during this forum.

Ms Brumby says with more than 160 delegates registered for the conference at the Hamilton Performing Arts Centre from October 11-13 the photographic competition will also create an eye-catching backdrop to the occasion.

Richard Weatherley, one of the judges, agreed.

Mr Weatherly – a successful and high-profile wildlife artist and environmentalist who has exhibited internationally – describes the standard of entries received as “quite surprising”.

“I have been most impressed by the breadth of areas covered by the entrants and the technical competence shown by many of the works,” he says.

“Indeed, the very best of the secondary school student work would easily have been of a very high standard in the open section of the competition.

“Obviously it is a little more difficult for the primary students to be as successful as that, but they still produced some excellent work.”

However it was the open section which drew the most support, with 164 entries received.

Other judges on the panel were Jill Frawley and Pat Cameron.

Ms Frawley is both a farmer and photographer, specialising in outdoor portraiture and rural events.

Her recent solo exhibition at the Hamilton Art Gallery 'After the Fire' depicted the fires sweeping through the Branhholme area in January 2009 and showed spectacular use of contrast and colour in a rural setting.

Pat Cameron has been a photographer for 35 years, has worked for *The Hobart Mercury*, *The King Island News* and *The Hamilton Spectator*.

Prize winning photos and highly commended photos will also be on display at the Hamilton Performing Arts Centre, Brown St, Hamilton, from October 12-13.

The display will then move to Hamilton Base Hospital foyer for two weeks from Thursday 14 October. Winning photos will also be displayed at www.farmerhealth.org.au and published in the *Hamilton Spectator*.

**Further details are available from Sally Stevenson,
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