

A striking entry to the town of murals

Sage Swinton 8 Sep 2015, 2:23 p.m.



EYE-CATCHING: Towns With Heart president Toby Thomas, community projects manager Lesley Morris, mural artist Peter Sesselmann and Cessnock MP Clayton Barr at the new mural located off the Hunter Expressway's Kurri exit ramp.

Kurri's first town entry mural was officially unveiled on Monday as part of Towns With Heart's Mural Month celebrations.

The mural, located at the Hunter Expressway exit, was designed and painted by Sawyers Gully artist Peter Sesselmann with his assistant Alex Yates.

The artwork contains Aboriginal heritage, references to mining, the aluminium smelter, murals, the Nostalgia Festival, sewing factories and of course the kookaburra – which appears in all of the Kurri murals.

“I get the feeling we met the brief – they wanted something eye catching, something bright, something that represented the Kurri past and also that represents the future in a certain way,” he said.

“It’s a project that we really enjoyed doing and we’re really appreciative.”

Mr Sesselmann said a major feature is the primary colours of the piece to symbolise primary industries, history, and to “create an image that doesn’t exist in nature” that stands out and contrasts the setting.

This is Mr Sesselmann’s fourth mural in Kurri and is the town’s 55th mural (the latest, number 56, is located on Kurri Police Station).

The entry mural project budget was \$29,000, with \$19,500 coming from the NSW Government’s Community Building Partnerships program.

Member for Cessnock Clayton Barr unveiled the plaque for the mural and said the project is a wonderful reflection of Kurri.

“Towns With Heart has done such an amazing job in developing the culture of Kurri Kurri; it’s on display in so many places,” he said.

“And as somebody from Cessnock I am a little bit jealous of what Kurri Kurri has achieved in that front.

“Community Partnerships is a great program and its fortunate that Towns With Heart was able to get some funding.”

The idea for an entry mural came about in 2006 when then-Towns With Heart town coordinator Wendy Franklin raised the idea of creating a town entry mural on the outskirts of Kurri.

The land the free-standing mural sits on is divided between Cessnock City Council and Roads and Maritime Services.

Towns With Heart president Toby Thomas acknowledged the hard-

working local people who developed the site for the mural.

“Col Maybury and Kurri Landcare have taken it on themselves to look after all the landscaping; we’re very, very appreciative of that.”

Mr Thomas said that now this project is complete, Towns With Heart will look to start creating other town entry murals, with the next one planned for Neath/Abermain pending council approval.

Mural Month celebrations will continue on Saturday in Rotary Park from 9am to 2pm, with mural tours and art activities for all ages.