

RSL culture celebrated in art exhibition

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A Bar to Call Home at NG Gallery

A nurse pushes an empty wheelchair, tiny dolls are dressed in uniform and a koala and Kiwi share a ciggie in a scarred landscape.

NG Art Gallery is exhibiting an extraordinary range of work on the theme of the RSL, celebrating the fiercely Australian tradition of the meat tray, pokies and day-glow carpet of the Returned Services League.

NG Gallery curator Nicky Ginsberg said she had been plotting an exhibition around the theme of the RSL for a year and had contacted artists who she knew would warm to theme.

“Some artists chose to reference more serious aspects of the RSL and others had quirky interpretations of the interior. It pushed these artists beyond their comfort zones and they made things they might not have considered otherwise. And they loved doing it,” Ginsberg said of the collection.

“For over 90 years the RSL has been an integral part of our social landscape. Whether one lives in a large city or small country town, the ubiquitous local RSL is never far away. This exhibition celebrates the RSL club in all its forms.”

Artists include Anne Zahalka, Reg Mombassa, Anita Tesoriero and Angus Wood.

Ginsberg recalls visiting her first RSL in Gosford when she first arrived from England.

“I was blown away by the screaming contrast of colours, patterned carpet and people engrossed in poker machines. It was fascinating.”

Ginsberg said she would like the exhibition to tour regional RSLs throughout the country.

“It would bring in the punters. I have invited people from RSLs all over Australia to come to the exhibition. I hope they come to visit.”

The exhibition, *A Bar to Call Home*, runs until May 16 at 3 Little Queen St Chippendale.

