A brief history

The Warrnambool Art Gallery, established in 1886, is home to some of Victoria’s most treasured art works. Among them are iconic works including Tower Hill 1855 by Eugene von Guerard, the pre-eminent landscape painter of colonial Australia (currently on loan to the Art Gallery of Ballarat) and Minjah in the Old Time 1856 by Robert Dowling (Currently on loan to the National Gallery of Victoria).

The WAG, as it is affectionately known, has 2,000 items in its permanent collection valued at over $10 million.

The WAG stages 30 exhibitions annually and offers education and outreach programs which engage thousands of students from across the South West.

A number of exhibitions have drawn in excess of 10,000 visitors.

The WAG seeks to build on its standing as one of regional Victoria’s leading art galleries.

Plans have been developed for the installation of a state-of-the-art HVAC (heating, ventilation and air-conditioning) system to meet current industry expectations around the care and preservation of valuable art work.

What this means

The modern HVAC system will allow The WAG to broaden its offering to the South West residents and visitors to the Great Ocean Road region.

Meeting expectations around temperature and humidity ranges will make it possible for The WAG to meet its duty of care in relation to its permanent collection and items borrowed from other galleries.

With a new HVAC system The WAG will be able to host touring exhibitions and borrow major art works from galleries including the NGV. The NGV is committed to sharing its collection and expertise with regional galleries and has identified in its key strategy to: “recognise regional Victorians as valued audiences by providing greater outreach opportunities.”

The building currently occupied by The WAG was opened in 1986 and the climate control system in the gallery reflects the technology of that era.

The new HVAC system will provide reassurance to lending bodies that The WAG is a gallery able to provide the best possible care to irreplaceable works of art.

The value of the Great Ocean Road region to the Victorian Visitor Economy is estimated at $800 million. Providing world class exhibitions within this key visitor destination will add to the region’s appeal and provide an incentive for visitors to extend their stay in Victoria.
The WAG HVAC (heating, ventilation and air-conditioning) Project

Cost: $1.5 million

Outcomes

Capacity to stage major exhibitions including touring exhibitions in Warrnambool

Capacity to borrow works from national and international art galleries

Capacity to meet requirements of the Museums Accreditation Program

Build on the visitor attractions within the Great Ocean Road Region

Enhance Warrnambool’s status as Victoria’s most liveable city.

Build on Victoria’s reputation as a destination in which to enjoy arts and culture

Build Victoria’s visitor economy

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