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MEDIA RELEASE

Capturing the threatened Bimblebox through art

Local artist and North Queensland Conservation Council president Gerald Soworka is joining with artists from across the country to focus attention on the plight of the land and the environment in the face of the massive coalmining expansion in Queensland.

Artists are to add their work to that of ecologists in the campaign to save a Nature Refuge in central western Queensland. Bimblebox Nature Refuge, near Alpha, will be destroyed if Clive Palmer's China First coal project is allowed to develop its proposed mine as planned.

Protected as a remnant of native vegetation in a vast area of cleared grazing land, the Nature Refuge has been the focus for a host of scientific studies in the past decade. Now, more than a dozen notable artists from Eastern Australia will use their talents to capture the nature of the bushland threatened by plans for the huge mine.

The artists, including Gerald Soworka, Jude Roberts and Jill Sampson, will spend ten days from 8 September camping and working at the nature refuge in the Desert Uplands bioregion. They will use a range of media, both traditional and contemporary, to make art inspired by Bimblebox.

Speaking for her colleagues, Ms Sampson said they aimed to document aspects of a very particular Australian landscape and habitat. "Our intention is to map the country and its inhabitants in our own unique ways," she said. The resulting artworks, including installation, painting, digital storytelling and sound, will come together in a dynamic exhibition.

Ms Sampson said she was inspired by the way Bimblebox Nature Refuge represented an ark of life in this semi-arid environment. "These 8000 hectares of native bushland sustain complex ecosystems. This will end if Waratah Coal is allowed to clear and mine the reserve," she said.

Ms Sampson pointed out that art and science have long complemented each other. "Nature, art and science are all meant to enhance our lives, and this is what we're seeing at Bimblebox" she said. The Nature Refuge is a low-impact cattle property and the site of ongoing research in native ecology and sustainable grazing practices. "We will draw from historical texts, flora and fauna surveys, and studies of animal tracks and behaviour, to creatively map this area and its inhabitants. Through our art we will bear witness to this place, its past and its future".

Bimblebox Artists include: Boyd, Howard Joe Butler, Kaylene Butler, Trey Butler, Alison Clouston, Dr Pamela Croft-Warcon, Donna Davis, Emma Lindsay, Fiona MacDonald, Samara McIlroy, Liz Mahood, Glenda Orr, Jude Roberts, Jill Sampson, Gerald Soworka

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