

The Border Times

THE VOICE OF THE MALLEE SINCE 1911

Wednesday, April 29, 2026

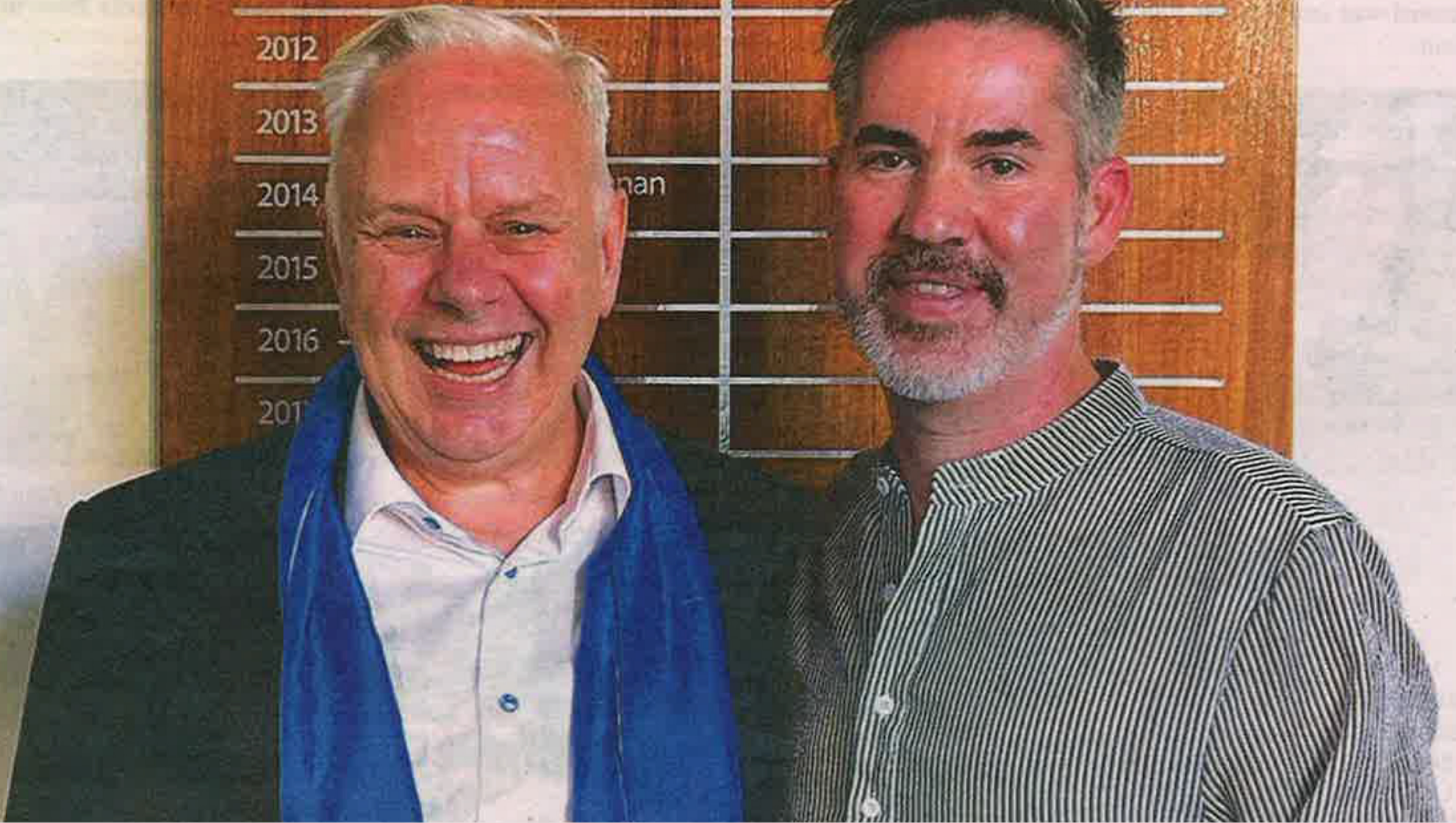
\$2.50

Mildura Arts Centre

The Elliott Award

for outstanding contribution to the arts

2006 – Des Tobin	2020 – Megan Sullivan
2007 – Tom McCullough	2021 – Will Hannah-Rodgers
2008 – Vaughan Stirrat	2022 – Libby Kennedy
2009 – Neil Noyce	2023 – Mary Briggs
2010 – Mollie Kalms	2024 – Terry 'Moose' McGowan
2011 – Shirley Bowie	2025 – Morrison Polkinghorne
2012	
2013	
2014 – [Name partially obscured]	
2015	
2016	
2017	



Morrison Polkinghorne (left) with Rohan Morris, chair of the Mildura Arts & Culture Advisory Committee, after being presented with the Elliott Award at Mildura Arts Centre on Sunday. The award recognises service to the arts community. PHOTO: Mildura Arts & Culture Advisory Committee

LOCAL ANZAC DAY COVERAGE: INSIDE

Award winner's got art and soul

BRIDGET O'DRISCOLL

Southern Mallee's Morrison Polkinghorne is officially the toast of the arts community.

Mr Polkinghorne's outstanding contribution to arts and culture, particularly in the Murrayville and Pinnaroo communities, earned him the 2025 Elliott Award, presented by the Mildura Arts & Culture Advisory Committee on Sunday.

"It's a bit of a buzz," Mr Polkinghorne told The Border Times this week.

"I feel very honoured... that the community comes out to do these art things with me. They trust me."

Since moving to the Mallee, Mr Polkinghorne has made a significant contribution to arts-based mental health initiatives in rural communities, particularly in Murrayville and Pinnaroo. "Morrison is an accomplished artist, a highly respected, generous, and active member of the community, whose creative leadership and dedication have and continues to make a lasting and meaningful impact," a committee spokesperson said.

Mr Polkinghorne has been an integral part of The Pinnaroo Project's creative team in recent years.

A number of group members were present in Mildura on the weekend to witness the award presentation.

"We (were) very excited to see Morrison accept this award while we clapped loudly," a group

spokesperson said.

"Congratulations Morrison."

Mr Polkinghorne said he was honoured to have his name added to the list of past Elliott Award winners.

"After the ceremony Helen from the council showed me the honour board and all the names on there from the last 20 years, and that's when it hit me..." he said.

"Oh my gosh, I couldn't believe that I was up there with all those other people."

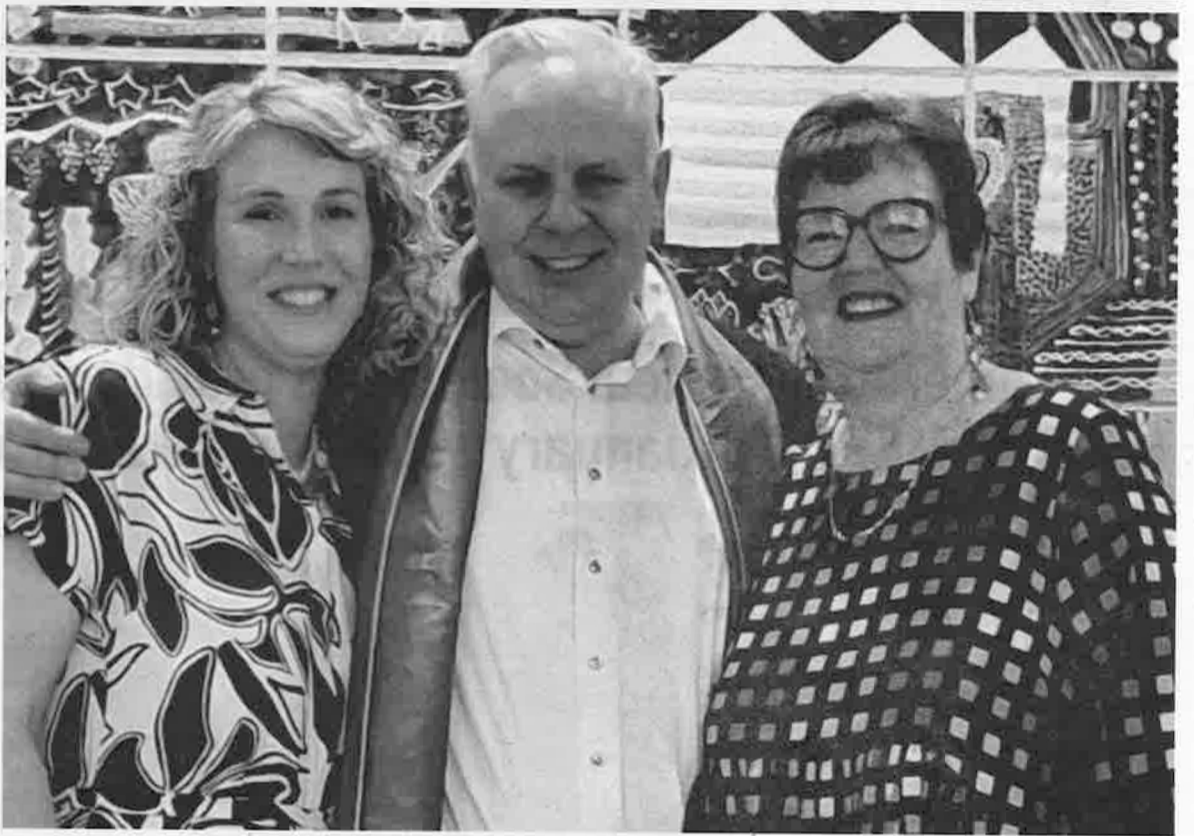
"At the ceremony about 90 per cent of the audience there were from Murrayville and Pinnaroo, which made me feel so welcomed in the community."

"A huge thanks to the community for joining me in these art-based endeavours, and joining me in the things that I love to do. I'm chuffed with it all."

Born in Tasmania but raised in Alice Springs, Mr Polkinghorne relocated to the Mallee after spending over a decade living and working in Cambodia, where he further developed and refined his artistic practice.

An accomplished artist with exhibitions at local, national, and international levels, his work is characterised by a deep engagement with both the act of making and the symbolic meaning of materials.

Over the course of his career, Mr Polkinghorne has established his own creative businesses and has been profiled in a range of pub-



Morrison Polkinghorne with Pinnaroo Project members Julie Wallis (left) and Dianne Thornton. PHOTO: supplied

lications, including Vogue Living Australia.

Since moving to the Mallee, Mr Polkinghorne has actively embraced the community he calls home, transforming the former Anglican Church in Murrayville into both his residence and studio.

For the past four years, he has played a key role in the Pinnaroo Project, co-ordinating and delivering arts and crafts activities that support mental wellbeing.

During this time, he collaborated with Flinders University to demonstrate and validate the positive impact of artistic practice on mental health outcomes in rural settings.

More recently, Mr Polkinghorne

became the Murrayville Neighbourhood House co-ordinator with Mallee Track Health & Community Services. He has also delivered art workshops across numerous Mallee locations, widening access to creative opportunities throughout the region.

In November 2025, he instigated and launched an innovative augmented reality project, A.R.M. Murrayville, which brings the town's historic streetscapes to life and unlocks its hidden stories. Currently, Mr Polkinghorne is leading a project with the Murrayville Liaison Group to repurpose the historic Murrayville Courthouse into a dedicated town art gallery.

He is co-author of the award-

winning The Burma Cooking, and during his long former stint in Sydney his textile company Passementeries won Most Innovative Product at The National Interior Design Show.

Past recipients of the Elliott Award have been recognised for their length of service to the arts and breadth of their contribution throughout the term of their involvement in the arts; the encouragement and nurturing of children and youth in arts practice; the championing of arts involvement to the broader community; and the creation of a significant positive community legacy in the development of the arts in our community.