

copy
"SBS"

19 Gregory Terrace
LAPSTONE 2773
4TH MAY 1998.

To Mark Aitkin
Preview Manager
S.B.S. Television.

Dear Mark,

I wish to introduce you to the Creative Embroiderers of the Nepean Districts. They have been established since 1994 as a grass-roots organisation for a special purpose. The purpose was to form a group of volunteers locally who would be willing to learn how to embroider, while working on wall hanging which depicted the contributions made by women to the development of the region over the last two hundred years.

It was my inspiration as I walked into the new Penrith City Library building to find it lacking colour and local features. I wrote to Penrith Council asking for some funds to buy linen and thread and for a space to use for the sessions. They were persuaded when I told them that U.W.S. Nepean had already pledged \$3,000 for a designer's fee and to supervise the quality of the project through Visual and Performing Arts. U.W.S. Nepean also agreed to find a suitable designer. Council agreed. The Historical Society was enlisted to do research and local members of the Embroiderers Guild were invited to direct and teach volunteers.

Notices in the paper and invitations to attend meetings, encouraged 100 ladies to attend and the work was completed in eighteen months and now hangs in the library in seven panels 1m x 1.5 metres each. Students from U.W.S. Nepean Design School produced the catalogue enclosed. The ladies come from indigenous groups as well as Netherlands White Russian, Persia, U.K. and Australia. They did not know each other before but are now good friends, The work is high quality and colourful. Everyone knows much more about history than they did before.

Penrith T.A.F.E. allowed us to use their power machines and heavy irons.
2/ The resulting work is worth much more than the Council gave in funds.
The ladies asked "What will we do next"? and my automatic response was
"Flora and Fauna" [of the Cumberland Plains. This piece of work is in
progress with about 35 regular embroiderers attending on Tuesdays in the
library from 9.30 to 3p.m. Ages 35-81 yrs.

Once again the U.W.S.Nepean has prepared canvas onto frames onto which a
local artist has painted the design she made from research done by U.W.S
Hawkesbury and local bird-watchers. This piece is more like a tapestry
with over-sewing in creative techniques which are being devised as we go.
The three panels are each a metre by a metre and a half looking like
stained glass windows, rounded at the side-tops. I have enclosed some
photographs of work in progress.

The most satisfying bonus is the fun we are having and the
social development that is evident as family photographs come in, stories
are told and genuine support is given across the group. Such a large work
could not be done by one person but we are all contributing, learning
and feeling very proud of this unique project. We are even teaching the
Persian lady how to swear properly. Library staff are interested and
husbands sons too. Barbara Curran is the Mistress of Embroidery.

There are interesting case studies and adventures which would
make absorbing viewing as a story, apart from the glorious work. A video
of the group at work and points of interest about the characters may
inspire others to do something similar. This has been great for new
residents to meet other women. It will be finished in November 1998
and hung in the library.

Nobody pays anything or is paid, the Council supplies tea coffee and
biscuits and sells our catalogues at \$10.00 a copy.

I do hope you will find this worth your while,
sincerely