ART FARM BIRCHS BAY

Improving access to enjoy art in nature at Art Farm Birchs Bay

artfarmbirchsbay.org.au

P.O. Box 194, Woodbridge Tas 7162

3866 Channel Highway, Birchs Bay

0438 128 134

info@artfarmbirchsbay.org.au

GOAL

To create meaningful experiences of art in nature for all to enjoy, especially children and people with disabilities

Vision

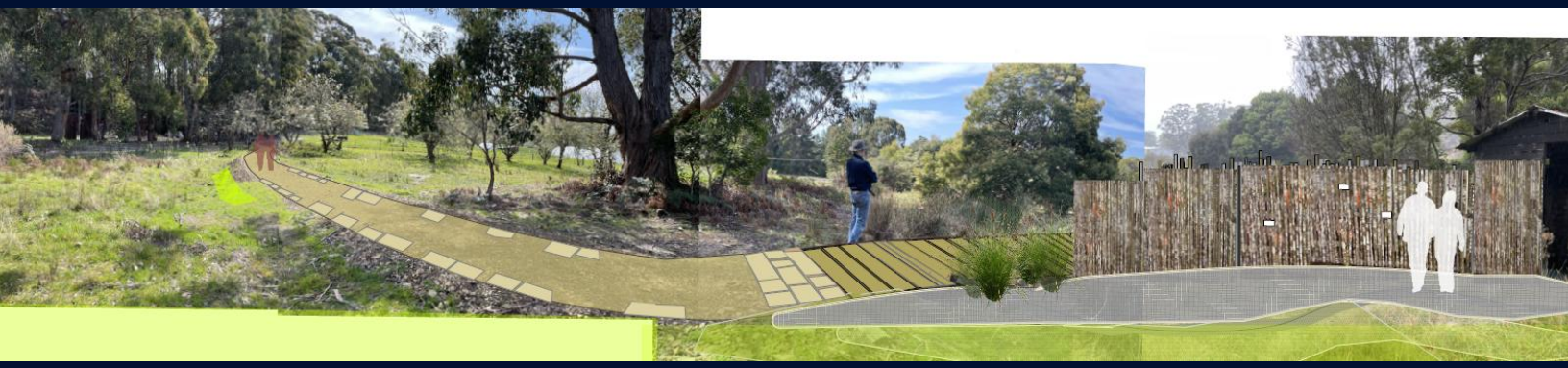
To celebrate 20 years of our beloved sculpture trail, we are working with landscape architect Susan Small to enhance accessibility and ensure the trail can be enjoyed by all visitors. The new section will ultimately feature durable, tactile, and weather-resistant sculptures, alongside fragrant and edible plantings to create a rich, multi-sensory experience.

About Art Farm Birchs Bay

Art Farm Birchs Bay is a not-for-profit association that fosters engagement between community, art and the landscape in southern Tasmania (Lutruwita). We are located around 45 minutes south of Hobart's CBD. Art Farm Birchs Bay is open 365 days of the year, from 9am – 5pm daily, and attracts an average of 8,000 visitors a year.

Situated on a working farm, our site includes a multi-use farm, an arts venue and a regenerative native bush ecosystem across over 100 hectares. Our team and our community includes artists, gardeners, growers, tinkerers, farmers, and makers interested in sharing their knowledge.

The current sculpture trail is 2km through paddocks and into the bush and requires a moderate level of fitness. It is undulating and includes some slightly challenging, if gentle, slopes. The new section will welcome all, especially children and people with disabilities with gradients of no more than 1:20.



Design sketch by Susan Small, landscape architect

Who Whoo's Next? by Wendy Edwards, one of the tactile sculptures which will feature in the new accessible section of our trail

"We wish to express our dedicated support for Art Farm Birchs Bay and are pleased to be part of their working group that will support their aspirations of expanding their services to ensure greater inclusivity for all. A key focus of this collaboration is the development of an accessible trail, designed to provide individuals of all abilities with the opportunity to engage with artistic installations. This will have long-term benefits to the community."

Amanda Rossatto
Manager, Disability Support and Management Services Tasmania

Design sketch by Susan Small, landscape architect

The Wave - Ian Johnston

Advisors

We have been working with some key advisors to develop our plans for the new accessible section of our trail, including:

- **Tanya Maxwell**

  Tanya has worked extensively as an artist in health settings for 20 years with the Humour Foundation to bring laughter, joy and genuine human connection to children s hospitals and aged care facilities through our Clown Doctors and Laughter Care programs, and has worked for Inscape Tasmania for the past 6 years, creating meaningful, uplifting experiences for patients, families and staff.

- **Felicity Haeusler**

  Felicity specialises in supporting students with disabilities through the Tasmanian Education Department. Felicity has experience working with children with low vision, hearing impairments, neurodiversity and chronic illness.

- **Andrew and Amanda Rossatto**

  Andrew and Amanada run a small family-owned and operated Tasmanian business specialising in disability care services, Disability Support and Management Services Tasmania. They have with over 30 years of hands-on experience.

- **June Sculthorpe**

  June is a Palawa woman who has spent over 50 years working to achieve a better future for Aboriginal people. June has supported Art Farm for several years by assisting to ensure the Farm and its initiatives respectfully acknowledge whose country they are on.

'Woodbridge School's Launching into Learning program visits the Art Farm each year with families and children aged 0–5 years. A wider, pram-friendly path will make it easier for families to explore the space, with sculptures thoughtfully positioned at a low, touchable height. Young children will be able to engage, discover, and connect through hands-on experiences, while families with younger siblings will enjoy a smooth, inclusive, and accessible journey together'.

Amy Wilcox
Launching into Learning Teacher/ LIFT | Friday
Woodbridge School & Marine Discovery Centre

“In contemporary education, universal design represents the gold standard. At its core, it is a simple but powerful principle: when we build environments with the needs of those requiring the highest levels of support in mind, we create spaces that benefit everyone.

At Art Farm Birchs Bay, this philosophy is central to the development of the Accessible Trail. High-contrast, visual and tactile signage supports a wide range of audiences, including non-English speakers, young learners, older visitors with low vision, and those with diverse sensory, intellectual and physical needs. By embedding these considerations and voices into the design from the outset, the project sends a clear message: this is a space for everyone. It affirms that art is for everyone; that all audiences are valued, and that all forms of communication are meaningful and respected.

While retrofitting accessibility into existing environments can be challenging, incorporating physical and sensory access from the earliest stages of design presents an exciting opportunity. It enables the creation of inclusive, innovative spaces from the ground up. Most importantly, this approach centers the voices of those with lived experience. Engaging young people and diverse communities as collaborators, rather than afterthoughts, is both empowering and transformative. For many, it is a rare opportunity to be heard and to shape a space that truly reflects their perspectives.

Difference is normal. Art is for everyone. We engage with art to feel something and to experience the world from a new perspective. Universal design makes this possible.”

Felicity Haeusler
Education advisor

“Life limiting illness can mean enduring long hospital stays and regular specialist clinics for treatment, necessitating absences from school, outdoor activities, nature, social and cultural connection. Not to mention fresh air! Medical studies show that having fun boosts the immune system, brings a sense of connection and can assist in emotional and physical recovery from procedures. Tactile art installations situated in nature provide a range of sensory experiences which have the benefit of anticipation, surprise, giving way to awe, motivation, imagination, provocation, conversation, thinking, feeling and most importantly, experiencing! All the parts of a child that aren't unwell are strengthened by the presence of play and wonder. Even in very sick children, the imagination and the business of play sits beneath the surface tension, waiting for an invitation to release from their circumstance.

I believe Art Farm’s improved accessible section would be deeply enjoyed.

Shared memories are treasures in tougher times.”

Tanya Maxwell