

# Women of Warren Shire

## **Jude Fleming**

*Admired for her “creativity and funky art”, Jude Fleming is an award-winning contemporary landscape artist who has exhibited in galleries across the state.*

*On top of her accolades as an artist, Jude is also known as a dedicated teacher and mentor of over 30 years, operating out of her home studio, Westwing.*

*A talented painter dedicated to supporting local creatives, we celebrate Jude’s contributions as this month’s Woman of Warren Shire.*

### **Quickfire questions...**

#### **A usual morning looks like...**

A usual morning has me rising at first light and sliding into the bathtub – my mental health unit! It is warm and reassuring.

I often read (or at the least look at my emails), do the New York Wordle, and get out whole and functional, ready to face the day and an always full calendar.

Until very recently when my darling doggie died, she and I would take a morning walk, mostly along the river and through the beautiful Window on the Wetlands (WOW) garden and the wetland walk around Tiger Bay.

After a breakfast of fruit and yoghurt, I tackle the daily to-do list...

#### **I’m most proud of...**

It is difficult to choose just a single thing of which to be most proud as there have been so many proud moments since I came to Warren 38 years ago.

The first may have been becoming an Australian citizen at a Warren Shire Council meeting, receiving flowers and local history books and having Councillors spontaneously standing up and giving me character references.

I have also been enormously proud of the achievements of friends and students of the Westwing Studio over the years and am over the moon with a current student winning the 2023 Junior Outback Archies in Coonamble just last weekend!

#### **On the weekend you can find me...**

On a weekend you can find me doing pretty much the same as most days of the week. Artists don’t really have weekends or ‘time off’, as being a painter and creator is way more of a vocation than a job.

#### **A quote or piece of advice you live by...**

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One of my favourite quotes is by Thomas Merton, who said “Art enables us to find ourselves and lose ourselves at the same time”.

And more recently I have embraced the concept of “Paint as liquid thought”.

## **What is your favourite place in Warren Shire?**

My favourite places in Warren Shire are many, but I particularly like being by the river, Tiger Bay and the WOW garden, and the Burrima Boardwalk at the Macquarie Marshes.

In saying that, I do love being at home and in the garden. It’s so nice living in an old house with many connections to the people and history of Warren.

## ***Some more about you...***

## **What do you love most about Warren Shire?**

It is always the people of a place that make it special and I am so appreciative of the people of Warren that have enabled me to practise as an artist almost ever since I arrived here in 1985.

## **Can you tell us a bit about your journey, including some of your most significant achievements?**

I gained a Bachelor of Fine Arts majoring in painting from the National Art School in Sydney as a mature-age student – where some of my peers called me Nanna!

One of my most significant achievements has been exhibiting my artwork with other members of Westwing Studio at State Parliament House a few years ago. I am truly honoured to have received a Lennon Simmonds Community Recognition Commendation from the NSW State Parliament acknowledging the provision of a creative outlet in person, online and to the wider region.

## **Having exhibited in venues from our local Window on the Wetlands to the ARO Gallery in Sydney, what have been some of your highlights as an artist?**

I have been involved with Outback Arts, our regional arts organisation, and have exhibited extensively in the region and afar.

I am currently a finalist in the Outback Archies and have an exhibition at the Warren Museum and Art Gallery, and will again participate in the Dubbo Art Fair at the Western Plains Cultural Centre at the end of October.

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**Not only that, but you're a dedicated teacher and mentor at Westwing Studio, Warren. Can you tell us a little about the studio and what you find most rewarding about sharing your passion for art with others?**

Westwing Studio was once a sleepout on the western side of my home – hence the name. It has external access and has become a well-loved and well-used creative space.

I run two classes each week in the Studio and have done so for more than 30 years and they are still highlights of my life. It is a sheer delight to share in students' and fellow painters' successes in putting ideas into paintings, which often manifests as a 'happy dance'!

**You're obviously known as a strong supporter of all things art, history and culture in our Shire. Why do you think it's so important to support local creatives?**

The support of local creatives can allow unique and original perspectives for local events, discussions, outlooks, and projects in a small community. That which is great for one can readily spill over to be great for many.

Vision can be informed by so much more than a black bottom line.

**What advice would you give to other women living in rural communities?**

I would encourage local women to be themselves, follow the desires of their hearts and to participate and share those wonderful qualities with our community.

Love may begin in the home but is really apparent and spreads quickly when shared.

*To nominate a Warren Shire woman to be featured in this series, email [media@warren.nsw.gov.au](mailto:media@warren.nsw.gov.au)*

**-ENDS-**