

Merbein through the lens for the past century



NATIONALLY-acclaimed Australian photographer Kevin Pheelan will be a special guest at the NAB Merbein Centenary Celebration Photographic Competition, to be as part of Merbein's 100-year celebrations in August.

With the theme of this year's competition being 'Merbein and District Faces and Places', competition organiser Rebecca Wells says everyone is encouraged to enter.

"The aim of the competition is to give locals a chance to photograph Merbein and its surrounding district," says Rebecca. "It will be a great opportunity for everyone to see Merbein in its 100th year through community eyes."

She said organisers were ecstatic that Kevin Pheelan had accepted the invitation to be guest judge. "His lifelong love of, and dedication to photography has seen him win many state and national awards for his work, become member, treasurer and course lecturer for the Essendon Camera Club," she said.

Kevin's interest in photography began at a young age, when he first used his mother's 'Box Brownie' camera. His talents as a youngster extended to him developing his own black and white photographs in the family bathroom.

After purchasing his first camera at age 16, and joining the Essendon Camera Club in 1985, the next 37 years saw Kevin develop as one of Australia's talented photographers.

A few of his many achievements include first place in the Ballarat National Photographic Competition, Landscape Section, in 2000; Champion Print, Best Exhibit and a First and Third place in Landscape at the 2005 Whittlesea Show; and in 2007 he received a Merit Award in Photo Journalism at the Ballarat National Photographic Competition.



• **FACES AND PLACES:** These are a few of the photographic examples. ABOVE and **BOTTOM**, that will be included in the Merbein photographic competition as part of the town's 100th birthday celebrations in August. Organisers are calling for district people to enter their favourite image of Merbein in the competition – entries close on July 22 at Walders Real Estate in Merbein.

Kevin was also the recipient of the prestigious award, the State Service to the Victorian Association of Photographic Societies, awarded to those who have given exceptional service to photography, not only within the club, but also to the advancement of the art of photography on a wider scale.

Kevin has been fortunate enough to spend the last few years

travelling Australia, taking in the nature and landscape. His trip to Sunraysia in August will give him the chance to put his eye over not only our local talent, but also this district's unique surroundings.

"We are very lucky to have a judge coming up especially from Melbourne to judge the competition," Rebecca said. All entries for the competition must be

taken within 2009. Apart from highlighting the community in its milestone year, it will also be great for the community to look back on what Merbein and its surrounds looked like on its 100th birthday.

"When you start to look around Merbein, there are so many great things to photograph," Rebecca said. "The people, the old

buildings, the landscape and, of course, our horticulture, with the hundreds of acres of vineyards and equipment. The possibilities are endless."

Sections for the competition include the Open section, Merbein and District Landscape/Architecture; Merbein Horticulture/Dryland Farming; Merbein & District Creative Experimental; Merbein & District Portrait; as well as categories for Primary and Secondary school students.

Entry forms for the competition are available at Walders Real Estate and the Merbein Information Centre, both of which are located in Commercial Street Merbein. They can also be found at Ramsay's Camera House in 8th Street Mildura, or can be downloaded from the Merbein Centenary website www.merbeincentenary.com.au.

Entry is free, and completed entry forms can be submitted between now and July 22 at Walders Real Estate between 9-5pm Monday to Friday and 9-11.30am on Saturdays.

A Model Release Form is also available at the web site and must also accompany entry forms if applicable.

Rebecca explains, "If you take a photo and there is a person or group of people who are the main feature in the photo, we want people to use the model release form, so that we know you have their permission to take their photograph."

Winners will be announced and prizes presented on Saturday, August 15 during the official opening of the Centenary celebrations. Winning entries will also be on display during the 10-day celebration period from August 14 to 23.

