



• LOCALS: Mayor Cr Paul Stephenson with Goulburn artists, Cherry Hood of Towrang (left) and Lynne Flemons, both of whom had works on display.



• TALENT: Goulburn artists Tracy Luff (right) and Jane Lyons at the exhibition opening with the president of Goulburn and District Arts and Crafts, Carol Divall (left).

Oberon artist paints way to \$35K

By **LEON OBERG**

OBERON artist Joanna Logue has won the country equivalent of the Archibald Prize, the \$35,000 Country Energy Art Prize for Landscape Painting.

Describing the painting, titled 'Connifer - Braidwood', the overall judge, Tim Storrier, described the work as "vibrant".

"The choice of the winner was almost immediate and displays a technical finesse and a type of poetry that is inescapable," Mr Storrier said.

Country Energy's managing director Craig Murray, said the work added to the wealth of quality art coming out of regional Australia.

Only in its fourth year, the Country Energy Art Prize for Landscape Painting is Australia's richest annual acquisitive landscape art prize.

"This prize provides opportunities for artists and regional galleries across NSW to participate in an event that highlights the importance of regional art, whilst promoting the value and benefits of regional galleries and the arts in our local com-

munities," Mr Murray told a crowded gallery of almost 150 people.

"Art can sometimes be very city-centric but this prize is focused very much on those outside our big cities and offers the chance for exceptional, regionally produced art to be showcased to the broader community."

Mr Murray said Country Energy represented some 92 per cent of the State and company sponsorships were approaching \$2 million a year - money he described as "going back into country communities".

Goulburn Mulwaree Mayor Cr

Paul Stephenson said the fixture showcased Goulburn, bringing it firmly into the national art world.

"For us it is a fantastic thing in that it gets away from that one photograph people see of Goulburn - that empty dam," he said.

In describing the artists of today, Mr Storrier said the "idea of a person working away on their own, painting in a small room, does require a certain amount of courage and demonstrates one striving for excellence".

"And we see this around us here today," he said.

Mrs Logue said her landscape

was "very personal and particular to me and I have worried about that, that it wouldn't appeal". The exhibition of all 42 finalists' works will be on show at Goulburn Regional Art Gallery until November 11.

Several local and regional artists are represented, Archibald prize winner Cherry Hood of Towrang, Lynne Flemons, Tracy Luff and Jane Lyons in addition to Braidwood artist, Helen Geier.

A Northern NSW artist, Joana Burgler took out the Country Energy employees' award.