

Chair's Remarks – Leighton Art Centre AGM

Good evening, everyone.

As Chair of the Board, it's my pleasure to share a few reflections with you tonight—on where we've been, where we're going, and the incredible people helping to lead the way.

First, I want to take a moment to recognize the heart of the Leighton Art Centre: our staff and volunteers. The work they do, day in and day out, is truly remarkable. Our staff are deeply dedicated to this place—they bring passion, creativity, and care to everything they do. And our volunteers are just as vital: whether helping with events, programs, or behind-the-scenes work, they make so much possible. The Leighton Art Centre is a special place, and it continues to thrive because of the people who care deeply about its mission and its future.

This past year has been one of transition—but also one of progress. We welcomed several new Board members, and I've been so impressed by how quickly this group has come together. Across every committee—governance, facilities, fundraising, and finance—there's been renewed energy and meaningful momentum. Committees are stepping into their roles with focus and purpose, and that work has laid the foundation for an updated strategic plan that will guide our next chapter as an organization.

As part of that work, the Governance Committee is currently developing a new process for Board recruitment and will be seeking three new Board members before our next AGM. It's an exciting opportunity to continue strengthening the leadership that supports the Centre's future.

We also welcomed Darryl to the team in November as our interim Executive Director. He joined us during a time of transition and rolled up his sleeves right away—working closely with our incredible staff to build momentum, bring focus to our priorities, and move the organization forward. I'm thrilled to share that we've removed the 'interim' from his title, and Darryl will continue in the role of Executive Director through December 2026.

Last year marked the 50th anniversary of the Leighton Art Centre—a milestone worth celebrating. When Barbara Leighton established this place, she did so with a dream of bringing art into the lives of others—creating a space where creativity and community could flourish in harmony with the natural world. That spirit still guides us today.

As we look to the future, we're proud to be launching our *Building on a Legacy* campaign, with a goal to raise \$180,000 for essential infrastructure repairs. These improvements will help us better serve school groups, workshop participants, and everyone who comes to experience the creativity and beauty of the Leighton Centre. Thanks to the incredible generosity of our Board members, we have a \$20,000 matching gift opportunity—so every donation will go twice as far.

To our members here tonight: thank you for your continued support. Your belief in this place and its potential means the world to us.

As we look ahead to our next 50 years, we're committed to celebrating the rich legacy of Barbara Leighton and the work of A.C. Leighton and his peers, while continuing to champion new and emerging artists in our region. We remain dedicated to providing opportunities for people of all ages to explore the connection between art and nature—through education, through experience, and through the simple joy of creating.

Thank you again for being part of this journey. We have an exciting road ahead.

Jodi

Chair, The Leighton Foundation