



SAMUEL JOHNSON OAM'S WPCC VISIT COMBINES ART AND SCIENCE

Charity campaigner and actor, Samuel Johnson OAM visited the Western Plains Cultural Centre (WPCC) yesterday to discuss both his experience sitting for the portrait that went on to be a 2022 Archibald Prize finalist and a clinical trial in new cancer treatments currently occurring at Dubbo Base Hospital.

Mr Johnson features in a work by Jeremy Eden which is currently on display at the WPCC as part of the 2022 Archibald Prize exhibition.

It depicts Mr Johnson looking contemplative while holding a picture of the artist's mother Annette, who died of cancer in 2008. It is a tribute to those lost to the disease, and to Mr Johnson's work campaigning for his charity Love Your Sister in memory of his sister Connie Johnson OAM, who died from cancer in 2017.

"He lost his mum to cancer, I lost my sister to cancer. I thought he was the right guy to do this painting at the right time," Mr Johnson said.

“The artist asked me to think about my beloved sister... he wanted to capture that grief and that loss. The reason it's such a sad piece is because he wanted to deal with the fact that we lose people we love.”

Mr Johnson's visit to the WPCC comes as part of a week-long tour of the region to spread the word about the clinical trial in precision medicine which was sponsored by his charity to the tune of \$1.2 million.

“If you're from a rural, regional or remote area – and that's 28 per cent of the Australian population – you're nearly 20 per cent more likely to die from cancer. I've got a problem with that,” Mr Johnson said.

“This is a world first happening in Dubbo... What we're doing here is an exciting partnership with Macquarie University and others, bringing precision medicine to cancer patients in this region because your postcode shouldn't matter,” Mr Johnson said.

“It's an honour to be able to host not just Mr Johnson but also for Dubbo to be the home of such an important trial in the fight against cancer,” Dubbo Regional Council Mayor Mathew Dickerson said.

“Council has long-term partnerships with medical and education facilities to make sure effective medical services are available for our community. The benefits of this trial will not just impact those seeking cancer treatment in the Dubbo region; it will have ripple effects right across the greater Western Health District when patients from remote areas come to Dubbo for their treatment,” Cllr Dickerson said.

Mr Johnson will return to Dubbo for *A Night with Samuel Johnson* at the Dubbo Regional Theatre and Convention Centre on Thursday 21 September from 7:30pm as part of the DREAM Festival. Tickets are

available at drtcc.com.au.

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