



ARTWORK SPEAKS VOLUMES

MICHELLE COLLINS

THE artwork is eye-catching but it is the conversations they start that really appeal to Wendy Hovard.

Hovard is the instigator of the *CollaborART* exhibition, now on at Art and Design Gallery in West End.

It showcases the works of clients of seven inner-city community organisations that support people experiencing homelessness, and those who live in private boarding houses and social housing and are experiencing social isolation.

Hovard is also the manager of homeless drop-in centre, 139 Club, which has run an art group for several years.

She says the club provides a place for the clients to work and store their brushes, paints and canvases.

"A lot of our clients are experiencing homelessness so having a space where they can have their paints and their brushes and their canvases is

just not a possibility," Hovard says.

"They can store their art here so they are not losing it if they take it out on the street."

The exhibition gives them an opportunity to sell their work and encourages conversations between the artists and potential buyers.

"The artwork has meaning and tells a story but it is also about the artist themselves and who they are," Hovard says.

"There are people in society who don't get to have a chat to someone who is living under the Story Bridge.

"It is about saying we are all people together and our life experiences may be a bit different but we all have something to offer. It gives them a voice."

Eighty per cent of the sale price goes back to the artist and the remainder goes to the community groups.

CollaborART, is on at Art and Design Gallery, 10 Bailey St, West End, until July 1.



TELLING JOURNEY: Slavica Kovacev, a resident at an affordable housing development in New Farm, stands before her abstract painting that reflects the pain of her daughter-in-law's cancer diagnosis, with splashes of red to signify the joy of a courageous recovery.