**Tips for Technique and Presentation**

It is always a pleasure to admire the diverse range of Needlework at the Royal Canberra Show.

Please check the general conditions of entry (in the Schedule) and special conditions of entry for the Needlework subsection, particularly noting attachments.

1. Student entries MUST have a note with Date of Birth attached to their entry.
2. If entering the challenge, your interpretation of the theme in a story of no more than 50 words MUST be attached to the Exhibit.
3. The entry must comply with the stated requirements.

***Here are some tips to help you.***

**Technique**

1. Select and use  the appropriate needle for your embroidery. Eg: sharp pointed ones for closely woven fabrics and blunter ones for working with wool and evenweave fabrics.  Ask your supplier or an embroidery tutor if unsure.
2. A measurement for the length of the thread to cut for your stitching is approximately the distance from wrist to elbow. A shorter thread helps to make neat stitches with an even tension. Refresh your thread by replacing it before it becomes too worn.
3. If you are doing cross-stitch, ensure that your top threads are going in the same direction. Carefully examine your finished work to see if all the stitches have been crossed. Sometimes, for no apparent reason, the top stitches in an area have been missed. Oops!
4. If you need to carry your thread across the back (e.g. if you are stitching lettering) consider using a fine backing fabric so that no thread shadow shows through. If the thread needs to be carried to another area more than 3 or 4 stitches away, and you are not able to slide the thread behind other stitches, consider finishing off and starting again in the new area.
5. If doing cut thread work, use sharp scissors so that no burrs of fabric are left behind.
6. When working with a hoop, remove your work when your stitching session is complete and re-tension it when starting again. This practice may lessen the hoop marks on the fabric, which sometimes become difficult to remove when all stitching is complete. Consider using some scrap fabric to hold the hoop.  This will lessen dirty marks on the stitching fabric, particularly if your hands begin to sweat during stitching.

**Presentation**

1. Your finished work must be presented as the best as it can possibly be (even if it is finished late the night before!)
2. It is very important to remove any dirty smudges from your finished work. If you have been using a hoop, check for any remaining hoop marks. If you need to wash the completed embroidery, make sure that the thread is colourfast. Wash gently with a mild soap in lukewarm water. Rinse well and then roll your embroidery in a clean towel to absorb excess moisture.  Place your embroidery face down on top of a clean folded towel. Cover with a pressing cloth (a clean tea towel can be used) Gently steam press.  This method helps to lift the stitches and removes any fabric wrinkles around the embroidery. Reminder: it is best not to have food or liquids around you when stitching.  Why? Accidental dribbles and spills can and do happen.
3. Look very carefully over your finished embroidery before presentation.  Check unframed items such as cushions, embroidered cloths, scarves, journal covers and doilies etc for pet hairs, stray bits of thread and even unexpected insects. Give cushions a particularly careful going over- pet owners will understand why!
4. If your work is framed, ensure that there is no fluff or other unwanted items between the glass and the fabric. Clean, dust and wipe the outside of both the glass and the frame before presentation.
5. For presentation your completed embroidery does not have to be professionally framed.  If you choose to frame it yourself, ensure the frame is a good fit for the finished work. It is important to have the grain of the fabric straight on all sides and the work must be firmly tensioned so that there are no bulges, wrinkles or distortions. The width of the border around the stitching to the edge of the mat or frame must be even on all sides.
6. If the embroidery is to be displayed in a hoop remove the completed work from the hoop.  Refresh the embroidery by cleaning it, then replace and re-tension it.  Cover the back with a piece of fabric or felt cut to the size of the hoop to ensure a neat finish.  Either stitch in place or carefully glue the backing around the edges of the hoop.

Every piece of needlework is very special and countless hours would have been put into the evolution and presentation of these beautiful pieces. All have different features and can be admired and appreciated for their many different colours, styles and stitches. Most of all, it is wonderful to know that needlework skills are continuing to develop and thrive.