



● The first featured artist at Albury Art Gallery's Meet the Maker sessions is Mullengandra silversmith Julia Simpson. Picture: TARA ASHWORTH

Step into heart of artists

BY SARAH DEAN

BORDER residents can now get a behind-the-scenes look at how local artists create their work.

Albury Art Gallery launched a new program last week which is designed to raise the profile of local artists and make it easier for residents to purchase their work.

A new artist will be featured every month.

Silversmith Julia Simpson is the first artist to be featured in the program, Meet the Maker.

Mrs Simpson fell in love with the craft at high school and continued

the trade after completing her studies.

She spent some time in Pakistan where she had her first solo exhibition of jewellery at the Australian Embassy in Islamabad.

"My teacher was fantastic, a guy by the name of Ray Norman who is a very famous silversmith in Australia," Mrs Simpson said.

"I just love the medium and I love the end product."

After leaving school, Mrs Simpson went to the US where she was taken on as an apprentice silversmith.

She returned to Australia in

1989 and set up a studio in Sydney before moving to Mullengandra where she has a studio on her property.

As an artist she is interested in exploring new techniques and finds great pleasure in turning a piece of silver sheet or stock gauge into a beautiful piece of jewellery.

Mrs Simpson mainly creates jewellery and said although competing against cheap overseas products, she believes there is a market for her jewellery in the region.

"I have had a great response to my work and I think there are people who like to have a connection

with local, hand-made products," she said.

Mrs Simpson spoke with residents and showcased her work on Thursday, January 20.

Her products are for sale in the gallery's shop.

Albury Council visual art co-ordinator Bianca Acimovic said the program was intended to give local people the chance to meet local artists.

"It's a great opportunity to buy local artwork and to get to know something about the person who made it, how they made it and what inspired them," she said.