

Eyes have it, says artist

By Jessica Mahar, State Parliament



Real likeness: Camden MP Geoff Corrigan poses before the portrait of him by Rizwana Ahmad. "I thought he belongs to this place [Camden] and I wanted to connect that to a landscape effect," she said.

Picture: Chris Lane

DARK clouds loom over Camden in the background of a portrait of local MP Geoff Corrigan but the artist, Rizwana Ahmad, said a single soaring white bird from the darkness symbolised her subject. It is part of the exhibition *Parliament Objects*,

"The dark cloud leads your eye to the St John's Church and you can see the bird," Mrs Ahmad said at last week's opening. "I thought a soaring bird in the cloud was a very good symbol for a rising politician who wants to do very well. I felt this person has confidence and the pen [in his hand] represents this."

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Last week the portrait exhibition featuring more than a dozen state and federal MPs was opened at NSW Parliament House.

Portrait Artists Australia asked politicians be painted with an object of significance to their lives. Mr Corrigan's object was Camden.

Mrs Ahmad, of Elderslie, approached her local MP to see if he would sit for her. When he said yes, she was honoured, she said. "He usually smiles but when he smiles his eyes get narrow. Not smiling, I thought his eyes were quite big. I thought I'd capture his smile but I must have his eyes because they're very glorious, very handsome. He belongs to this place [Camden] and I wanted to connect that to a landscape effect."

Mrs Ahmad won the Camden Local Artist Prize in 1994 and 2002, the People's Choice Award in 1995 and the Watercolour Prize in 1999.

Mr Corrigan said he loved the painting.

Details: portraitartistsaustralia.com.au.