

11.10.23

MEDIA RELEASE

Winners of the 2023 Victorian Museums and Galleries Awards announced

Hosted by vibrant radio broadcaster Jacinta Parsons, winners of the 2023 Victorian Museums and Galleries Awards were announced at a gala ceremony held on Tuesday 10 October at ACMI – Melbourne's centre for screen culture.

Now celebrating their 30th year, the Awards acknowledge and highlight outstanding achievements across the museum, gallery and community collecting sector.

This year marks the first time Australian Museums and Galleries Association Victoria (AMaGA Victoria) and Public Galleries Association of Victoria (PGAV) have partnered to deliver the Awards. The 2023 Awards received a record 55 nominations, showcasing the remarkable range and quality of projects carried out by Victoria's museums, galleries and community collecting organisations.

Ten awards were presented during the evening, and twelve organisations were recognised for achieving Reaccreditation – the gold standard for collecting institutions, as outlined by the National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries.

THE 2023 INDIVIDUAL WINNERS

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

WINNER: **Tammy Nguyen**, Vietnamese Museum Australia

Tammy is a remarkable volunteer and leader who inspires and motivates others through her charisma and dedication. She fosters collaboration with diverse communities, organises meaningful events, and fundraises for charitable causes. As a member of the Vietnamese Australian Professional Network, she also bridges generational and cultural gaps, nurturing a vibrant volunteer community.

Judges comments: Tammy is commended for her dedication in realising a community museum, showcasing her remarkable leadership, active committee participation, and collaboration with various organisations to bring this vision to fruition.

MARTIN HALLETT AWARD FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

WINNER: **Sherene Hassan**, Islamic Museum Australia

Sherene has been instrumental to the Islamic Museum of Australia, contributing greatly to its success through community outreach, cultural training, and educational programs. Her input in gallery content has made it an inclusive space for all to learn about Islam.

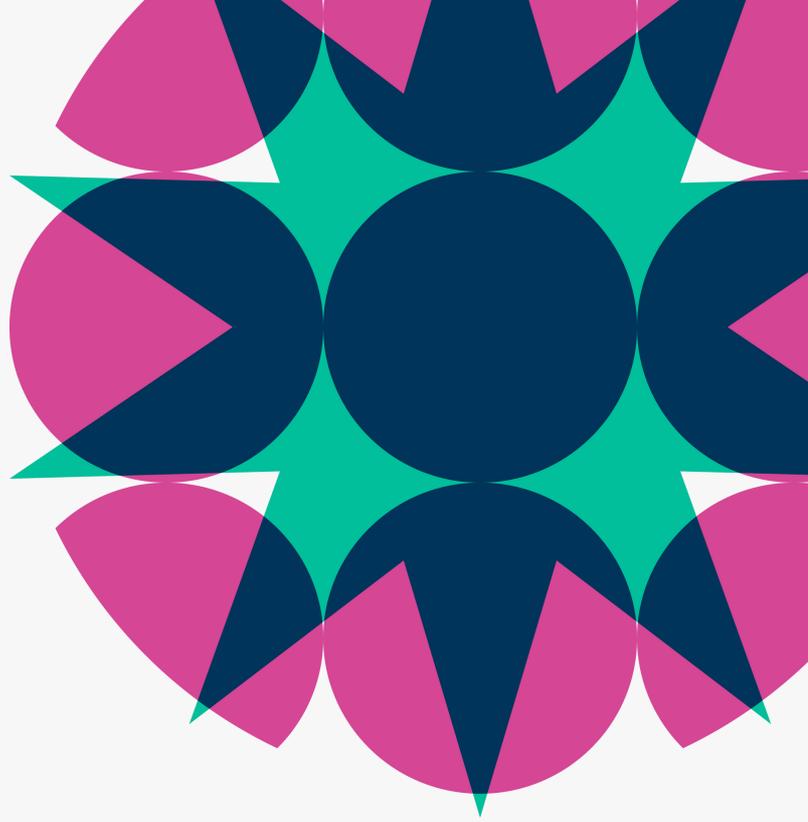
Judges comments: Sherene is a crucial figure in promoting intercultural collaboration by educating school students and others about Australia's Islamic community, contributing significantly to reducing racism and Islamophobia while fostering cultural awareness, making her an invaluable asset to the museum sector.

CHANGE-MAKER OF THE YEAR

WINNER: **Rose Hiscock**, The University of Melbourne

In 2016, Rose was appointed as Director, Museums and Collections to lead the development of the Science Gallery. Her work led to the formation of the Museums and Collections department, opening of the Science Gallery, and the ongoing development of an Indigenous-led Place for Indigenous arts.

Judges comments: Rose has achieved a remarkable feat by centralising the university's collections, displaying exceptional leadership, innovation, and collaboration, which are essential for the successful execution of this challenging endeavour.



THE 2023 ORGANISATION WINNERS

VOLUNTEER-RUN PROJECT OF THE YEAR

WINNER: [Queenscliffe Historical Society](#) for their exhibition *Queenscliffe Revealed: Hidden Histories, New Narratives*

Opened in September 2022 as part of the Queenscliffe HUB project, this exhibition, researched and curated by QHM volunteers on a limited budget, featured three main themes and 26 stories, offering insights into the history of the Wadawurrung, Queenscliffe, and Point Lonsdale regions.

Judges comments: This is a wonderful project with an impressive number of local stories developed and researched for it to tell the history of the community.

HIGHLY COMMENDED: [Women's Art Register](#) for their publication *Leaving Your Legacy: A Guide for Australian Artists*

Judges comments: This is an excellent project with relevance and real outcomes, using multiple platforms to educate the community -- very well done.

SMALL PROJECT OF THE YEAR (MUSEUM)

WINNER: [Yarra Ranges Regional Museum](#) for their exhibition *Hard Place/Good Place: Yarra Ranges*

The result of cross-sector collaboration and a minimal budget, the exhibition showcased augmented reality stories created by local young people affected by a severe windstorm in the Dandenong Ranges in June 2021. It aimed to address community issues such as climate change and mental health, contributing to the healing and recovery process after the storm's first anniversary.

Judges comments: Highlights successful collaboration between university partners and participants, with a strong emphasis on engaging stakeholder communities and demonstrating the project's lasting relevance, particularly in the context of climate change. It underscores the essential role cultural organisations can play in their communities during times of crisis.

HIGHLY COMMENDED: [Shrine of Remembrance](#) for their exhibition *Defending with Pride*

Judges comments: The exhibition serves as a compelling illustration of how cultural organisations can influence attitudes and beliefs, showcasing the Shrine's effective engagement with stakeholder communities, with clear and compelling evidence of its impact.

SMALL PROJECT OF THE YEAR (GALLERY)

WINNER: [RMIT Culture](#) for *Radical Utopia, The Design Archaeology of a Creative City*

This collaborative project between RMIT Design Archives and RMIT Gallery resulted in an exhibition, public programming, and a

scholarly journal edition. It delved into how 1980s Melbourne designers pioneered innovative creative practices through design activism, public discourse, exhibitions, publications, and new media, ultimately leading to the development of digital creative practices and establishing Melbourne as a global leader in the field, particularly in gaming.

Judges comments: The judges praised the collaboration between RMIT Culture and RMIT Design Archives for the "Radical Utopia" exhibition, highlighting its exploration of 1980s Melbourne designers' creative practices and the educational value of the accompanying expanded edition of the RMIT Design Archives Journal.

HIGHLY COMMENDED: [Hamilton Gallery](#) for their exhibition *Luminous: John Orval, Stained Glass Artist*

Judges comments: Hamilton Gallery has accomplished an ambitious project with limited resources, and their scholarly approach to exhibition-making has left an impact on audiences and made a significant contribution to Australian art history.

MEDIUM PROJECT OF THE YEAR (MUSEUM)

WINNER: [Museums Victoria](#) for their exhibition *More Than a Tarrang (tree): Memory, Material, Cultural Agency*

This exhibition connects memory, material practice, and cultural agency, featuring ancestral belongings, artworks, and new pieces by senior and emerging artists, while also promoting a deeper understanding of trees as more than mere objects and fostering the regeneration of knowledge of Country.

Judges comments: This exhibition represents a remarkable First Peoples-led collaboration between museums and academia, challenging traditional norms and yielding an innovative outcome that beautifully merges natural and First Nations heritage. It is truly awe-inspiring and outstanding.

HIGHLY COMMENDED: [Bonegilla Migrant Experience](#) for their exhibition *The Bonegilla ID Cards*

Judges comments: This exhibition exemplifies innovative design with interactive elements that immerse visitors in the migrant experience, encouraging reflection and engagement. It also showcases the project's collaborative nature and the possibilities of collections digitisation for future exhibitions.

MEDIUM PROJECT OF THE YEAR (GALLERY)

WINNER: [Art Gallery of Ballarat](#) for their exhibition *Beating About The Bush: A new lens on Australian Impressionism*

The enduring appeal of Australian plein-air landscape paintings has shaped our perception of the Australian landscape. However, female artists and lesser-known male artists associated with this group have often been marginalised in art history. The exhibition, inspired by various influences, seeks to challenge these

historical biases by presenting works by female Australian Impressionist artists and contemporary female photographers, allowing for a more comprehensive representation of the period and challenging prevailing myths.

Judges comments: The exhibition provided a meaningful reinterpretation of the gallery's collection. The gallery capitalised on the opportunity by filling gaps in their collection of Australian female Impressionist painters and contemporary female photographers, as well as conducting conservation work on significant artworks and frames.

HIGHLY COMMENDED: [TarraWarra Museum of Art](#) for their exhibition *TarraWarra Biennial 2023: ua usiisi fa'ava'asavili*, curated by Dr Leuli Eshragi.

Judges comments: This exhibition shows a commitment to championing new voices in the field and exemplifying an innovative curatorial model – sparking conversations about Indigenous aesthetics and practices across Australia and in neighbouring Asia and Oceania.

LARGE PROJECT OF THE YEAR

WINNER: [Museums Victoria](#) for their exhibition *Tyama: A deeper sense of knowing*

The exhibition transports you to Victoria's nocturnal worlds, immersing you in 360-degree responsive projections, breathtaking effects, and exquisite soundscapes. Tyama is the Keeray Woorroong language verb 'to know'. It is about knowing, not just with our minds, but with our whole body.

Judges comments: An exciting exhibition that showcases how larger cultural organisations can harness cutting-edge technology to innovate in exhibition display and visitor experience while honouring First Peoples' traditions and knowledge. It offers a rich and resonating experience that has captivated audiences.

HIGHLY COMMENDED: [Central Goldfields Art Gallery](#) for the *Gallery Redevelopment Project*

Judges comments: This serves as an exciting illustration of the positive impact and increased community engagement achievable through substantial redevelopment efforts by cultural organisations. By revitalising existing structures and fostering stronger connections with community stakeholders, the project has positioned the Art Gallery favourably to continue fulfilling its social role in the region.

FIRST NATIONS PROJECT OF THE YEAR

WINNER: [Daylesford and District Historical Society with Djaara Elder Uncle Rick Nelson](#) for their exhibition *Coranderrk Portraits*

This exhibition offers a rare opportunity to reflect on the impact of colonisation and forced removal on the Dja Dja Wurrung people and their communities. It features portraits of Dja Dja Wurrung ancestors from circa 1866 and includes a narrated film led by Djaara Elder Uncle Rick Nelson and Professor Barry Golding, taking visitors on a truth-seeking journey across

significant sites. The exhibition is complemented by storyboards, videos, images, text, and artefacts that delve into the Dja Dja Wurrung story and Coranderrk history.

Judges comments: Initiated by Uncle Rick Nelson, this project showcases impactful local collaboration and dialogue led by Elders and First Peoples, bridging cultural divides, decolonising spaces, and reconnecting Djaara Ancestors with their community through powerful ancestral portraits. Involving young children in interpreting the artwork adds an inter-generational dimension to this small-scale initiative with a strong community spirit.

HIGHLY COMMENDED: [Bundoora Homestead Art Centre](#) for *Truth-telling Permanent History Display*

Judges comments: This project highlights the role of arts and cultural institutions in bridging gaps between Traditional Owners and local councils, offering a lasting resource that affirms Indigenous stories, decolonises spaces, and fosters reconciliation and collaboration. Kudos to all involved for their dedicated three-year effort.

HIGHLY COMMENDED: [Krowathunkoolong Keeping Place](#) for the *Repatriation of Gunai Kurnai GRI (canoe)* project

Judges comments: The project achieved significant national and international impact through its repatriation efforts, emphasising the importance of returning cultural materials. The strong relationship with TMAG and the Tasmanian Aboriginal community is fundamental to the project's success, contributing to community strengthening, care, and well-being. This work serves as a noteworthy example of community-driven repatriation and is part of a growing global momentum in the repatriation of material culture.

REACCREDITATIONS

The following organisations have continued to meet the standards for professional operations in alignment with the National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries.

COMMUNITY MUSEUM ACCREDITATION PROGRAM

- Doncaster and Templestowe Historical Society
- Knox Historical Society
- Nepean Historical Society
- National Alpine Museum

MUSEUM ACCREDITATION PROGRAM

- Beechworth Burke Museum
- Burringa Dandenong Ranges Cultural Centre
- Coal Creek Community Park and Museum
- National Trust of Australia (Victoria)
- The Dax Centre

QUOTES

The Honourable Colin Brooks, Minister for Creative Industries

These awards celebrate Victoria's vibrant museums and galleries and people who bring them to life across the state - from local regional galleries to city institutions.

Victoria is the nation's creative state and we're proud to back these awards as they showcase the vital contribution people make to boosting our cultural and artistic heritage.

Anne Robertson, Executive Officer, PGAV

The partnership between PGAV and AMaGA Victoria has resulted in record nominations for this year's Awards, making evident the abundance of exceptional projects on offer at galleries, museums and collecting spaces across the state.

Importantly, the inaugural First Nations Project of the Year highlights the role Victoria's cultural institutions play in providing the community meaningful engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and culture –allowing audiences to listen, reflect and learn from the oldest continuing living culture in the world.

As the winners of the 2023 Awards demonstrate, Victoria is home to outstanding galleries, museums and collecting institutions – truly worth celebrating!

Dr Ashley Robertson, Executive Director, AMaGA Victoria

Recognising 30 years of sector recognition, the Awards continue to provide an opportunity to celebrate excellence across Victoria's museums, galleries and community collecting organisations.

The remarkable range and quality of projects nominated this year is a true testament to the vibrant tapestry of our sector. We celebrate the tireless dedication, passion, and innovation of the paid and unpaid staff who fuel our creative institutions.

Let us continue to nurture these invaluable spaces, where the past and present converge, shaping a richer and more enlightening tomorrow. Congratulations to all the winners!

MEDIA

Photographs of the Award-winning projects and Reaccredited museums and galleries are available upon request.

Notes for editors | AMaGA Victoria

The Australian Museums and Galleries Association (AMaGA Victoria) was established in 1993 as the peak body representing Victorian museums. We aim to facilitate the exchange of information and ideas in ways which affirm the value of cultural institutions, stimulate debate about principles and standards, and inform and inspire staff, volunteers and supporters.

Our mission is to provide support to the Victoria's 1000+ collecting institutions, encompassing a diverse range of organisations, including museums, galleries, science centres, Indigenous Keeping Places, historical societies, botanical gardens, zoological parks, and archaeological sites.

AMaGA Victoria promotes collecting organisations to all levels of government and the community, and fosters high standards in all aspects of museum and gallery management through research, policy formulation, publications, and training. Moreover, we actively contribute to the creative sector through our flagship initiatives and programs, including the Museum Accreditation Programs and [Victorian Collections](#), an online portal showcasing the cultural treasures of our state.

For additional information, please visit amagavic.org.au.

Contact: **Ash Robertson**

ashrobertson@amagavic.org.au | 0450 661 082

Notes for editors | PGAV

Public Galleries Association of Victoria (PGAV) is the peak body representing over 65 art galleries and art museums in Victoria, including 19 regional galleries. Our members include state cultural institutions, local government galleries, university art museums, and independent non-profit galleries.

PGAV's mission is to build and strengthen the capacity of Victoria's public galleries, empowering them to deliver valuable social, cultural and economic returns to their communities.

PGAV delivers programs to support the development of the sector, undertakes research to quantify sector impact and need, advocates to stakeholders, and promotes public galleries to new and diverse audiences in Victoria and across Australia.

In 2023, PGAV launched the Public Galleries: Our Creative Heart initiative to promote the value of public galleries to local communities and highlight the need for greater investment to ensure galleries continue to deliver the best possible access to art – for Victorians, for interstate visitors, and international tourists.

For additional information, please visit pgav.org.au

Contact: **Anne Robertson**

anne.robertson@pgav.ngv.vic.gov.au | 0403 268 017