

2/11/2017

[EMBARGOED UNTIL 9PM THURSDAY 2 NOVEMBER 2017]

CAIRNS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Winner at State Awards

The strength, ingenuity and talents of Queensland's public galleries and museums were triumphantly demonstrated tonight with the announcement of the winners of the **2017 Gallery and Museum Achievement Awards** (GAMAA) at a gala presentation event, proudly hosted by Old Government House, QUT.

Cairns Historical Society, in far north Queensland, was **announced the Winner** for outstanding achievement in the category of 'Projects: Organisations with Paid Staff' for its nomination *Reimagining Cairns Museum*.

The reimagining of the Cairns Museum was a seven-year project for the Cairns Historical Society (CHS) and represented an enormous undertaking for the volunteer-run Society, supported by funding from Cairns Regional Council. The process included external consultation and volunteer workshops that resulted in key themes for a renewed Cairns Museum and a vision 'To reveal the past and engage with the present of Cairns as a tropical city'. The Museum opened in July 2017 and now operates with 2.4 paid staff and ongoing support from Council.

Museums & Galleries Queensland (M&G QLD) Executive Director, Rebekah Butler said, "Being recognised as the Winner in this category is testament to the Cairns Historical Society's tremendous effort and commitment to realise their vision."

The strategic planning process for the 'reimagining' investigated the role of a Museum in a regional city, the existing cultural infrastructure, and the significance of the existing CHS collection. It created a contemporary thematic framework 'Living in the Tropics' that became the foundation for delivering a Museum that was about the past and the present of Cairns as a tropical city, rather than a more generic Museum about the olden days. In addition to the

extensive work around the existing collection, the project also engaged with two Traditional Owner groups and supported a volunteer curator who worked with a number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island families for more than two years to bring their stories into the Museum, to be told and be displayed in Cairns for the first time.

Ms Butler said, "This year's winners and finalists stood out from an exceptional group of nominations. These accolades embody outstanding examples of our sector's achievements, professional excellence, and innovation. They also highlight the valuable contribution and achievements of professionals and volunteers working in our industry."

The GAMAA were established by Museums & Galleries Queensland in 2004 to honour the achievements of our state's individuals and organisations in striving towards excellence.

Winners of the 2017 GAMAA received an exquisite trophy crafted by Queensland artist, Lincoln Austin. Commissioned by M&G QLD, the trophies are generously sponsored by our long-standing Awards supporter, Brian Tucker Accounting.

For media enquiries or images, please contact:

Rebekah Butler, Executive Director, M&G QLD

Museums & Galleries Queensland

Phone: **07 3059 9740** Freecall: **1800 866 101** Mobile: **0422 579 180**

Email: **rebekah.butler@magsq.com.au** Website: **www.magsq.com.au**

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Museum & Gallery Services Queensland Ltd trading as Museums & Galleries Queensland – ABN 32 109 874 811 is supported by the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland, and is assisted by the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy, an initiative of the Australian, State and Territory Governments.