

14/10/2019

AUSTRALIAN AGE OF DINOSAURS

Winner at State Awards

The Winners and Finalists of the **2019 Gallery and Museum Achievement Awards** (GAMAA) were proudly announced on Thursday 19 September at a special presentation event, held at the recently opened Cairns Performing Arts Centre, Far North Queensland.

Australian Age of Dinosaurs was announced as **Winner** for outstanding achievement in the category of Sustainability: Organisations with Paid Staff for its project, ***Turning out the lights: Australia's first International Dark-Sky Sanctuary.***

The Jump-Up in outback Queensland is a magical spot to stargaze. It is Australia's first International Dark-Sky Sanctuary; awarded a unique classification within the International Dark Sky Places Program reserved for sites that are the remotest and often darkest places in the world and whose conservation state is most fragile.

But first some background...

Following the accidental discovery of a large dinosaur femur in 1999, local graziers David and Judy Elliott started a not-for-profit museum, the Australian Age of Dinosaurs. During the first seven years of its operation, the Museum acquired the beginnings of a very large collection of dinosaur bones. In 2009, it relocated to The Jump-Up, a 1400-hectare unique mesa environment near Winton that is home to a diverse array of flora and fauna.

The rise in artificial light around the world and its potential to negatively affect the environment, including wildlife, led Museum staff and volunteers at the Australian Age of Dinosaurs to begin a sustainable program to protect the extraordinarily dark-skies above The Jump-Up.

Museums & Galleries Queensland (M&G QLD) Executive Director, Rebekah Butler said,
"The Australian Age of Dinosaurs staff and volunteers are to be congratulated for their tremendous achievements in compiling and adopting their formalised Lighting Management Plan and for being designated Australia's first International Dark-Sky Sanctuary. The Museum has demonstrated leadership through its conservation strategies, educational programs and guided tours. These initiatives have created a better understanding of the benefits of truly dark skies and are ensuring continued public engagement with this very remote Museum and region."

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.

Robert Ryan, the Senior Co-ordinator Community Programs for Mackay Regional Council and 2019 GAMAA judge, presented awards to this year's Winners and Finalists. The Winners received an exquisitely crafted trophy by Queensland artist, Lucy Quinn. Commissioned by M&G QLD, the trophies are generously sponsored by our long-standing Awards supporter, Brian Tucker Accounting.

The awards were hosted at Cairns Performing Arts Centre in front of representatives of Queensland's public museum and gallery sector, including delegates of M&G QLD's 2019 State Conference, *Opening Doors*, also presented in Cairns.

M&G QLD acknowledges the tremendous support of the 2019 GAMAA sponsors: Brandi Projects; Cairns Regional Council; Brian Tucker Accounting; Public Galleries Queensland; and Australian Museums and Galleries Association (Queensland).

For the full list of GAMAA Winners and Finalists see:

<http://www.magsq.com.au/cms/page.asp?ID=5036>

For media enquiries or images, please contact:

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