

[EMBARGOED until 6pm Saturday 17 November 2012]

Chinchilla Historical Society Inc. honoured at prestigious State Awards

Museum and Gallery Services Queensland (M&GSQ) proudly announced the winners of the **2012 Gallery and Museum Achievement Awards (GAMAA)** at a gala event hosted by the Abbey Museum of Art and Archaeology, Caboolture, on Saturday 17 November. Special guest, Hon Ros Bates, Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts congratulated this year's recipients and presented the winners with a specially commissioned trophy created by Queensland artist, Donna Marcus.

The **Chinchilla Historical Society Inc.** was **recognised for its outstanding achievement** in the category of 'Organisations: Volunteer Run' for its project, ***Making the Museum More Relevant to the Local Community.***

In awarding Chinchilla Historical Society Inc. a **Special Commendation** in this category, the Judges acknowledged the brave step by the Society in taking change into its own hands and turning adversity into advantage. The Judges also recognised the Society's tenacity in developing and pursuing a different strategic direction, maximising its potential for success by accessing professional support and identifying and drawing on the strength of its relationships with key stakeholders and partners.

In 2007 the Chinchilla Historical Society was facing a decline in visitation to the Museum due to its "off highway" position and they were deeply concerned about the future sustainability of the Museum in its current guise. The Society took a strong leadership role to address this problem, ardently pursuing plans to redevelop the Museum and relocate it to a more visible location to attract the tourist market. After five years of trying, the Society accepted that it could not get the vital support it needed to realise this plan, and was facing the prospect of closing the Museum's doors. With the support of Queensland Museum's Museum Development Officer, Vicki Warden, they chose instead to reinvent the Museum on its present site and focus on making it more

relevant to the local community. The result of this shift in focus has been an increase to visitation by 25% over a six-month period, and a high level of access by community groups.

Councillor Carolyn Tillman, spokesperson for **Western Downs Regional Council's** Cultural Development and Community Services said today,

'The decision to focus on making the museum a must-see place for not only visitors to town but for the community of Chinchilla and surrounds is a forward thinking initiative.

This museum will not only preserve the local history but will become a major event venue for the local community. The committee is committed to promoting social cohesion and community identity as well as providing volunteers and members with the social benefits of working within a friendly environment.'

Presented by **Museum and Gallery Services Queensland**, the GAMAA is a prestigious annual event designed to celebrate the outstanding achievements, professional excellence and innovation of Queensland's museums and galleries. The Awards recognise the valuable contribution our State's museums and galleries make to enriching their local and wider communities, and honour the extraordinary commitment and talents of paid professionals and volunteers working in the industry.

The Executive Director of Museum and Gallery Services Queensland, Rebekah Butler, said today

'It is with great pleasure that M&GSQ congratulates the winners of the 2012 GAMAA and commends all those who nominated for their remarkable achievements and contribution to the sector. This year's awards recognise a range of inspirational people and projects.'

For a full list of winners, go to the M&GSQ website at www.magsq.com.au

The 2012 GAMAA were proudly sponsored by the Abbey Museum of Art and Archaeology, Brian Tucker Accountant, Brandi Projects, Archival Survival, Regional Galleries Association of Queensland and Museums Australia Queensland.

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