

9/10/2026

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD: EDITH CUFFE OAM 2026 GALLERY AND MUSEUM ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Museums & Galleries Queensland (M&G QLD) was delighted to present **Edith Cuffe OAM** with a **Lifetime Achievement Award** in recognition of her extraordinary contribution to Queensland's museum sector, at the **2026 Gallery and Museum Achievement Awards (GAMAA)**, proudly hosted by **Ipswich Art Gallery** on Thursday 8 October.

Now in their twenty-second year, the GAMAA are Queensland's premier awards program for the museum and gallery sector, recognising excellence, innovation and leadership across the State. Special guest, **Ipswich City Council Mayor Teresa Harding**, congratulated this year's recipients and presented winners with individually crafted trophies by acclaimed Queensland glass artist **Jarred Wright**.

Edith Cuffe OAM was presented with the **Lifetime Achievement Award** in recognition of her extraordinary contribution to Queensland's museum sector and more than four decades of dedicated service to the **Abbey Museum of Art & Archaeology**.

Beginning as a volunteer at the Museum in 1977 and later serving as Chief Executive Officer and Museum Director, Edith has transformed a small regional museum into a highly respected cultural organisation with national and international reach. Through her vision, leadership and business acumen, she has secured major infrastructure investment, expanded exhibitions and educational programs, established enduring partnerships, and successfully guided the organisation through periods of significant growth and challenge.

A passionate advocate for museums, history, education and community participation, Edith has inspired generations of staff, volunteers and supporters while fostering a culture of learning, inclusion and belonging. Her leadership has made history accessible and engaging for diverse audiences through exhibitions, public programs and the renowned Abbey Medieval Festival, which is now celebrating its 35th year. Attracting around 30,000 visitors annually, the Festival has become one of Queensland's leading cultural tourism events, generating significant economic benefits for the Moreton Bay region while creating opportunities for thousands of volunteers, performers, educators and historical re-enactors.

In 2008, Edith established Archaeology on the Move, bringing hands-on archaeology experiences to regional schools with limited access to museum education. The initiative became the

foundation of the Museum's education program, which today welcomes more than 10,000 students each year.

Edith's outstanding achievements have been recognised through numerous honours, including the Medal of the Order of Australia in 2011, appointment as Museum Director in 2012, the Royal Historical Society of Queensland Centenary Medal in 2019, and most recently leading the Museum to the 2026 Pumicestone Business Award for Tourism and Attractions.

Edith's legacy extends far beyond the Museum's collections and programs. It is reflected in the generations of people she has mentored, the communities she has connected through culture and heritage, and the enduring institution she has helped build.

Museums & Galleries Queensland Executive Director, Rebekah Butler, congratulated Edith on receiving this honour, saying "The Lifetime Achievement Award is a fitting recognition of Edith Cuffe OAM's extraordinary career and contribution to Queensland's museum sector. For more than four decades, she has been the driving force behind the Abbey Museum of Art & Archaeology, demonstrating exceptional vision, determination and leadership. Her influence extends well beyond the Museum itself, with a legacy reflected in the countless people, organisations and communities she has inspired, supported and empowered along the way."

This year's awards attracted nominations from across the state, recognising excellence in exhibitions, public programs, collections management, First Nations and community engagement, leadership, innovation and volunteer contribution.

M&G QLD congratulates each of this year's winners, highly commended recipients and finalists. Their achievements exemplify the passion, creativity and commitment that continue to enrich Queensland's cultural landscape and inspire excellence across the sector.

ABOUT MUSEUMS & GALLERIES QUEENSLAND

Museums & Galleries Queensland (M&G QLD) is the peak professional industry body for the public museum and gallery sector in Queensland.

Our purpose is to inspire and support excellence in Queensland museums, galleries and keeping places, fostering innovation, connection and cultural leadership.

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR 2026 GAMAA SPONSORS AND SUPPORTERS

The 2026 GAMAA are proudly supported by the **Ipswich Art Gallery** and sponsored by **Public Galleries Queensland** and **Australian Museums and Galleries Association Queensland**.

The 2026 GAMAA trophies are generously supported by **Brian Tucker**.

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