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STATE LIBRARY OF QUEENSLAND WINNER 2026 GALLERY AND MUSEUM ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Museums & Galleries Queensland (M&G QLD) was delighted to announce **State Library of Queensland** as the Winner in the **First Nations** category for its exhibition ***The unbroken spirit of the Kalkadoons*** 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**.

The unbroken spirit of the Kalkadoons was a landmark First Nations-led exhibition developed through a genuine partnership between the State Library of Queensland and the Sam family to share four generations of Kalkadoon oral history.

Through newly commissioned artworks, digital stories, immersive media and historical research, the exhibition traces the resilience, survival and enduring connection to Country of the Kalkadoon people despite the impacts of frontier violence and displacement. Co-designed over 18 months, with cultural authority remaining firmly with the family, the project created a meaningful space for truth-telling, learning and healing.

By centring First Nations voices, knowledge and lived experience, *The unbroken spirit of the Kalkadoons* demonstrates the transformative potential of community-led storytelling. The exhibition has been widely recognised for its impact, including receiving the 2025 Queensland Reconciliation Award, and sets a benchmark for collaborative practice and reconciliation in action.

Museums & Galleries Queensland Executive Director, Rebekah Butler, congratulated the State Library of Queensland on this multi-award-winning project, saying "*The unbroken spirit of the Kalkadoons* is an extraordinary example of community-led storytelling that honours cultural authority, lived experience and the enduring strength of First Nations knowledge. Through genuine partnership with the Sam family, State Library of Queensland has created a deeply meaningful exhibition that fosters understanding, supports truth-telling and demonstrates the vital role cultural organisations can play in advancing reconciliation. We commend the State

Library and the Sam family on this outstanding achievement and well-deserved recognition as a winner.”

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**.

For media enquiries, 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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