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UQ ART MUSEUM WINNER 2026 GALLERY AND MUSEUM ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Museums & Galleries Queensland (M&G QLD) was delighted to announce the **UQ Art Museum** as the Winner in the **Engagement: Organisations With 7+ FTE Paid Staff** category for its project **Public art on campus: SUNA (Middle Ground)** 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**.

UQ Art Museum was declared winner in this GAMAA category for *Public art on campus: SUNA (Middle Ground)*, a landmark installation by Papua New Guinean artist Yuriyal Bridgeman that transformed The University of Queensland campus into a space for dialogue, cultural exchange and community connection.

Inspired by the artist's family home in Papua New Guinea's Waghi Valley, *SUNA (Middle Ground)* invited visitors to gather, reflect and learn through shared experiences. The large-scale installation created a welcoming environment for intercultural exchange, exploring themes of identity, community, place and belonging through contemporary art.

Presented to coincide with the 50th anniversary of Papua New Guinea's independence, the project featured a rich program of performances, food, talks and a symposium celebrating Papua New Guinean culture, creativity and futures. Welcoming almost 22,000 visitors, the installation engaged diverse audiences and fostered meaningful connections between communities through art and shared cultural experiences.

Through its ambitious vision and collaborative approach, *SUNA (Middle Ground)* demonstrated the capacity of public art to build understanding, strengthen partnerships and create opportunities for genuine cultural exchange.

Museums & Galleries Queensland Executive Director, Rebekah Butler, congratulated UQ Art Museum on its award-winning achievement, saying "*SUNA (Middle Ground)* is an outstanding example of how public art can create spaces for connection, learning and cultural exchange. We

commend UQ Art Museum's ambitious vision and collaborative approach. By bringing Papua New Guinean perspectives and experiences to the forefront, it has delivered a project that encouraged meaningful conversations, celebrated cultural diversity and fostered deeper understanding between communities."

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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