

15/10/2024

Sarah Johnson

Winner at State Awards

The Winners, Highly Commended and Finalists of the **2024 Gallery and Museum Achievement Awards** (GAMAA) were proudly announced by Museums & Galleries Queensland (M&G QLD) on Tuesday 8 October, at a special awards presentation hosted by the Queensland Museum Cobb+Co, Toowoomba.

Museums & Galleries Queensland is excited to announce that **Sarah Johnson**, Senior Curator, Qantas Founders Museum, Longreach, has been honoured with **Winning the Individuals: Paid Staff** category at the prestigious **2024 Gallery and Museum Achievement Awards** (GAMAA).

Sarah Johnson's journey to becoming the Senior Curator of the Qantas Founders Museum is a testament to her bravery, professionalism, and commitment to arts, culture and regional communities.

Since arriving in outback Queensland in 2021, Sarah has embraced and been embraced by the local community in Longreach.

Sarah's impact on the cultural life of Longreach is profound. She has been instrumental in transforming the cultural, social, and economic landscape of Longreach through her innovative initiatives and unwavering dedication. As Senior Curator, Sarah manages a vast collection of over 10,000 objects, including aircraft, aviation material, and memorabilia. Her leadership role in advocating for regional artists and providing mentorship has been instrumental in supporting the region of Longreach and its people.

Sarah's distinctive contributions have elevated the regional arts community, contributing to the region's social and tourism economies and fostering a more inclusive and vibrant cultural environment, and is quoted as being "an invaluable asset to Longreach and the broader Queensland region".

Sarah has nurtured a platform for diverse artistic expressions and fostered a deeper appreciation for the arts, enriching the community's cultural tapestry. This includes curating numerous local and regional exhibitions, celebrating the talents of regional artists and attracting the broader community to experience art, often for the first time.

Sarah's most notable achievement was her successful negotiation to secure the celebrated international Yayoi Kusama exhibition from the National Gallery of Australia. This accomplishment brought a world-class exhibition to the region and significantly boosted tourism, drawing visitors

and attention to Longreach and its vibrant cultural landscape, and instilling a sense of excitement and pride in the community.

In awarding Sarah Johnson winner in this category, the judges commended her dedication and impactful initiatives, and her achievements in raising the standards of practice and professionalism of the Qantas Founders Museum.

Sarah's meticulous attention to detail and historical accuracy, coupled with a contemporary lens to ensure access and inclusivity, has set a new benchmark for the Museum's exhibitions and programs. She has initiated projects to improve access to the Museum's collections and enhanced the representation of First Nations peoples in the stories presented at the Qantas Founders Museum.

Museums & Galleries Queensland (M&G QLD) Executive Director, Rebekah Butler said, "Our congratulations to Sarah Johnson – she is a worthy winner in this category. Her exceptional contributions, leadership, unwavering dedication and warmth, typify the profound impact that passionate and committed individuals can have on their communities."

Ms Butler continued, "The 2024 Winners, Highly Commended and Finalists were selected from a strong field of nominations received from organisations, large and small, across Queensland. It is an honour to be shining a spotlight on the outstanding work of so many worthy individuals and organisations."

Now in its twentieth year, the GAMAA were established by Museums & Galleries Queensland (M&G QLD) to honour the achievements of our State's individuals and organisations in striving towards excellence.

The 2024 Winners received an exquisite trophy by emerging Queensland artist, **Monique Burkhead**. Monique is of Polynesian, Maori and Australian heritage and lives and works in Cairns. She is passionate about conserving the environment, and through her art hopes to raise an awareness of the fragile nature of our natural environment and the impacts of climate change.

The 2024 GAMAA trophies are generously supported by **Brian Tucker**.

The 2024 GAMAA are proudly supported by the **Queensland Museum** and sponsored by **Public Galleries Queensland** and **Australian Museums and Galleries Association Queensland**.

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