

Cairns Historical Society Museum Looks to a Bright Future!

Museum and Gallery Services Queensland (M&GSQ) congratulates the Cairns Historical Society Museum, one of six community collecting institutions in Far North Queensland who have completed a year long groundbreaking program for Queensland's museum sector. The Standards Program is designed to help participating museums plan for a sustainable future by recognising their achievements, raising their profile and identifying strategic priorities for improvement and development.

On Wednesday 21 November Leslie Sparkes, Manager, Community and Cultural Development, Cairns City Council welcomed participants to a formal event celebrating their completion of the program. The Cairns Historical Society Museum received a certificate of recognition from Paul Brinkman, Director, Cairns Regional Gallery in acknowledgment of their achievement and hard work.

Reviewers, Dan Robinson, Ken Smith and Jan King, who provided professional expertise free of charge throughout the program, congratulated the Cairns Historical Society Museum saying 'The Historical Society operates with a strong group of volunteers including a small group directly responsible for the museum component. The majority of displays are well organised around regional themes and they are to be commended for their active temporary display program and their school outreach program. They also have an exceptional digital records system for historical and museum information, readily available for public access and a very good website.'

The Museum is currently housed in the 100 year old 'School of Arts' Building near the City Place, and displays extensive artefacts which relate to the history of Cairns and Far North Queensland. As part of the Standards Program, Cairns Historical Society Museum identified objects in their collection of great significance to the region, including several rare aboriginal rainforest swords, a Chinese temple collection, gold scales from the 1890 Batavia mine and an 1882 Kennedy Regiment uniform.

After identifying key areas for development in the Standards review, Cairns Historical Society Museum now plans to update its strategic plan and finalise its Museum Action Plan which will incorporate improved captions in the museum displays. Improved collection documentation and conservation measures will also be introduced. The Museum also plans to provide better access and encourage community participation by providing improved signage and downloadable audio tours of their displays.

Stephen Fowler, President of the Museum explained what they gained from participating in the Standards program: 'We have begun to improve our display labels in order to enhance visitor experience of the Museum and we are also developing personal mp3 audio tours of the museum. The reviewers also identified the importance of researching information for object files on key museum objects and on the development of our strategic plan and annual budget.'



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Next year M&GSQ will offer the Museum Standards Program to another region in Queensland, to be announced in early 2008.

Full program information is available at
http://www.magsq.com.au/01_cms/index.asp?view_mode=subsection&ss_id=18

Media profiles and print quality images from the Presentation Ceremony are attached.
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