

10/09/2025

## **Bundaberg Regional Galleries Finalist at State Awards**

The Winners, Highly Commended and Finalists of the **2025 Gallery and Museum Achievement Awards** (GAMAA) were proudly announced by Museums & Galleries Queensland (M&G QLD) on Tuesday 9 September, at a special awards presentation hosted by Museum of Brisbane. Special guest, **Hon John-Paul Langbroek MP, Minister for Education and the Arts**, congratulated this year's recipients and presented the winners with individually crafted trophies by artists Vanessa Cannon, Laurence Gibson, Gregory Salt, and Lorna Shuan, from the Yalanji Arts Collective, Kuku Yalanji Country, Mossman Gorge, Far North Queensland.

**Bundaberg Regional Galleries** was acknowledged with a **Finalist** award in the category of **Projects: Organisations with 7+ FTE Paid Staff** for its powerful community arts initiative, ***Zapatos Rojos (Red Shoes)***.

*Zapatos Rojos* was a transformative project that raised awareness of domestic and family violence through public art and deep community engagement. Originating from Mexican artist Elina Chauvet, the project was brought to Bundaberg in 2024, culminating in a striking installation of 544 red-painted shoes, each symbolising a life affected by violence.

Launched by Vanessa Fowler OAM, sister of Allison Baden-Clay, the project engaged 660 participants across schools, emergency services, and community groups through 30 workshops and outreach sessions. These sessions fostered peer-to-peer conversations, education, and healing, with emotional safety embedded throughout the process. The project was overseen by Gallery Director, Rebecca McDuff, a qualified psychologist. Staff were involved in sessions with an experienced Lifeline counsellor, and all participants were given an opportunity to debrief before leaving a session and provided with resources for external support.

Partnerships were numerous, including the Allison Baden-Clay Foundation, Zonta Club, Public and private secondary schools, Queensland Police Service, Queensland Ambulance Service, Queensland Fire Services, State Emergency Services, Wide Bay Hospital and Health Services, Lifeline, and other community organisations.

The final installation, unveiled during the 16 Days of Activism at the Bundaberg Botanic Gardens, was viewed by over 55,000 people. Visitors were invited to reflect and contribute to a guest wall, which received 175 heartfelt messages. The project honoured the artist's vision while tailoring it to local needs, with two pairs of shoes sent to Chauvet's international collection and Allison Baden-Clay's ballet slippers accessioned into the Gallery's collection.

*Zapatos Rojos* exemplifies the power of art to drive social change, spark dialogue, and unite communities in action against domestic violence.



The judging panel praised Bundaberg Regional Galleries' professionalism and sensitivity in raising public awareness of this serious societal issue through their impactful community art project.

**Museums & Galleries Queensland (M&G QLD) Executive Director, Rebekah Butler** said, "Our congratulations to Bundaberg Regional Galleries for their powerful installation, *Zapatos Rojos*. We commend the Gallery's leadership in establishing meaningful partnerships throughout the Bundaberg and Wide Bay community, and beyond internationally. The Gallery excelled in addressing such a challenging and pressing issue through the lens of public art, taking care throughout the process in supporting not only attendees and participants, but the artists, Gallery staff and the involved community organisations."

Ms Butler continued, "This year, we undertook a comprehensive review of the award categories and introduced several new ones, which led to an unexpectedly high number of nominations. This response is a testament to the remarkable work being done by museums and galleries of all sizes throughout Queensland. It is a privilege to shine a spotlight on the achievements of so many deserving individuals and organisations."

**Minister for the Arts, John-Paul Langbroek**, said, "Queensland has more than 400 museums and galleries, all of which play an important role in sharing our stories, activating and connecting communities and attracting visitors to our regions."

"Congratulations to everyone who has taken part in this year's Gallery and Museum Achievement Awards, which celebrate individuals and organisations who support community and visitor engagement with arts and cultural experiences."

"The Crisafulli Government is proud to invest in Museums & Galleries Queensland through the Organisations Fund 2026-29, which supports delivery of our 10-year arts and culture strategy, *Queensland's Time to Shine* and its vision for a thriving creative sector supporting a statewide vibrant arts scene."

Now in its twenty-first 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 2025 GAMAA are proudly supported by the **Museum of Brisbane** and sponsored by **Public Galleries Queensland** and **Australian Museums and Galleries Association Queensland**.

The 2025 GAMAA trophies are generously supported by **Brian Tucker**.

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- ABN 32 109 874 811 is supported by the  
Queensland Government through Arts Queensland.