

10/09/2025

State Library of Queensland 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.

The **State Library of Queensland** was recognised as a **Finalist** in the category of **Projects: Organisations with 7+ FTE Paid Staff** for its innovative exhibition, **Neon**.

This remarkable show not only attracted the Library's highest recorded exhibition attendance of 26,842 visitors over its nine-week display (6 December 2024 to 9 February 2025), but also energised the Library's public engagement strategy through its vibrant display of Queensland's neon signage history.

Featuring items from the Library's collection, the exhibition also showcased 26 original neon signs from Gold Coast Motels, Stephan's iconic rainbow, to the 1947 Welcome Cross. It captivated audiences and transported them into the golden era of neon signage (1940s-2000s), evoking collective memories and offering new perspectives on Queensland's history.

In addition to the exhibition, the State Library's *Neon* cinema program offered free film sessions during the summer holidays, attracting over 300 attendees.

A key achievement of the *Neon* exhibition was the State Library's commitment to sustainability and safety. The Library pioneered safe exhibition practices by addressing the complexities of exhibiting hazardous materials, such as mercury in neon tubes, while implementing comprehensive risk management protocols. These new safety guidelines are now being adopted by cultural organisations across Australia.

The 2025 GAMAA panel commended the State Library's leadership, cross-team collaboration, and detailed logistical coordination in delivering this immersive, nostalgic Neon experience. The creative streetscape-inspired design, augmented with archival footage, photographs and other memorabilia, heightened audience engagement and fostered a deep connection that resonated with the community.

Neon stands as a testament to the State Library's dedication to innovation, sustainability, workplace health and safety, and cultural engagement.

Museums & Galleries Queensland (M&G QLD) Executive Director, Rebekah Butler, said "We congratulate the State Library of Queensland for presenting a project that explores Queensland's social history through the unique and vibrant medium of neon signs. We further commend the Library on its meticulous approach to safe exhibition practices, which has set a benchmark for safety standards when working with these materials."

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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