

10/09/2025

The Condensery – Somerset Regional Art Gallery

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 Condensery – Somerset Regional Art Gallery received a **Finalist** award in the category of **Projects: Organisations with 1-6 FTE Paid Staff** for its exhibition, ***Volatile Terrain***.

Volatile Terrain was the inaugural exhibition for The Condensery's *Harvest Biennial*, launched in 2025. Prioritising the development of new work by emerging local artists, while mentoring them and positioning their practices alongside nationally and internationally recognised peers, has made a remarkable impact on the Somerset region, strengthening artistic practice and delivering engaging cultural experiences for the broader community. Led by The Condensery's curator, Madeline Brewer, and guest curator, Cara-Ann Simpson, the exhibition brought together local artists Naomi McKenzie, Shirley Gregor, Sandi Hook, Jim Filmer and Cassandra Hodgins with nationally acclaimed artists Bonita Ely, Dylan Sarra, Judy Watson, Kate Geck, Marion Drew, Megan Cope, Keg de Souza and Prita Tina Yeganeh, fostering a rich dialogue around environmental and cultural themes.

Over a two-year development phase, local artists engaged in workshops and received mentorship through peer-to-peer learning, which enhanced their skills, confidence and professional networks. This experience has had ripple effects for participating local artists, leading to new and significant professional opportunities beyond the region.

Volatile Terrain was accompanied by a dynamic public program, including artist talks and community workshops, which successfully attracted new audiences, significantly raising the profile of Somerset's creative scene. Feedback from attendees highlighted the exhibition as their first encounter with contemporary art, marking a significant step towards inclusivity in the arts. The *Harvest Biennial's* innovative model and community-driven approach have created an important cultural legacy for the region and paved the way for the next guest curator and cohort of artists in 2027.

The 2025 GAMAA judging panel applauded The Condensery's place-responsive approach to developing this initiative, and commended its prioritising of mentorship, capacity building, collaboration and community engagement.

Museums & Galleries Queensland (M&G QLD) Executive Director, Rebekah Butler, said "*Volatile Terrain* reflects The Condensery's ongoing commitment to showcasing and celebrating the Somerset Region's creative stories. We commend the Gallery's efforts in fostering skills development by pairing emerging local and nationally recognised artists, while delivering an environmentally aware and culturally rich *Biennial* that benefits the whole community."

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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