

14/10/2019

DR VALERIE KEENAN

Winner at State Awards

The Winners and Finalists of the **2019 Gallery and Museum Achievement Awards** (GAMAA) were proudly announced on Thursday 19 September at a special presentation event, held at the recently opened Cairns Performing Arts Centre, Far North Queensland.

Dr Valerie Keenan, in her role as Art Centre Manager of Girringun Aboriginal Art Centre in Cardwell, North Queensland, was announced as **Winner** for her outstanding achievement in the category of Individuals: Paid Staff.

Valerie is recognised for the sustained effort and dedication she has shown in her position as Art Centre Manager. A passionate advocate and leader, Valerie has worked with the Centre from the outset when it first received full-time funding in 2008.

Valerie has enabled real jobs for staff, volunteers and trainees. Her multiple duties have included: arts program development, business plan development; staff hire, training and funding; administration; grant writing and acquittals; exhibition development; professional development opportunities; media and promotion; merchandise development; and research – not to mention, bus driver; cook; and more!

Under Valerie's guidance, major highlights for the Centre have included solo and group exhibitions in places such as Monaco, Paris, Canada, and numerous Australian venues. Girringun artists are represented in major collections including the British Museum, National Gallery of Australia, National Museum of Australia, and many private collections.

A major exhibition of Girringun artists' works, *Manggan - gather, gathers, gathering*, is currently touring five states of Australia.

Under Valerie's direction, the Centre has also successfully completed public art projects in Monaco and many in Australia, including the Queensland Rail Tilt Train Art+Place Project, Bagu on the Foreshore in Cardwell, Strand Ephemera in Townsville, and most recently, the Cairns Performing Arts Centre.

During her time at the Centre, Valerie has completed her PhD, and was personally awarded the Vida Lahey Memorial Travel Scholarship 2019 (Queensland Art Gallery | GOMA) to research Norwegian Explorer Carl Lumholtz who undertook exploration of parts of the Girringun region in the 1880s. Findings from this study will result in an exhibition and be included in the Girringun archives. Valerie is currently in Norway undertaking this study.

Museums & Galleries Queensland (M&G QLD) Executive Director, Rebekah Butler said, "As the Winner in this category, Dr Valerie Keenan is recognised for her remarkable commitment, dedication, leadership and vision in her role as Art Centre Manager of Girringun Aboriginal Art Centre. She is also commended for her generosity and the support provided to all those she has worked with."

The GAMAA were established by Museums & Galleries Queensland in 2004 to honour the achievements of our State's individuals and organisations in striving towards excellence.

Robert Ryan, the Senior Co-ordinator Community Programs for Mackay Regional Council and 2019 GAMAA judge, presented awards to this year's Winners and Finalists. The Winners received an exquisitely crafted trophy by Queensland artist, Lucy Quinn. Commissioned by M&G QLD, the trophies are generously sponsored by our long-standing Awards supporter, Brian Tucker Accounting.

The awards were hosted at Cairns Performing Arts Centre in front of representatives of Queensland's public museum and gallery sector, including delegates of M&G QLD's 2019 State Conference, *Opening Doors*, also presented in Cairns.

M&G QLD acknowledges the tremendous support of the 2019 GAMAA sponsors: Brandi Projects; Cairns Regional Council; Brian Tucker Accounting; Public Galleries Queensland; and Australian Museums and Galleries Association (Queensland).

For the full list of GAMAA Winners and Finalists see: <http://www.magsq.com.au/cms/page.asp?ID=5036>

For media enquiries or images, please contact:

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