

Gallery & museum sector award winners announced

2009 IMAGinE awards

Representatives of galleries and museums from metropolitan and regional NSW and the ACT gathered at the Australian National Maritime Museum in Sydney on Saturday night (17 October 2009) for the presentation of the **2009 IMAGinE awards**. Celebrity host Peter Berner added an element of humour to the cocktail event which saw over 100 arts volunteers and professionals from across the state come together to acknowledge their peers.

Now in their second year, the IMAGinE awards celebrate the achievements of both the professional and volunteer-run museums and galleries in NSW and the ACT and those who work within them.

This year saw 64 nominations across five categories including collection management, exhibitions and education, as well as awards for excellence for both organisations and individuals. The categories are sub-divided into organisations with more than six paid staff, less than six paid staff and volunteer-run organisations.

The Western Sydney region proved to be a strong force, with cutting-edge facility Campbelltown Arts Centre and the Parramatta Heritage Centre being chosen as joint winners in the Organisational Award for Excellence and Thelma Scanes, a volunteer with Old Government House in Parramatta picking up an Individual Award for Excellence.

The Northern Rivers region was also strongly awarded with the Richmond River Historical Society winning in two categories: Collections Management and Volunteer Organisational Award for Excellence.

Western Plains Cultural Centre, a state-of-the-art facility in Dubbo was acknowledged for their education and public programs, as was Lake Macquarie City Art Gallery in the Hunter region of NSW.

Other regional organisations who received awards included the Berrima District Museum in the Southern Highlands for Exhibitions and Walgett Historical Society in the North West of NSW for Education and Public Engagement.

"These awards are a fantastic way to highlight the vital role that museums and galleries play in the cultural life of their communities and as custodians of the cultural material that defines us all", said Maisy Stapleton, CEO of Museums & Galleries NSW which initiated the awards.

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The awards are an initiative of Museums & Galleries NSW, Museums Australia (NSW & ACT), and Regional & Public Galleries NSW and are sponsored by macforbes wines, Mental Media and the Australian National Maritime Museum. *Museums & Galleries NSW is assisted by the NSW Government through Arts NSW, under Communities NSW.*

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