Museums & Galleries of NSW



inspiring museums and galleries in excellence

ii / IMAGinE Awards 2025

Acknowledgement of Country

Museums & Galleries of NSW acknowledges the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation and all the other Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we live and work.

We pay respect to them as First Nations people with continuing connection to land, place, waters and community.

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Foreword





On behalf of Museums & Galleries of NSW, we congratulate all the outstanding nominees for the 2025 IMAGinE Awards.

Museums, galleries and Aboriginal cultural spaces are central to the liveability and social cohesion of our communities, whether located in metropolitan or Western Sydney, or in regional or remote areas of the state, and whether large cultural institutions, volunteerled organisations or medium-sized facilities run by local government. They each play an essential role in telling important local stories, preserving cultural heritage for future generations, serving as launch pads for artists and cultural workers, and supporting local economies through cultural tourism and job creation.

The IMAGinE Awards recognise and honour this work and provide an opportunity to bring the sector together to celebrate their collective achievements of the previous twelve months.

Across the categories of Exhibitions, Engagement, and Access and Inclusion programs (presented in partnership with Accessible Arts NSW), there has been an increasing range of projects that focus on diverse and marginalised voices, prioritise access for all, and ensure safe spaces for communities. This also extends to the increasing number of organisations working closely with NSW Aboriginal communities

and First Nations artists. These projects play a crucial role in developing relationships, deepening understanding and valuing the contribution of Indigenous knowledge on contemporary life.

The Awards also acknowledge the achievements of individuals, with the Volunteer Achievement Award recognising the many volunteers working in the sector. These individuals tirelessly serve their communities and institutions, often in the face of extremely limited budgets and resources.

The Aboriginal Culture, Heritage & Arts Association (ACHAA) Award for Excellence by an Aboriginal Curator highlights exceptional curatorial practice from First Nations curators in New South Wales.

Despite the numerous challenges facing our sector, this publication offers an inspiring snapshot of the incredible work museums, galleries, and Aboriginal cultural spaces are doing across the state. We thank them all for enriching the state's cultural life.

Kylie Tung Chair, Museums & Galleries of NSW

Brett Adlington CEO, Museums & Galleries of NSW





Major Sponsor: International Conservation Services

International Conservation Services (ICS) is Australia's largest private conservation practice. Founded by practising conservators more than 35 years ago, ICS has continuously worked to provide museum-grade conservation skills and services to smaller museums and galleries that might otherwise find these services hard to access.

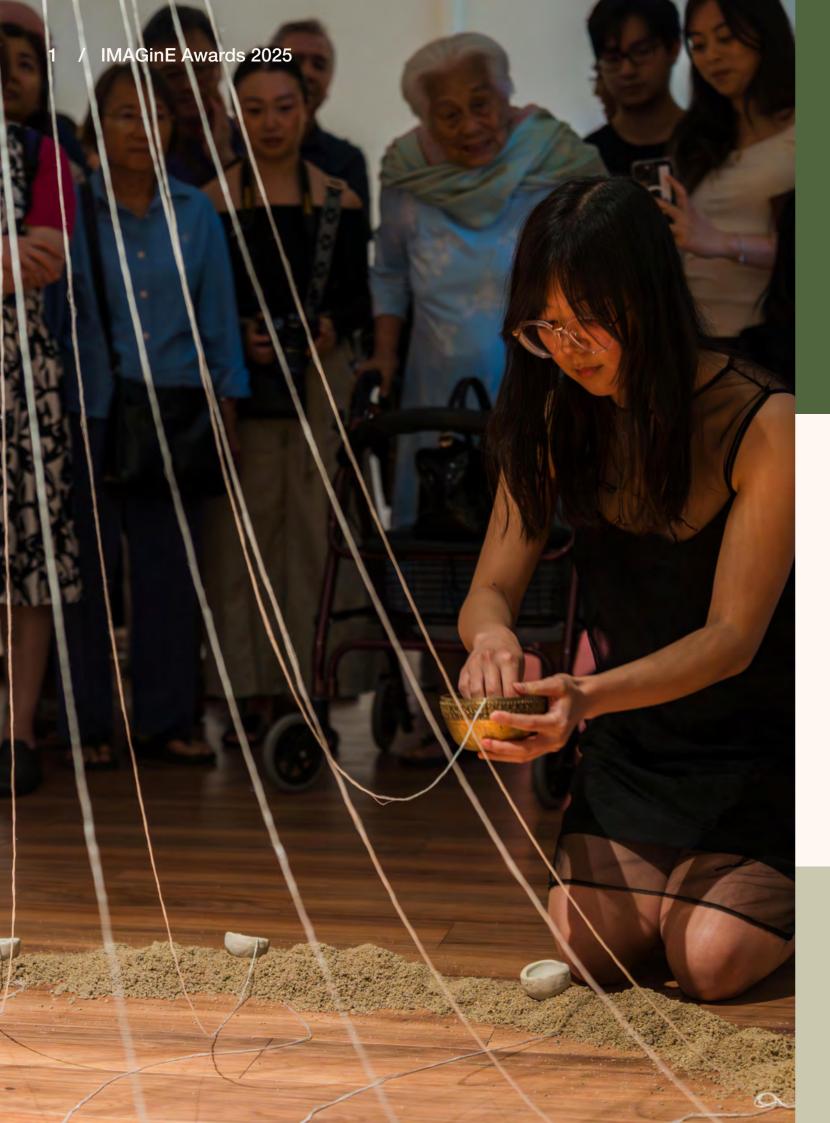
Our vision back in the 1980s responded to a need for conservation and collection care amongst smaller cultural organisations outside the major state institutions, who typically have their own conservation departments.

We continue to provide an award winning comprehensive service, whether it is hands on treatment of paintings, works on paper, objects, furniture, sculptures and textiles or broader consulting services on disaster planning and response, mould prevention, storage design or creating safe environments for collections.

We work throughout NSW for art galleries, museums, historic sites, house museums and historical societies, bringing our own mix of high quality conservation combined with a pragmatic and practical approach, all driven by our ongoing passion for the work we do.







Exhibition Projects Award

Nominations in the Exhibition Projects Award demonstrate excellence and innovation in permanent and temporary exhibitions, exhibition practice, design, publications and resources, and exhibition partnerships.

One award is given in each of the following categories:

- Small gallery or visual arts organisations
- Medium gallery or visual arts organisations
- Volunteer museum or heritage organisations
- Small museum or heritage organisations
- Medium museum or heritage organisations
- Major metropolitan institutions

Galleries / Visual Arts Projects

Small or Volunteer Organisations

4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art

Man&Wah: Propagate|Germinate|Bloom

This major VACS-supported commission transformed 4A into a lush, cosmic botanical environment of sound, film, and large-scale print. Created by Hong Kong-born, Brisbane-based duo Man&Wah, the exhibition intertwined migration, ecology, and identity, offering an immersive, multilingual, and community-driven experience that made contemporary art accessible, inclusive, and deeply connected to place.





Bankstown Arts Centre

3rd Bankstown Biennale: Same Same/Different

Co-curated by Coby Edgar, Jason Wing and Rachael Kiang, Same Same/Different explored equitable multiculturalism and respectful coexistence through First Nations worldviews of interconnectedness. Featuring 17 First Nations and CaLD artists, the Biennale transformed the Centre's indoor and outdoor spaces into a dynamic flow of sound, installation and performance, celebrating shared humanity while honouring cultural connection. Presented in partnership with Sydney Festival 2025.

Bathurst Regional Art Gallery

Dhuluny: the war that never ended

Curated by Wiradyuri/Kamilaroi curator Jonathan Jones with Wirribee Aunty Leanna Carr, Dhuluny: the war that never ended commemorated 200 years since the 1824 Declaration of Martial Law in Bathurst. Meaning "the direct or gospel truth," **Dhuluny** shared Wiradyuri perspectives on frontier conflict and resilience through works by contemporary and historical Wiradyuri artists. Developed with the Wiradyuri community, the exhibition embodied truth-telling and celebrated the resilience of the Wiradyuri Nation.



Bondi Pavilion Art Gallery Karla Dickens: Rise and Fall



Rise and Fall, a major new work by acclaimed Wiradjuri artist Karla Dickens, reimagines the mermaid mythologies of Bondi through a post-apocalyptic lens. Commissioned by Waverley Council and curated by Daniel Mudie Cunningham, the exhibition responds to the devastating 2022 Lismore floods, confronting climate catastrophe from a First Nations perspective. Dickens created a powerful narrative of resilience and survival that reflects the realities of our climate emergency, while also inspiring hope and action through the power of First Nations' storytelling.

Bondi Pavilion Art Gallery

Souter's Bondi

Curated by Todd Fuller, Souter's Bondi celebrated Waverley's Art Deco Centenary by reuniting David Henry Souter's iconic Bondi murals with contemporary responses. Featuring works by Gerwyn Davies, Maz Dixon, Billy Bain, Cigdem Aydemir, Anne Zahalka, Samuel Leighton-Dore, Paul Blackmore and Lillian O'Neil, the exhibition reinterpreted Souter's imagery through contemporary lenses of identity, inclusion and place. Presented in partnership with the Australian National Maritime Museum, the project bridged Bondi's cultural history with modern perspectives on community and change.



Fairfield City Museum & Gallery

Within Heaven and Earth

Within Heaven and Earth brings together seven artists exploring identity, cultural memory, and healing through spirituality, rituals, and storytelling. Works by Agus Wijaya, Celine Cheung, Jess Bradford, Kean Onn See, Linda Sok, Tianli Zu, and Vipoo Srivilasa are complemented by responses from emerging musicians and writers, creating a collaborative, multi-dimensional dialogue that celebrates Asian Australian heritage and the renewal of cultural traditions.

Firstdraft

Guruwa gunya (gum tree home)

Muruwari artist Dr Virginia Keft's immersive solo exhibition Guruwa gunya (gum tree *home)* invited audiences to an experiential and sensory encounter that blended concepts of Country and the natural world of the Australian bushland, with the domestic and urban space of 'home'. The exhibition encouraged audiences to reflect on their own understanding of home, while acknowledging the deep connections that Aboriginal peoples hold with Country and place—connections that span time, distance, and place.



Firstdraft

still waters run deep



still waters run deep was a collaborative exhibition with Cementa, curated by Hester Lyon, which brought together five artists from Wilyakali and Barkindji Country: Barbara Quayle, Blake Griffiths, Dan Schulz, Tannya Quayle, and Verity Nunan. Developed through immersive gatherings on Country, the exhibition explored connections to home, community, and environment, reflecting the social, cultural, and ecological landscapes of Broken Hill and Menindee while linking regional and metropolitan audiences.



Gosford Regional Gallery

25 Moments: Reimagining Twenty-Five Years of Art

Celebrating its 25th anniversary, Gosford Regional Gallery reflects on nearly 500 exhibitions since 2000 in 25 Moments: Reimagining Twenty-Five Years of Art. Featuring 25 key exhibitions and 31 artists, the exhibition highlights the gallery's curatorial evolution, iconic works, and new commissions, showcasing its enduring impact on the Central Coast's cultural landscape and contributions to contemporary Australian art.



Goulburn Regional Art Gallery

Sammy Hawker: Conversations with bees

Conversations with bees by Kamberri/ Canberra-based artist Sammy Hawker explores grief, ecological loss, and interspecies reciprocity through photography, text, and moving image. Developed during a regional residency on Gundungurra/Ngunawal Country, the exhibition placed artworks within beehives, creating a unique dialogue between humans and the more-thanhuman world. Immersive and poetic, it reflects ecological awareness, ritual, and community engagement.

Goulburn Regional Art Gallery

Horizons

Horizons brought together nine contemporary Australian artists to explore the intersections of body, environment, and the built environment. Spanning photography, sculpture, installation, and video, the exhibition engaged with local and national ecologies, cultural histories, and identity. Bold and multidisciplinary, *Horizons* demonstrated that the gallery continues to champion diverse voices, engage broad audiences and contribute meaningfully to the contemporary arts landscape in NSW and beyond.



Hawkesbury Regional Gallery

Burnt Into Memory -Dancing with the Devil

Burnt into Memory evolved from the documentary Dancing with the Devil, capturing stories from the Hawkesbury community during the 2019-2020 bushfires. Expanding into a major exhibition, it brought together artists with firsthand experience in the fire zone to reflect on loss, resilience and recovery. Combining trauma-informed practice with art, the project fostered healing, empathy and connection across fire-affected communities.

Lismore Regional Gallery

Buruugaa Garaa Buruu Garaa Budgeramgali (Saltwater People Freshwater People Stories)

Co-curated with Melissa Ladkin, this exhibition featured works by Amrita Hepi, Joshua Lynch, Djon Mundine OAM and Uncle Roy Gordon. Exploring spiritual and customary relationships with water through choreography, spoken word and sound, it reflected ancestral knowledge and contemporary storytelling, marking Lismore Regional Gallery's post-flood reopening with a strong First Nations-led vision.



Line 1/h

Macquarie University Art Gallery

Ken Unsworth: Love is the Sweetest Thing

At 94, acclaimed artist Ken Unsworth presented five new large-scale works exploring love, loss and memory through poetic, theatrical installations. Blending sculpture, performance and sound, the exhibition offers an uncompromising view of our shared humanity, while reaffirming Unsworth's enduring influence and the role of university galleries in championing significant yet underrecognised Australian artists.

Museum of Art and Culture, yapang

Truth Tell

To understand the present, we must confront the past. *Truth Tell* delves into the learned narratives of early colonisation, and the deep impacts on Aboriginal people during this period. The exhibition draws on historical accounts of events during a time of land dispossession and cultural disruption, inviting an exploration of the complexities of learned histories.



Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre, Singleton Arts + Cultural Centre with Arts Upper Hunter

LiddellWORKS

exhibition that invited 16 artists to respond creatively to the decommissioning of the Liddell Power Station. Featuring diverse new works, the project reflected on history, community and the carbon transition, capturing the site's industrial, social and environmental legacy. Presented across Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre and Singleton Arts + Cultural Centre, the exhibition explored themes of transformation, memory and regional identity.

Exhibition Projects: Galleries / Visual Arts / 14

Performance Arts Culture Cessnock

Con.fluence: contemporary ceramics from kil.n.it and Hunter region artists

Con.fluence brought together 42 contemporary ceramic artists from Sydney's kil.n.it experimental ceramics studio and the Hunter region in a dynamic cross-regional collaboration celebrating the diversity and innovation of contemporary ceramic practice. The exhibition showcased works ranging from functional forms to experimental installations, bridging urban and regional communities through shared creativity and exchange.



Tamworth Regional Gallery

Overhead and Underneath -Lessons in Observation

Overhead and Underneath invited audiences to pause and observe the world above and below, fostering awareness of the present moment. The exhibition brought together artists from Albury and Tamworth, including First Nations artists, to respond to our natural environment in a way that only deep observation and a direct response to place can provide. Complemented by workshops, meditation and yoga sessions, the project encouraged skill exchange, reflection and community engagement.



The Lock-Up

Khaled Sabsabi



Khaled Sabsabi at The Lock-Up was the most extensive survey of the Lebanese Australian artist's career, spanning nearly two decades. Featuring major multi-channel video works and new collaborative paintings with community organiser TUNZ, the exhibition explored belonging, conflict, memory and resilience with poetic force, affirming Sabsabi's cultural significance and The Lock-Up's leadership in presenting nationally relevant contemporary art.

UNSW Galleries

Sarah Contos: Eye Lash Horizon

Eye Lash Horizon was the first comprehensive survey of Sydney-based artist Sarah Contos, uniting two decades of multidisciplinary practice. Curated by Karen Hall, the exhibition transformed UNSW Galleries into four immersive environments themed around the brain, womb, belly, and soul. Combining textiles, video, sculpture, and found objects, it explored memory, emotion, and transformation through a richly layered and immersive experience.



Verge Gallery You're Welcome?



You're Welcome? questioned what it means to be welcome in Australia. Curated by Dharug artist Billy Bain and timed with Invasion Day and USYD's Welcome Week, the exhibition featured ten emerging artists exploring multicultural identity, belonging, and exclusion. Through humour, storytelling, and inclusive design, it created a counter-space for critical reflection and dialogue on Australia's often hostile and unwelcoming national consciousness.





Galleries / Visual Arts Projects

Medium Organisations

Australian Design Centre

Crafted Liberation

Initiated by Iranian-Australian designer Nila Rezaei, through RK Collective, *Crafted* **Liberation** is a collective action that transformed donated headscarves from Iranian women into stadium seats as a statement of women's empowerment. These headscarves, once symbols of enforced tradition, now embody personal choice and resilience.



Australian Design Centre

Vipoo Srivilasa: re/JOY

re/JOY is ceramic artist Vipoo Srivilasa's most significant project to date, transforming seven broken ceramic objects, each donated by someone with their own migration story, into new works celebrating resilience and belonging. Curated by Lisa Cahill and developed with curator Tian Zhang, **re/JOY** is a collaborative exploration of migration stories and how people build their lives in Australia. Touring nationally with support from Creative Australia and the Visions of Australia program.



Blacktown Arts

A Real Experience

A Real Experience celebrated senior-career female artists connected to Blacktown through works from the Blacktown City Art Collection and the Garage Graphix archive. Centred on Vivienne Binns' landmark Mothers' Memories, Others' Memories, the exhibition explored women's stories, advocacy and activism. A new collaboration with the Older Women's Network, led by Amani Haydar, extended this legacy, amplifying the voices of local women today.



Blue Mountains Cultural Centre Cunning Revived

Cunning Revived explored ritual and ceremony through the practices of nine women artists, re-examining the misrepresented history of 'cunning folk', community healers and knowledge keepers. Curated in-house, the exhibition invited audiences to consider how women's contributions have been omitted from history. Featuring interactive works and participatory performances, it encouraged reflection on empowerment, spirituality, and our cultural connection to the natural world.



Campbelltown Arts Centre

Marikit Santiago: Proclaim Your Death!

Proclaim Your Death! was a major solo exhibition by Filipino-Australian artist Marikit Santiago. Combining painting, installation, and family collaboration, the exhibition explored displacement, identity, and resilience. Anchored by a large-scale cardboard installation of San Augustin Church and featuring oil paintings, watercolours, and video, it engaged over 500 participants through workshops, public programs, and an education kit, merging personal and collective narratives into a profound dialogue on survival and cultural memory.



Grafton Regional Gallery

True North: From the Forest Floor

True North: From the Forest Floor is the inaugural exhibition in the gallery's True North series, showcasing the dynamic practices of Northern Rivers artists. Curated by Christine Willcocks, the exhibition connects artists, community, and country through works inspired by the region's subtropical rainforests, Big Scrub, and coastal forests, reflecting the vital relationship between artists working across painting, installation, sculpture, film, sound and performance in the Northern Rivers.



Bulaan Buruugaa Ngali celebrates the rich woven histories and identities of Bundjalung women, connecting ancestral knowledge with contemporary practice. Touring Grafton, Lismore, and Murwillumbah, the exhibition presents new works by First Nations artists responding to their great-grandmothers' weaving, alongside historic objects from the Australian Museum. Artists including Bindimu, Janelle Duncan, Madeleine Grace, Lauren Jarrett, Tania Marlowe, Bianca Monaghan, Krystal Randall, Rhoda Roberts

AO, Kyra Togo, and Margaret Torrens breathe

new life into ancient weaving traditions.



Hazelhurst Arts Centre

Sanctuary: 25 Years of Hazelhurst Arts

Hazelhurst Arts Centre

Sanctuary: 25 Years of

Centre celebrates the strength and diversity of Hazelhurst's artistic legacy. Featuring 25 artists who have shaped the Centre's history, the exhibition reflects on its past while signalling an engaging future. Drawn from local and national talent, the exhibition explored themes of retreat, respite, and contemplation, which underlines the gallery as a welcoming and accessible space.



Lewers: Penrith Regional Gallery

Blak Douglas: The Halfway Line

Blak Douglas: The Halfway Line was a landmark mid-career survey that traces the artist's thirty-year journey from early graphic design to award-winning portraiture. Co-curated by Djon Mundine OAM and Toby Chapman, the exhibition focused on the emergence of Douglas's iconic aesthetic and voice, speaking truth to power, and attracted record audiences through major loans, new works, and extensive public and education programs.



Lewers: Penrith Regional Gallery

Spot the Difference

Spot the Difference explored the myth of the elusive panther, its symbolic identity, and local significance. Bringing together emerging and established artists from Western Sydney, Greater Sydney, and interstate, the exhibition blended local lore, legend, and contemporary storytelling. Through newly commissioned and existing works, it engaged new audiences, celebrated community identity, and fostered inclusivity, attracting 25,000 visitors and highlighting the gallery's capacity for bold, locally resonant, and conceptually ambitious programming.

Liverpool Powerhouse | Yellamundie Art Gallery

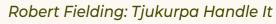
Giving Voice: Celebrating the History of the Liverpool Women's Health Centre

Giving Voice marked the Centre's 50th anniversary through archival materials and new artworks exploring five decades of activism, care, and resilience. Developed with local partners, the exhibition featured artists Louise Whelan, Susan O'Doherty, Susan Grant Murphy, and Diana Baker Smith, with Kate Blackmore, and celebrated art's enduring role in community empowerment and social change.



Maitland Regional Art Gallery

Robert Fielding: Tjukurpa Handle it



showcased the multidisciplinary practice of Yankunytjatjara and Western Arrernte artist Robert Fielding, exploring cultural continuity, resilience, and truth-telling. Developed in partnership with Mimili Maku Arts and Mindaribba Local Aboriginal Arts Council, the project fostered deep exchange between Central Desert and Wonnarua artists, resulting in new collaborations, mentorships, and enduring cultural and creative connections.





New England Regional Art Museum

Inner/Space: Helen Eager

Inner/Space: Helen Eager was a major survey exhibition at the NERAM, tracing Eager's evolution from interiors and still life to bold abstraction. Bringing together works from NERAM's collection, the artist, and Utopia Art Sydney, the exhibition illuminated Eager's mastery of colour, light, and form while deepening public engagement with abstraction in contemporary art.

Orange Regional Gallery

Conversations with Clarice Beckett

Conversations with Clarice Beckett presented new works by eight Central West artists responding to Beckett's life and practice. Following a research visit to the National Gallery of Australia, the artists created works in painting, photography, sculpture, and ceramics. Shown alongside Clarice Beckett: Paintings from the National Collection, the exhibition connected regional practice with Beckett's enduring inspiration and legacy.



Wollongong Art Gallery

Greetings from Wollongong

Greetings from Wollongong, celebrated the City's legacy of activism and creativity. Guest curated by Kaylene Milner, the exhibition showcased Redback Graphix, filmmaker Mary Callaghan, alongside invited and collection artists. Through art, fashion, film, and music, it explored Wollongong's enduring spirit of resistance, reframing local histories with a feminist and intergenerational lens, while connecting archival and contemporary works to broader conversations on social change.



Museums/Heritage & Galleries/Visual Arts

Major Metropolitan Institutions

Chau Chak Wing Museum, The **University of Sydney**

Mungari: Fishing, Resistance, Return

Mungari celebrated the return of four Gweagal spears taken by James Cook in 1770. Guided by Gweagal descendants and the Dharawal community, the exhibition displayed the spears alongside traditional fishing tools and contemporary works, honouring cultural resilience, continuity of knowledge, and community-led repatriation. Designed as a culturally safe space for truthtelling and community engagement.



Museums of History NSW

Seeing Sydney, Knowing Country

Seeing Sydney, Knowing Country explores the development of the NSW colony through historical maps, plans, artworks and objects from MHNSW and other collections. Developed with artist Alison Page and the Sydney Coastal Aboriginal Women's Group, the exhibition layers First Nations understandings of Country over colonial perspectives, using design and storytelling to reveal enduring connections to land and evolving perceptions of place.



State Library of NSW

Dr Bronwyn Bancroft AM: The Country Cries for Truth

The Country Cries for Truth presented works created by Bundjalung artist Dr Bronwyn Bancroft, during her First Nations Creative Fellowship at the State Library of NSW. Through painting, storytelling and family artefacts, Dr Bancroft reclaimed her ancestral lands and exposed the enduring impact of colonisation. The exhibition calls for us to pause and consider the devastation of colonisation for Aboriginal people, and to remember the complex and painful legacies of this history.



Museums / Heritage Projects

Volunteer Organisations

Adelong Alive Museum

Childhood Pastimes

Childhood Pastimes celebrated the diverse fruits of the imagination, ingenuity and craftsmanship through an eclectic exhibition featuring over a hundred examples of entertaining and instructive activities from the early 19th century to the 1970s, sparking curiosity in children and memories in adults. The exhibition showcased how our history is shaped through stories and objects from the past.





New South Wales Lancers Memorial Museum

Lancers Memorial Wall

Lancers Memorial Wall is a restored historic artwork originally painted by a former Regiment member. It features a mounted Light Horseman, the Regimental badge, and a list of its' battle honours. The new design replaces paint with laser-cut stainless steel and wall-mounted, powder-coated elements for durability. This lasting tribute honours military heritage through the craftsmanship of dedicated volunteers.

Pilot's Cottage Museum

Aboriginal history permanent displays

Kiama Historical Society worked with respected Aboriginal Elder Dr Aunty Joyce Donovan to transform the way Aboriginal and post-settlement history is displayed and interpreted in the Pilot's Cottage Museum. This volunteer-led project quadrupled the space for Aboriginal stories, integrated them into broader narratives, and increased cultural awareness, truth telling and reconciliation. The museum now tells all the history of the area, not just of settlers, and is described as 'living' - encouraging ongoing input and discussion from Aboriginal people and others.



Port Macquarie Museum



Barayal Bila (River Song) celebrates the cultural and environmental significance of Dungang (Hastings River). Through audio and visual storytelling, the exhibition includes poetry, artworks, Birpai voices and Gathang language, highlighting the deep connections of local people to the river and inviting reflection on its natural and cultural history, and future.



Museums / Heritage Projects

Small Organisations

Fairfield City Museum & Gallery

Villawood: Between Hope and Hopelessness

Villawood has a complex history, as a testing ground for social and urban planning, a landing place for migrants and, in recent decades, it is synonymous with immigration detention. This exhibition covers a century of conflicting narratives, defining Villawood as a place in flux, caught between hope and hopelessness.





Old Government House, National Trust NSW

Fashionable Silhouettes

Fashionable Silhouettes is the latest exhibition in the Old Government House temporary exhibition program with the aim to share more of the National Trust's collection and stories and draw repeat visitation to the property. Showcasing dazzling silhouettes created by well-known Australian and international designers alongside examples made in the home or by unknown, skilled dressmakers, this exhibition celebrates statement sleeves, striking skirts, and the undergarments that helped to create them. Visitors can explore decades of fashion from a 1740s yellow silk gown through the bustle back era, leg-ofmutton sleeves and 'New Look' skirts, to the mini dresses of the 1960s.

Orange Regional Museum

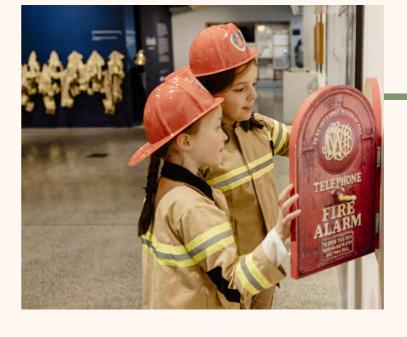
ASSEMBLE: Orange Festival of Arts 1965-1987

ASSEMBLE: Orange Festival of Arts 1965-1987 traces the ambitious history and legacy of Australia's first regional cultural festival. Featuring 50 photographs and objects, the exhibition illuminates festival highlights and personal recollections. Oral histories were recorded with 18 artists and volunteers, and the project led to significant donations to the museum's collection.



Orange Regional Museum Orange 412: A history of our local

Orange 412: A history of our local Fire Brigade

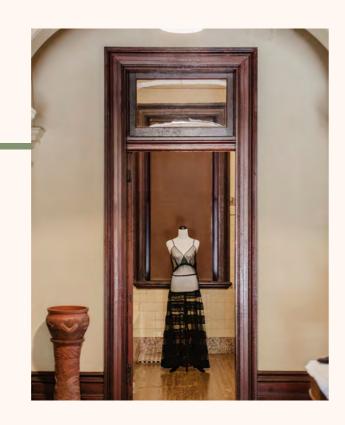


Orange 412 explored the rich history of the Orange Volunteer Fire Brigade through compelling storytelling, arresting historical images, and hands-on activities. Balancing historical depth with interactivity and play, the exhibition was a local hit, sparking community engagement and creating a welcoming space for children and families across generations. The exhibition highlighted local heritage whilst expanding ORM's regional reach, demonstrating curatorial excellence, and fostering community engagement.

Riversdale Homestead, Saumarez Homestead, and Grossmann House, **National Trust NSW**

Back to Black

Back to Black was a touring exhibition across regional NSW that explored the cultural and historical meaning of black in fashion. Regional communities accessed 150 years of textile and fashion history, benefitted from volunteer training, and engaged with high-quality displays, building local skills and connecting audiences with nationally significant heritage. **Back to Black** exemplifies excellence in heritage interpretation, outreach and capacity building—transforming a static collection into a dynamic touring experience and inspiring new conversations about fashion's



Tweed Regional Museum How To Draw A Dinosaur

How to Draw a Dinosaur combined fossils. science, and contemporary art, blurring the lines between science and imagination. One of the first dinosaur exhibitions created for and by a regional museum in Australia, it demonstrated the highest levels of curatorial quality, community relevance, and creative thinking. The exhibition's playful, hands-on approach made complex scientific ideas accessible to all ages. It achieved the highest visitation in the museum's history, increasing attendance by 131%. It was also successful in securing Regional Arts Touring funding, with a NSW regional tour now underway.



UNSW Library

Colour: Inflexions and Interactions

Tracing our understanding of colour and light, this exhibition draws on the Library collection from Newton's prism experiments to Albers' modernist theories. It explores how we perceive colour, scientific advances, the fluidity of perception, and the advent of digital systems like RGB, bringing us to the vivid screens we see today. The exhibition highlighted that colour is not just a scientific phenomenon or an artistic medium but a fundamental part of our shared human experience.



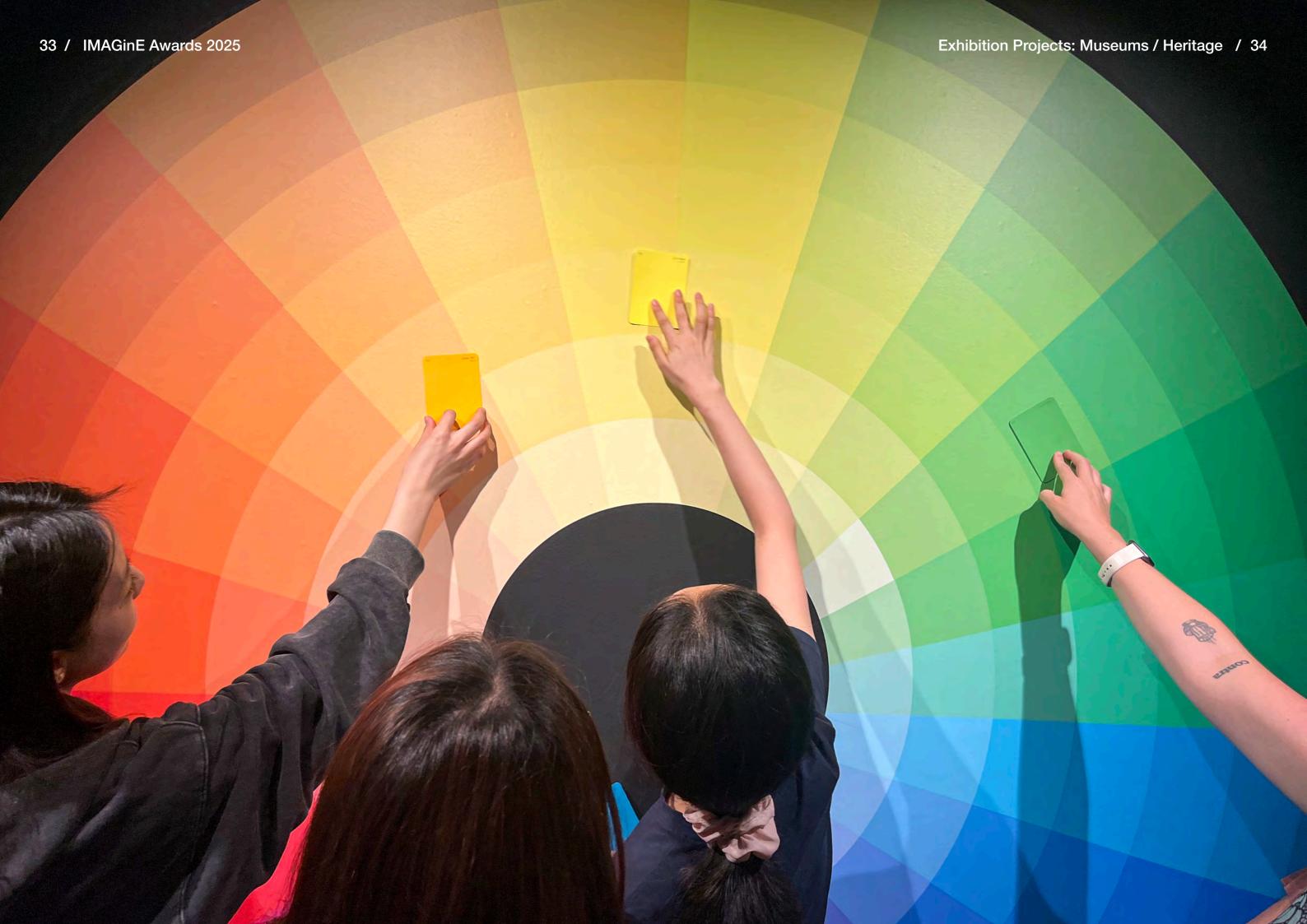
UNSW Library

Living Water: 75 years of water research at UNSW



Drawing together breakthrough studies, technological innovations, and community engagement efforts, Living Water offers insight into how scientists, engineers, artists, and researchers address complex challenges related to the stewardship of the planet's water systems and the multitude of ways water shapes existence and impacts survival.





Museums / Heritage Projects

Medium Organisations

Albury LibraryMuseum

Bungambrawatha: Stories of Albury

Bungambrawatha: Stories of Albury is the new permanent collection gallery exhibition at Albury Library Museum. It charts the history and spirit of the community through objects and photographs from the Albury City Museum & Social History Collection, charting the people and stories that make up the rich tapestry of Albury.





Hurstville Museum & Gallery

Makers & Manufacturers: The industrial history of St George

Makers & Manufacturers uncovered the industrial history of Sydney's St George region, spanning the 19th century to the 1970s. Drawing on the Hurstville Museum & Galleries collection and loans from public and private sources, the exhibition highlighted local industries and business life, shedding light on overlooked economic and community stories. The exhibition offered a vivid, multi-sensory experience through tools, machinery, photographs, advertisements, and videos that brought the region's industrial past to life.

Museum of the Riverina

Marea and the Queen's Purse

Whimsical, beautiful and engaging both children and the child within, *Marea and the Queen's Purse* was an exhibition that fused a narrative, storybook approach with historical accuracy to create an immersive exhibition and children's book about a girl from Wagga Wagga with big dreams.



Qtopia Sydney

We're Here, We're Queer



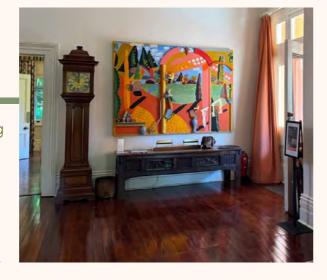
We're Here, We're Queer celebrates LGBTQIA+ pride across Australia and beyond. Featuring colourful maps, Queer terminology and bold symbolism, this exhibition transforms hidden stories into loud pride. From local bubbles to global movements, We're Here, We're Queer offers a powerful reminder of visibility, resilience and community. It exemplifies how exhibitions can go beyond traditional display to become platforms for healing, dialogue, and empowerment. It stands as a landmark project that has amplified pride, challenged invisibility, and made a lasting contribution to LGBTQIA+ storytelling in Australia.

Retford Park, National Trust NSW

Retford Park Art House – Significance Assessment and Rehang

In 2025, the National Trust completed a major rehang of the James Fairfax Collection at Retford Park, guided by a Significance Assessment, volunteer research, and accredited historical scholarship.

The project authentically reflects Fairfax's life, art, and domestic world, and defines the property's interpretation and presentation for decades to come.





Royal Flying Doctor Service Outback Heritage Experience Broken Hill

Outback Heritage Experience

The redeveloped *Outback Heritage Experience* is a world-first exhibition showcasing the RFDS's 97-year history through immersive storytelling, heritage aircraft, and digital innovation. It celebrates community resilience, cultural heritage, and healthcare evolution in remote areas of Australia, engaging diverse audiences through inclusive design and local collaboration.

Yarrila Arts and Museum

Swell Chasers: Surf Stories from the Mid North Coast

was a significant exhibition that interwove social and cultural history with the work of contemporary artists, celebrating the vibrant surf culture of the Coffs Coast region. The exhibition's thematic approach—spanning the Gumbaynggirr surfers' relationship with the land and sea, the surf lifestyle that emerged in the '60s and '70s, iconic road trips, the pioneering surf shops, clubs and schools and the rise of local legends—ensured a nuanced and inclusive narrative. It elevated the Mid North Coast's surf culture from local lore to greater recognition, fostering a sense of belonging and cultural ownership among participants and audiences.







Engagement Projects Award

The Engagement Programs Award is assessed across the museum and gallery sector. It celebrates best practice in public programs, education resources, websites and social media, community engagement and participation.

One award is given in each of the following categories:

- · Small and volunteer organisations
- Medium organisations
- Large organisations

Engagement Programs

Small and Volunteer Organisations

Australian Country Music Hall of Fame

Kids' Trail

The *Kids' Trail* is a free activity booklet designed to engage young visitors to explore the museum's collection through creativity and play. Featuring seven interactive activities, from designing guitars to finding particular objects, the trail has attracted over 5,000 participants in nine months and transformed their visits into deeper, hands-on learning experiences.





Team Trampoline

Developed by BAMM with artist Meg Wilson, *Team Trampoline* engaged more than 50 young people across the Moree Plains to design and weave trampoline mats from recycled cotton. Culminating in a public exhibition of the finished trampolines, the program built confidence, skills, and community pride through hands-on, youth-led collaboration.

Dungog Museum, Scone Museum and Tocal Homestead with Arts Upper Hunter

This Here Then Now

Produced by Arts Upper Hunter, *This Here Then Now* was a cross-regional residency connecting three small museums with contemporary artists. Artists created new works—from participatory textile projects to stop-motion film—responding to objects in each collection. The activation helped revitalise each small museum through intergenerational participation, building community pride, and deepening connection to local heritage.



Firstdraft

Baajo (Come and Dance)!







Hawkesbury Regional Museum

Ngarra Ngurang: Place of Learning

Ngarra Ngurang / Place of Learning is a living Aboriginal teaching garden co-created by the museum with Dharug Custodians, Merana Aboriginal Community Association and local community members. Blending art, culture and ecology, it celebrates Dharug knowledge and their deep connection to Country, creating a sensory space for storytelling, intergenerational learning and ongoing community-led engagement.





Lismore Regional Gallery

Art and Ageing Enrichment Program

The Art and Ageing Enrichment

Program supports the wellbeing of older adults through weekly gallery tours, morning tea and hands-on artmaking.

Guided by artist Aaron McGarry and volunteers, participants explore diverse art forms while connecting socially. Free and accessible, the program fosters intergenerational exchange, strengthens community ties, and combats isolation.

Museum of Printing

Wimble's Wayzgoose, 2025

Wimble's Wayzgoose celebrated Australian printing history through hands-on engagement with the F.T. Wimble & Co. Collection. Over a weekend, more than 250 participants joined in workshops, demonstrations, a print swap and a large collaborative block print. Designed for all ages, the volunteer-led event fostered community pride and activated local heritage by bridging the past and present through active participation.





Orange Regional Museum

History Futures

History Futures is a full-day education program that connects Years 9–12 students across the Central West with study and career pathways in history and humanities. Over 150 students in the inaugural program explored careers in journalism and the GLAM sector through guest talks, behind-the-scenes tours, and hands-on workshops.

South East Centre for Contemporary Art (SECCA)

TIDELAND: Art + Word project

TIDELAND: Art + Word was a collaboration between SECCA, the Bega Valley Library, and the South Coast Writers Centre. Regional writers created poetry in response to SECCA artworks, with 11 poems displayed in the TIDELAND exhibition. The project included workshops and a launch with live performance poetry, which attracted local and regional audiences. By connecting visual and literary arts, the initiative fostered crossdisciplinary engagement, highlighted diverse voices, and expanded cultural participation in the Bega Valley.



PARTIE NO.

Tamworth's Outdoor Callery

Tamworth's Outdoor Gallery

Tamworth's Outdoor Gallery projects digital artworks and animations onto public buildings, bringing art into the CBD and engaging audiences beyond the gallery walls. Developed over three years, the project showcases regional artists, fosters skills development, celebrates community groups, and enhances the city's cultural vibrancy.

UNSW Library

Open Studio - Colour: Inflections and Interactions

Open Studio – Colour: Inflexions and Interactions offered students an interactive workshop blending art and science. Using handheld lights, glass, and crystals, participants explored reflection, refraction, and pattern-making, then translated these ephemeral light effects into drawings and artworks. The program, part of UNSW Library's Experiential Learning initiative, converts passive observation into active inquiry, engaging students in interdisciplinary thinking, problem-solving, and creative expression.



UNSW Library

Yanma badhu (Dharug) – Water Walk



Yanma badhu (Dharug) – Water Walk was a public walk accompanying the exhibition Living Water: 75 years of water research at UNSW. Led by artists and First Nations mentors, 40 participants explored the ancient watercourse that moves through the Bedgegal and Kamaygal Lands on which UNSW Kensington campus is located. Contextualising Living Water's research with First Nations knowledge highlighted the persistence of water and related ecosystems despite environmental changes caused by urbanisation.



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Engagement Programs

Medium Organisations

Australian Design Centre

Australian Design Centre x Regional Arts NSW

Australian Design Centre partnered with Regional Arts NSW to create an opportunity for regional artists and makers to exhibit in ADC's Object Space window gallery on William Street, Sydney. Three exhibitions were supported with curatorial, production and marketing assistance, which strengthened visibility for each artist.





Australian Design Centre x National Indigenous Art Fair

Threads: Lore and Lineage, curated by Miah Madden in partnership with the National Indigenous Art Fair, showcased works from eight Indigenous Art Centres exploring culture, lineage, and identity. Through workshops, talks and professional development opportunities, the exhibition strengthened the visibility of artists from remote communities and fostered cultural exchange with Sydney audiences.



Dhuluny: the war that never ended

Curated by Wiradyuri/Kamilaroi curator Jonathan Jones with Wiradyuri Elder Wirribee Leanna Carr, *Dhuluny: the war that never ended* commemorated 200 years since the Declaration of Martial Law in the Bathurst region. Developed as part of *The Dhuluny Project*, the exhibition and programs offered opportunities for truthtelling, reflection and resilience through Wiradyuri art, culture and storytelling. The program amassed over 67,000 participants in a powerful act of community remembrance and learning.



Blue Mountains Cultural Centre

Disruptor: for all that matters suite of programs



Disruptor: for all that matters was a suite of artist-led public programs that deepened engagement with environmental art in the Blue Mountains. Combining creativity, science, and sustainability, the initiative included live performances, talks, workshops and school excursions for over 1,000 participants. Activities such as ecodyeing, pigment-making and imaginative craftmaking inspired learning through play and discovery. Developed on Gundungurra and Dharug Country, the program was a tribute to the robust environmental volunteer community within the Blue Mountains.



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Gosford Regional Gallery

Dandhi-Grounded First Nations Residency, Exhibition and Banner Project

Gosford Regional Gallery partnered with artist Ethan-James Kotiau to deliver the first iteration of its First Nations Residency Program. The residency included an exhibition, *Dandhi – Grounded*, and workshops where high school students created 22 banners for the Gallery entrance, explored sand drawing, ochre preparation and Indigenous storytelling. The program combined mentorship, cultural education, and public engagement, fostering connection to First Nations culture, creative expression, and hands-on learning for students and the community.



Goulburn Regional Art Gallery

Jodie Munday 'Woven Stories'

Woven Stories by Wiradjuri artist Jodie Munday featured a stunning collection of hand-woven works that draw on the artist's Aboriginal and Celtic heritage, combining traditional and contemporary materials such as native plants and raffia to tell stories of family, place, and cultural memory. The exhibition generated a suite of community-focused engagement programs, including school visits, an allages weaving workshop and artist talk.

Grafton Regional Gallery

Superpower - Community Capes

The gallery partnered with Acmena Juvenile Justice Centre to create workshops for young people in custody. Using activities designed by Kamilaroi/Gamilaraay artist Dennis Golding that accompanied his exhibition *POWER* – *The Future is Here*, the participants created superhero capes exploring cultural identity and personal storytelling, which were then exhibited alongside Golding's work. The innovative program provided access to creative mentorship, celebrated Aboriginal culture, and connected participants with the wider community.



Lewers: Penrith Regional Gallery

Penrith Open Studio

Penrith Open Studio supported young creatives aged 13–17 to develop their artistic practice and connect with their local gallery. Over 17 weeks, participants engaged in artist-led workshops, gallery visits, and mentorship from emerging and established artists, which culminated in a group exhibition, To be Continued.

Engagement Programs / 54

Lewers: Penrith Regional Gallery

Maggie & the OWLS: Light in Space

Maggie & the OWLS: Light in Space brought together contemporary lace artist Maggie Hensel-Brown and fifteen members of the local OWLS (Outer Western Lacemakers) collective for a community-driven exhibition celebrating traditional and experimental lacemaking. The project included weekly drop-in demonstrations, workshops and a national collaborative tapestry, fostering intergenerational knowledge sharing, audience participation, and broader engagement with lacemaking as a vibrant, evolving artform.



Liverpool Powerhouse

Tagata Moana: People of the Pacific Ocean

Tagata Moana celebrated Pacific identity and culture through three solo exhibitions by Tyrone Te Waa, Sereima Adimate, and Adriana Māhanga Lear, alongside a community workshop program curated by Leo Tanoi. Workshops in painting, quilting, weaving and Samoan star-making offered hands-on, intergenerational learning, while initiatives like Club Weld Attitude and Body Pasifika supported youth and emerging Pasifika creatives. The program brought contemporary Moana Oceania art to life and fostered cultural connection, storytelling and active audience participation.

Maitland Regional Art Gallery

Conversations on Life Loss Longing and Love – engaging with Ron Mueck's Pregnant Woman

Ron Mueck's artwork, *Pregnant woman*, was loaned to MRAG from the National Gallery of Australia and enabled extensive community engagement programs. The gallery commissioned female and Indigenous artists to respond, connected works from its collection, and ran programs attended by over 126,000 visitors, which included creative workshops, prenatal yoga, music and open mic sessions.



Maitland Regional Art Gallery

Twitcher - birds, art and citizen science

Twitcher celebrated birds in art with works by 24 contemporary Australian artists and collection highlights, alongside a mural by 47 local Indigenous artists. The program integrated art, science, and advocacy through workshops, performances, bird surveys, and community partnerships, engaging over 46,000 people and fostering creative, environmental and cultural connections.



Mudgee Arts Precinct

Tell Your Story

Tell Your Story, led by the Mid-Western Youth Council in partnership with Mudgee Arts Precinct, empowered young people through workshops, mentoring, and a youth-curated exhibition of 67 works. A variety of workshops covered filmmaking, printmaking, sound, 3D printing and more. The program fostered creativity, leadership, and youth-driven cultural engagement resulting in over 498 participants and an ongoing weekly drop-in program called 'Creative Fridays.'



Parramatta Artists Studios

PAS Granville Open Day 2024

PAS Granville Open Day 2024 invited the community into Parramatta Artists' Studios for workshops, artist talks, performances and interactive activities conducted by resident artists. Extensive outreach and inclusive programming ensured broad participation with over 700 attendees. The event strengthened relationships between artists and the local community, built new audiences, and contributed to a vibrant, inclusive cultural identity for Granville.

Parramatta Artists Studios

PAS Access & Inclusion Program 2024–25

PAS Access & Inclusion Program 2024–25

was an organisation-wide program to improve equitable access for Deaf and Disabled artists and audiences. Codesigned initiatives included disability led online information and application support, a Cultural Safety & Accessibility Questionnaire for incoming artists, development of Visual Stories across all sites, sensory-friendly youth programs, and a hybrid crafting workshop. The program removed barriers, fostered participation, and strengthened trust with artists and audiences.





Engagement Programs

Large Organisations

Australian Museum

The Birds of Australia STORYBOX

The Birds of Australia STORYBOX is a touring program that reimagines John and Elizabeth Gould's iconic illustrations through animation, First Nations storytelling and mobile interactivity. Presented in public spaces across regional NSW and beyond, it connects communities with Australia's birdlife, inspiring creativity, conservation and cultural dialogue beyond the museum walls.





Australian National Maritime Museum

Australian National Maritime Museum Website

The Australian National Maritime Museum's new website (www.sea.museum) redefines how Australians connect with maritime heritage. Designed for a national audience, it blends storytelling, interactivity, and intuitive design to showcase the Museum's collections, research and physical experiences. The site invites exploration, fosters accessibility and strengthens emotional connections to Australia's maritime identity.

Blacktown Arts

Level 5 - Makers Space with Ebony Wightman

Level 5 was a Blacktown Arts' Makers Space project by artist and 'We Are Studios' cofounder, Ebony Wightman. Designed for all ages, the space offered tactile activities, costume play, sensory elements and quiet reflection. Informed by Wightman's lived experience as an Autistic person, the immersive installation was an imaginative exploration of the world through the lens of a spy, inviting participants to engage creatively and rethink their surroundings.





Campbelltown Arts Centre

Creative Careers Expo 2025

Creative Careers Expo 2025 connected over 200 Western Sydney students with artists, tertiary institutions, and industry professionals through workshops, panels, performances, and interactive stalls. Showcasing diverse creative pathways in animation, music, visual arts, theatre and more, the free event empowered emerging talent to explore creative futures as artists, professionals, and cultural leaders.

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Museum of Contemporary Art Australia

MCA Mega Draw

The *MCA Mega Draw* transformed the Museum of Contemporary Art into a sensory-friendly, collaborative canvas for over 2,500 visitors. Designed through consultation with The A List Create Space Arts Initiative, the free event offered large-scale community artworks, self-paced activities, quiet spaces and accessible support. Engaging all ages and abilities, the event created a welcoming and empowering public art experience.



Museums of History NSW

Beautiful waterways... and stinky sewers: a free virtual event for NSW school students

Beautiful Waterways... and stinky sewers was a free live virtual event cocreated by Museums of History NSW and the Museum of the Riverina, which explored the history of water from First Nations creation stories to how waterways changed as a result of colonisation. Collaborating with cultural knowledge holders and schools, the initiative engaged 3,000 students across 174 urban and regional NSW schools.



MEGAN COPE: Ngumpi Kinyingarra Oyster House

MEGAN COPE: Ngumpi Kinyingarra Oyster

House transformed Newcastle Harbour into a vibrant hub celebrating community collaboration, ancestral technologies and environmental stewardship. Over ten days, a program of events (including workshops, performances and a community oystercleaning initiative) engaged nearly 4,000 attendees. Collaborating with First Nations knowledge holders, artists, and students, the project fostered learning while activating the waterfront in inventive ways.



PHIVE

The Western Terrace Series



PHIVE's Western Terrace Series engaged emerging and early-career Western Sydney creatives to transform the site into an extension of the home and neighbourhood through curating performances, sharing everyday cultural practices and telling stories. The co-created program offered immersive, intergenerational experiences for audiences while providing professional development opportunities for First Nations, CALD and marginalised creatives.



Pine Street Creative Arts Centre, City of Sydney

Creative Connections

Creative Connections was a community-led initiative that brought together two culturally significant programs, Elder's Stories in Clay and the Women's Weaving Program, to support storytelling, healing and cultural connection through creative practice. Codesigned with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members and delivered alongside local cultural centres, the two-part program offered workshops and artmaking opportunities, which culminated in collaborative exhibitions.





Powerhouse Materials: Textiles

Powerhouse Materials is a new series that invites guest curators to explore the Powerhouse Collection through the lens of one material. Inaugural guest curator and disability activist Chloe Hayden explored her lived experience through a textile collection featuring horses, country life and fashion. The program engaged younger and neurodivergent audiences through exhibitions, talks, self-guided activities and hands-on workshops.

Sydney Jewish Museum

Incommon

Together with partners at TikTok,
Howatson+Company and the Dor
Foundation, Sydney Jewish Museum
launched *Incommon* – a campaign
targeted at Gen Z users on TikTok, aiming
to stem the rise in antisemitism on the
platform. Through a vibrant brand and
product line including natural wine, vinyl
records, candles and food, the campaign
achieved over 20 million views in its first two
weeks and translated Jewish traditions to a
younger audience.







Accessible Arts Award for Access and Inclusion

Accessible Arts is the peak arts and disability organisation in New South Wales, advancing the rights of, and opportunities for, people with disability or who are d/Deaf to develop and sustain professional careers in the arts and have equitable access to arts and culture across NSW.

Accessible Arts has partnered with Museums & Galleries of NSW to present the Award for Access and Inclusion across exhibition and engagement categories from both museums and galleries.

Australian Museum

The Birds of Australia STORYBOX

Accessibility and inclusion were embedded in the design of this exhibition. The multi-sensory experience included vibrant animation, poetry, bird calls and soundscapes for audiences with low literacy, vision impairment or diverse learning needs. The free outdoor installation offered access for people of all abilities, including those who may not typically visit museums.

Playful interactive elements such as colouring and sound triggers were featured, making the experience welcoming for intergenerational audiences with cognitive or developmental disabilities. Through universal design and sensory engagement, the exhibition broadened access to cultural participation and created meaningful ways for people with disability to connect with Australia's birdlife.



Blacktown Arts

Level 5 - Makers Space with Ebony Wightman



Ebony's lived experience as an Autistic person informed a creative direction that was welcoming and inclusive. Blacktown Arts staff collaborated with Ebony to interpret her artistic vision while ensuring accessibility in concept and spatial design.

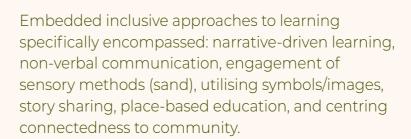
The space was carefully crafted to accommodate a wide range of mobility needs. Activities were designed to suit all ages and abilities, resulting in an intergenerational creative environment that embodied inclusive design throughout.

Gosford Regional Gallery

Dandhi – Grounded First Nations Residency, Exhibition and Banner Project

The Aboriginal pedagogy framework '8 Ways of Learning' was engaged to ensure all aspects of students' learning needs were supported.

Additionally, Ethan-James Kotiau and elder Chris Moore were consulted during the development of the First Nations Artmaking and Cultural Workshops.





Museum of Contemporary Art Australia MCA Mega Draw



Autism Spectrum Australia conducted an Accessibility
Audit with recommendations for sensory adaptations
on lighting and Museum announcements, and 20
MCA staff completed cross-departmental Autism
Awareness training. The A List provided professional
development opportunities for Autistic artists and
event volunteers.

Resources were created for participants, including visual stories for wayfinding, a sensory map for key Museum areas, and large-print activity instructions.

Visitors had the opportunity to meet Deaf Artist Angie Goto as she created a mural. The entire event was free, removing socio-economic barriers to participation.





Powerhouse

Powerhouse Materials: Textiles

This program considered accessibility and inclusion throughout its creative collaboration with inaugural guest curator and disability activist, Chloe Hayden, who selected textile objects from the Powerhouse collection and incorporated her lived experience into the program. As a proud neurodivergent person, Chloe worked with Powerhouse to create a space for collection research and storytelling through a series of conversations, reviews, and amendments to selected objects.





Parramatta Artists Studios

PAS Access & Inclusion Program 2024-25



PAS are committed to improving access and inclusion in its program and will continue to seek out and endeavour to meet best practice standards for the communities that it supports. Over this year-long period, their approach combined co-design, transparent information, multiple modes of participation, and staff capability. This program was made more accessible through co-designed resources, barrier free application support, safer sensory environments, proactive accommodations, skilled staff, and clear venue info.

This joined up model demonstrably reduces barriers across the artist journey, from first contact to programming, and embeds disability leadership within PAS activity.

New South Wales Lancers Memorial Museum Inc.

Lancers Memorial Wall

The Memorial Wall is situated in the open with a level concrete slab in front of it to facilitate accessible viewing, as well as paths leading from the Barracks.



Royal Flying Doctor Service Outback Heritage Experience Broken Hill

Outback Heritage Experience

The Outback Heritage Experience features level flooring, automatic entry doors, accessible toilets and change rooms, braille signage, and a hearing loop. Wheelchairs and walkers are available, and seating within the exhibition includes armrests to assist less-mobile visitors.

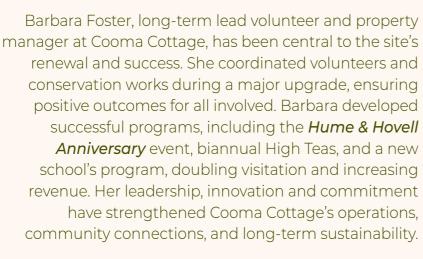
The exhibition's immersive content caters to varied learning styles, ensuring engagement for neurodivergent visitors and those with disabilities. Staff are learning Auslan and assisting with CALD requirements. The "sensorial" approach aligns with best practices in inclusive museum design, to ensure that all visitors—regardless of ability—can fully participate in and benefit from the Outback Heritage Experience.

Volunteer Achievement Award

The Volunteer Achievement Award acknowledges the outstanding contribution of an individual who has demonstrated leadership in the completion of a significant project for their organisation in the previous 12 months, or through developing creative solutions to address challenges faced by the organisation.



Cooma Cottage, National Trust NSW

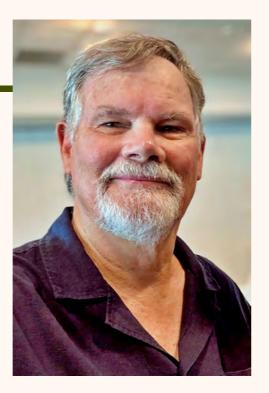




Neil Gould

Kogarah Historical Society Inc.

Neil Gould has significantly enhanced the Kogarah Historical Society through the creation and maintenance of a comprehensive, user-friendly website and the cataloguing of Carss Park Cottage's collection. His work replaced outdated record systems, streamlined cataloguing and improved access for members, schools and the public. Neil's technological leadership has supported exhibition planning, enabled loans to other museums, strengthened preservation and provided a marketing and educational tool. His initiative demonstrates how digital innovation can enrich small historical societies and promote local history to a broader audience.



David Williams

Maitland Regional Art Gallery

David Williams has given an innumerable amount of his time to the Gallery as a Visitor Engagement Officer, recently invigilating alongside Ron Mueck's *Pregnant Woman*, an artwork on loan from the National Gallery of Australia. His warm, engaging approach has enriched visitor experiences and fostered open conversations about art. Drawing on his background in hospitality, David connects with people of all ages, mentors new volunteers and embodies cultural mediation; strengthening MRAG's inclusive, community-focused visitor engagement.



Jeni Bruno

Moree & District Historical Society

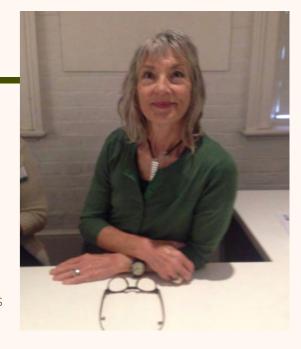


As Vice President of the Moree & District Historical Society, Jeni Bruno co-created the Museum's new Water Room exhibition and led the Water Stories from the Grave cemetery walk for NSW Water Week. Combining strong research, organisation and storytelling, she connects the community with local history. Jeni mentors volunteers, drives inclusive programming and has strengthened the Society's public engagement and operations through her dedication and leadership.

Julie Johnstone

S.H. Ervin Gallery, National Trust NSW

Julie Johnstone has made an outstanding contribution to S.H. Ervin Gallery over the past 12 months as a Volunteer Guardian and Exhibition Guide. She has conducted more tours than any other guide, delivering highly informed, engaging experiences underpinned by extensive knowledge of Australian and international art history. Julie's research, organisational skills and warmth enrich visitor experiences while strengthening the volunteer team. Her dedication ensures the Gallery operates efficiently and maintains the highest standards of professionalism and public engagement.





ACHAA Awards

Aboriginal Culture, Heritage & Arts Association (ACHAA) is the Peak Body for Aboriginal community-controlled cultural spaces across NSW. Its 21 member centres comprise cultural centres, knowledge centres, language centres, galleries, museums and Keeping Places.

Through inspiring community leadership, ACHAA members create Living Centres for Living Cultures dedicted to advancing NSW Aboriginal culture, arts and heritage.

ACHAA has worked closely with Museums & Galleries of NSW since its foundation in 2014. Each year since 2019, ACHAA has presented two IMAGinE Awards:

- The ACHAA Award for Outstanding Lifetime Contribution to NSW Aboriginal Culture, Heritage and Arts
- The ACHAA Award for Excellence by an Aboriginal Curator

The ACHAA Award for Outstanding Lifetime Contribution to NSW Aboriginal Culture, Heritage and Arts

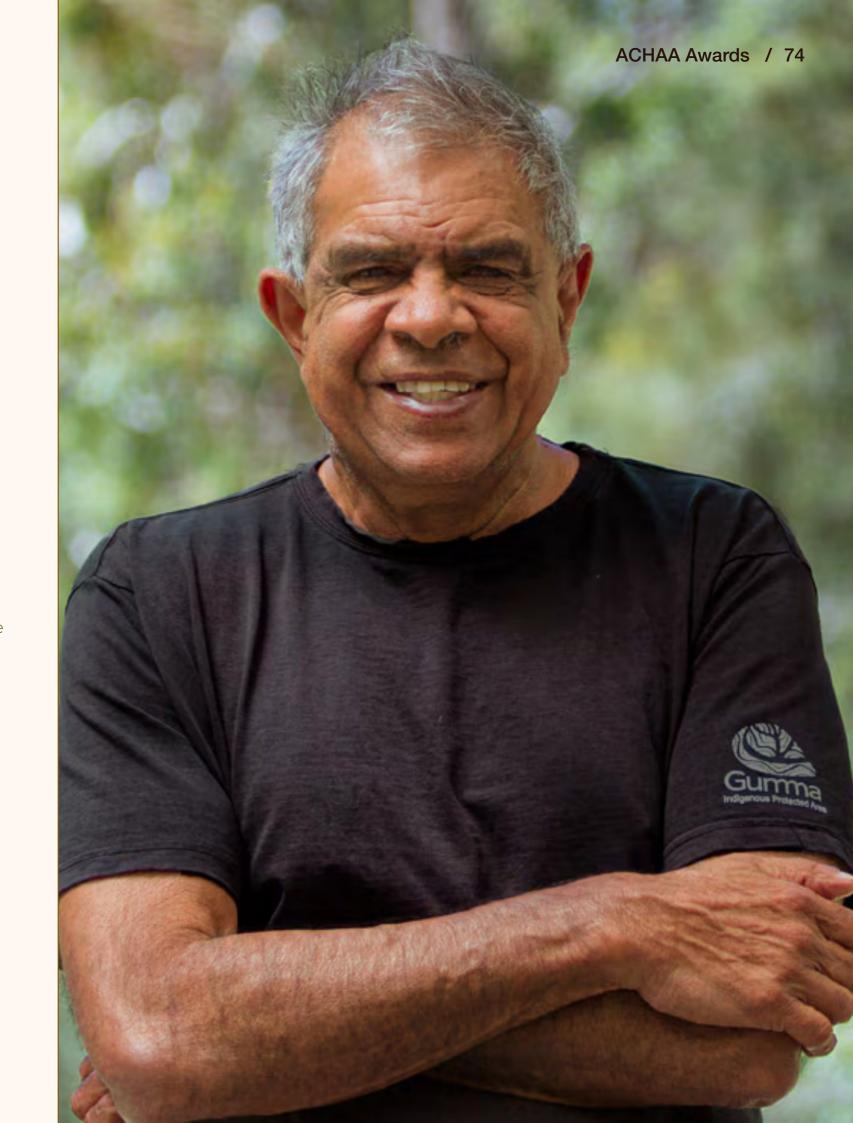
Gary Williams

Gary is a Gumbaynggirr/Bundjalung man who grew up in Nambucca Heads, his mother's country, surrounded by family, including Elders Tiger Buchanan and Uncle Charles Moran.

In 1965, Gary joined his University of Sydney classmate, Charles Perkins, in organising the student activist movement Student Action for Aborigines, which led the Freedom Ride across NSW. The two were the only two Aboriginal students at the institution at the time. He was all set to join the Freedom Ride but was called and needed back home. Despite not being able to ride along on the bus, he made history all the same by sitting down at a racially segregated pub in Bowraville. Gary spent many of the following years rallying against racial discrimination, lobbying at the Aboriginal Tent Embassy, campaigning during the 1967 referendum, and becoming a founding member of the Aboriginal Legal Service.

Gary returned home to Nambucca Heads in 1990, and in 1997, he attended the first Gumbaynggirr language classes at Muurrbay Aboriginal Language and Culture Co operative. At Muurrbay, he has spent decades working on language reclamation. When Muurrbay expanded into a Regional Language Centre in 2004, he became a regional language researcher, using his cultural knowledge and linguistics skills to research the Gumbaynggirr language as well as Bundjalung, his father's language. Gary's research alongside Elders and peers led to valuable records of Gumbaynggirr Elders being unearthed. He has become a pillar of Muurrbay's support of NSW coastal languages, setting up language organisations, sometimes delivering their first classes, and supporting the creation of multiple language dictionaries. Gary has supported the revival of seven languages.

Through all he has done, Gary has been present and committed, always ready to walk alongside his community.



The ACHAA Award for Excellence by an Aboriginal Curator



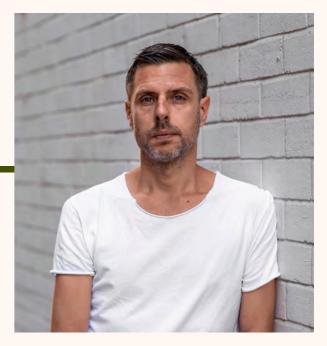
Kat Kitch
Language Group: Wiradjuri
Albury LibraryMuseum
MOB

Curated by Wiradjuri curator Kat Kitch, *MOB* celebrated local Aboriginal culture and history through cultural objects from the AlburyCity Museum & Social History Collection, many exhibited for the first time. Kat worked closely with the Dyiraamalang Girbang (Wiradjuri Elders Group), community mentors, and local leaders to ensure the project was community-led and grounded in Wiradjuri knowledge. Their curatorial approach foregrounded Aboriginal voices, emphasising openness and accessibility through the use of open object displays and plinths painted by local Aboriginal women, guiding staff and audiences through complex and often confronting histories. Kat fostered greater respect and understanding of Aboriginal people in the region.



Jonathan Jones Language Group: Wiradyuri/ Kamilaroi Bathurst Regional Art Gallery Dhuluny: the war that never ended

Curated by Wiradyuri/Kamilaroi artist and curator Jonathan Jones with Wiradyuri Elder Wirribee Aunty Leanna Carr, *Dhuluny: the war that* never ended marked 200 years since the 1824 Declaration of Martial Law in the Bathurst region. Working with the Wiradyuri Traditional Owners Central West Aboriginal Corporation and Bathurst Regional Art Gallery, Jones led the development of a major exhibition and public program grounded in community consultation and truth-telling. He collaborated closely with Wiradyuri artists and Elders to present contemporary and historical works that revealed the enduring impacts of frontier violence and celebrated cultural resilience. Jones's curatorial approach centred women and non-binary artists, fostering intergenerational dialogue and a deeper understanding of Wiradyuri history.







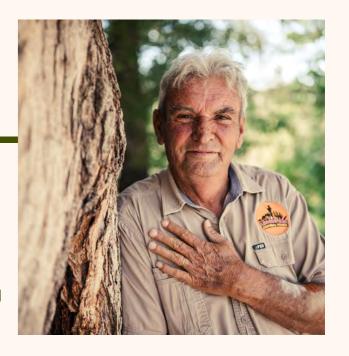
Jonathan Jones Language Group: Wiradyuri/Kamilaroi Bundanon bagan bariwariganyan: echoes of country

Curated by Wiradyuri/Kamilaroi artist Jonathan Jones, bagan bariwariganyan: echoes of country brought together Gweagal/Wandiwandian storyteller Aunty Julie Freeman, Walbunja/Ngarigo artist Aunty Cheryl Davison, and the historical Yuin artist Mickey of Ulladulla in a multigenerational dialogue of South Coast storytelling. Jones worked collaboratively with the artists to shape an exhibition promoting Aboriginal values and kinships, featuring new commissions, large-scale installations, and historic works. His curatorial approach centred cultural knowledge systems and the leadership of the Aunties, ensuring their stories of Country were experienced on their own terms. Through this process, Jones created a space for connecting the past and present.



Len Waters Language Group: Kamilaroi Australian Country Music Hall of Fame Trailblazers of First Nations Country Music

Curated by Kamilaroi man Len Waters, *Trailblazers* of First Nations Country Music celebrated the vital role of First Nations artists in shaping Australian country music. Len led the project in close collaboration with museum staff, engaging directly with artists, families, and communities to ensure culturally appropriate representation. He integrated imagery captured on Country, objects from the Long Gully Keeping Place, and consented archival material, foregrounding the connection between Country, culture, and music. Through his curatorial practice, Len amplified First Nations voices, highlighted stories of resilience, and demonstrated how country music has enabled Aboriginal artists to share truth, culture, and history across generations, creating a landmark exhibition that honours First Nations country music artists whose stories have interwoven with Tamworth's country music history.



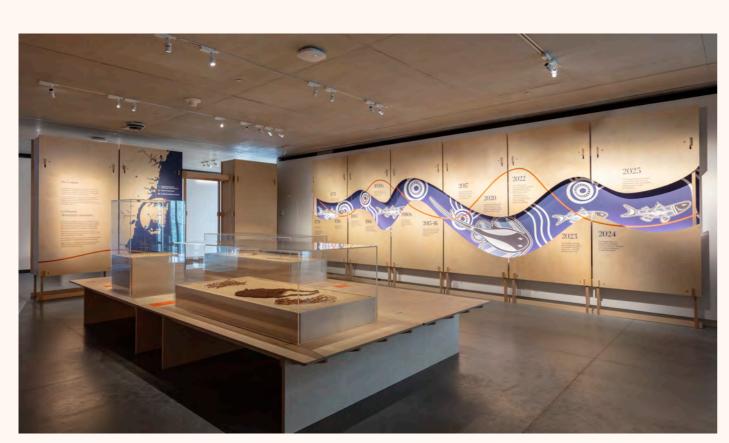


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Marika Duczynski
Language Group:
Gamilaraay and Mandandanji
Chau Chak Wing Museum,
The University of Sydney
Mungari: Fishing, Resistance, Return

As Senior Curator of Indigenous Heritage, Marika Duczynski led Mungari: Fishing, Resistance, Return, a community-driven exhibition celebrating the return of four Gweagal spears taken from Gamay in 1770 and held in the UK for 254 years. Developed with the Gujaga Foundation, La Perouse Local Aboriginal Land Council, and a curatorium of Gweagal descendants, Marika facilitated a deeply collaborative process through workshops, on-Country visits, and co-design. Working closely with First Nations architect Jack Gillmer, she embedded Dharawal language, knowledge, and cultural safety throughout the exhibition. Under her direction, Mungari exemplified best practice in community-led curation, foregrounding cultural authority and demonstrating how museums can respectfully support truth-telling.





Credits

Special thanks to this year's IMAGinE Awards and ACHAA Awards judges: **ACHAA Board Directors, Amy Mills, Angus Cawdell-Smith, Bren Donnellan, Brett Adlington, Colleen Fitzgerald, M. Sunflower, Rebecca Turnbull, Rebecca Kummerfeld, Sarah Gurich, Yvette Dal Pozzo.**

IMAGinE Awards branding designed by **Kerri Kennedy**.

Image credits

Introduction

- iv / Top Image courtesy Kylie Tung. Bottom Brett Adlington. Photo: Vanessa Low.
- **v** / Installation view of *Horizons*, Goulburn Regional Art Gallery 2025. Photo: Silversalt Photography.
- **vi /** The Painting Conservation team performing treatments in the natural light of the Sydney lab.
- vii / Elric Ringstad, Senior Conservation Framer.

Exhibition Projects – Galleries / Visual Arts

- **01 /** Linda Sok, Ritual for Ritual performance. Photo: Steven Ballas.
- **03 / Top** Installation view of *Man&Wah: Propagate/Germinate/Bloom*, 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art. Photo: Christina Mishell. **Bottom** Installation view of *Toad Destruction* by Karla Dickens, 2024. Photo: Dean Qiu Lin Li.
- **04 / Top** Exhibition view of *Dhuluny: the war that never ended* at Bathurst Regional Art Gallery, 6 July 8 September 2024, featuring works by Karla Dickens and Augustus Earle. Photo: Silversalt Photography. **Bottom** Exhibition view of *Rise and Fall* at Bondi Pavilion Art Gallery. Photo: Silversalt Photography.
- **05 / Top** Exhibition view of *Souter's Bondi* at Bondi Pavilion Art Gallery. Photo: Silversalt Photography. **Bottom** *Within Heaven and Earth* installation shot. Photo: Anna Kucera.
- **06 / Top** Installation view of *Guruwa gunya (gum tree home)*, Dr Virginia Keft, detail, Firstdraft. Photo: Jessica Maurer. **Bottom** Installation view of *still waters run deep*, Firstdraft. Photo: Jessica Maurer.
- 07 / A Real Experience, Blacktown Arts 2025. Photo: Tammy Dang.
- **09 / Top** Gosford Regional Gallery *25 Moments Reimaging Twenty-Five Years of Art* 2025, Image includes Sharon Aldrick, *Photographic prints*, 2001. Atong Atem, *Maria of Mars*, 2022. Stelarc, *Prosthetic Head*, 2002. Anne Graham, *Threshold*, 2025. Minka Gillian, *Mind Garden*, 2019-2025. Photo: Wolfe Wise Creative. **Bottom** Installation view of *Sammy Hawker: Conversations with bees*, Goulburn Regional Art Gallery 2024-5. Photo: Silversalt Photography.
- **10 / Top** Installation view of *Horizons*, Goulburn Regional Art Gallery 2025. Photo: Silversalt Photography. **Bottom** *Burnt into Memory* Katherine Boland, Gary Shinfield, Wona Bae and Charlie Lawler. Courtesy of Hawkesbury Regional Gallery.
- 11 / Top Installation view of Buruugaa Garaa Buruu Garaa Budgeramgali (Saltwater People Freshwater People Stories), Lismore Regional Gallery. Photo: Cherie Winter 2024. Bottom Opening night crowd for Ken Unsworth's Love is the Sweetest Thing at Macquarie University Art Gallery. Photo: Effy Alexakis (photowrite).
- 12 / Top Peta Clancy, here merri merri lies, 2024, Truth Tell exhibition at MAC yapang. Bottom

- Tim Black, *Liddell Historical 360 VR Experience*, 2023, 360 VR video, colour, sound (stereo), 7 min, aspect ratio 16:9.
- **13 / Top** Courtesy of the artist Holly Macdonald. **Bottom** *Overhead and Underneath* Exhibition Opening, Installation View. Courtesy of Tamworth Regional Gallery.
- **14 / Top** Exhibition and program views of *Khaled Sabsabi*, 14 September 24 November 2024, The Lock-Up, Muloobinba/Newcastle. Courtesy of the artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane. Photo: Ben Adams Photography. **Middle** Sarah Contos, *Universes Built and Destroyed in a Dressing Room of a Protagonist Yet to be Born*, 2024. Installation view: *Sarah Contos: Eye Lash Horizon*, UNSW Galleries, Sydney, 2024. Courtesy the artist and STATION Gallery. Photo: Jacquie Manning. **Bottom** *You're Welcome?*, 2025. Courtesy of Billy Bain.
- **15 /** Installation view *Man&Wah: Propagate/Germinate/Bloom*, 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art. Photo: Kai Wasikowski.
- 17 / Top Photo: Jacquie Manning. Bottom Photo: Jacquie Manning.
- **18 / Top** *A Real Experience* (detail), Blacktown Arts 2025. Photo: Silversalt Photography. **Bottom** *Cunning Revived* opening night. Audience participation with Emily Hunt's *The Public Art Rings* 2020 2022. Photo: Ann Niddrie.
- **19 / Top** Photo: Lucy Parakhina. **Bottom** *True North* guest curator Christine Wilcox. Courtesy of Grafton Regional Gallery.
- **20 / Top** Bulaan Buruugaa Ngali image: Photo: Kate Holmes. **Bottom** Sanctuary: 25 Years of Hazelhurst Arts Centre Installation view, 2025. Photo: Silversalt Photography.
- **21 / Top** Photo: Silversalt Photography. **Bottom** Photo: Silversalt Photography.
- **22 / Top** Installation view of *Giving Voice* featuring posters by Toni Robertson and EARTHWORKS POSTER COLLECTIVE. Photo: Ben Williams Photography. **Bottom** Artists Mimili Maku Arts along with artists from Mindaribba Local Aboriginal Land Council and Wonnarua Elders. Photo: Leighsa Cox.
- **23 / Top** *Inner/Space: Helen Eager* exhibition view, New England Regional Art Museum, 2024. Courtesy of New England Regional Art Museum. **Middle** Installation view of Colleen Southwell's *Hymn 1-3*, 2024. Paper, pigment, watercolour, stainless steel wire, silk and cotton thread. Courtesy of Orange Regional Museum. **Bottom** Installation view of *Greetings from Wollongong*. Photo: Silversalt Photography. Courtesy of Wollongong Art Gallery.
- **24** / Opening night of *Greetings from Woollongong*. Photo: Katelyn Slyer. Courtesy of Wollongong Art Gallery.
- **25 / Top** The Gamay Dancers led visitors into the Museum on the opening night of *Mungari*. Courtesy of Chau Chak Wing Museum, The University of Sydney. **Bottom** Photo: James Horan for Museums of History NSW.
- **26** / Inside the exhibition *Dr Bronwyn Bancroft: The Country Cries for Truth.* State Library of NSW. Photo: Bruce York.

Credits

Exhibition Projects - Museums / Heritage

- **27 / Top** Photo: H Hewson. **Bottom** Courtesy of New South Wales Lancers Memorial Museum.
- 28 / Top Courtesy of Kiama Historical Society. Bottom Courtesy of Port Macquarie Museum.
- **29 / Top** *Villawood: Between Hope and Hopelessness.* Photo: Document Photography. **Bottom** Courtesy of National Trust NSW.
- **30 / Top** *ASSEMBLE: Orange Festival of Arts 1965-1987*, detail. Photo: Kirsten Cunningham. Courtesy of Orange Regional Museum. **Bottom** *Orange 412* interactives. Photo: Kirsten Cunningham. Courtesy of Orange Regional Museum.
- **31 / Top** Photo: Mike Terry. **Bottom** Photo: Sam Townsend.
- **32 / Top** Colour: Inflexions and Interactions (2025-26). Courtesy of UNSW Library. **Bottom** Living Water: 75 years of water research at UNSW (2024), UNSW Library. Photo: Jacquie Manning.
- **33** / Colour: Inflexions and Interactions (2025-26). Courtesy of UNSW Library.
- **35 / Top** Courtesy of Albury City. **Bottom** Selection of boot and shoe making tools, c1920s-40s. Courtesy of Hurstville Museum & Gallery.
- **36 / Top** Courtesy of Museum of the Riverina. **Bottom** Courtesy of Qtopia Sydney.
- **37 / Top** Courtesy of National Trust NSW. **Middle** Photo: Jason King Broken Hill Production. **Bottom** *Swell Chasers: Surf Stories from the Mid North Coast* exhibition view. Photo: And The Trees Photography.
- 38 / Photo: Sam Townsend.

Engagement Programs

- **39** / MCA Mega Draw 2025. Photo: Eliya Cohen.
- **41 / Top** Courtesy of Tamworth Regional Council. **Bottom** Moree East Campfire, *Team Trampoline*, lead artist Meg Wilson, facilitator Cate Gaston. Bank Art Museum Moree, 2025. Photo: Christine Sharp.
- **42 / Top** Scone Museum installation of *Desks of Fabric*. Photo: Suzannah Jones. **Bottom** *Baajo* (come and dance) Ghana Road Show Performance at Firstdraft. Photo: Liam Black.
- **43 / Top** *Ngarra Ngurang: Place of Learning* aerial street view. Photo: Peter Haynes. **Bottom** *Art and Ageing Enrichment Program* 2024 2025. Photo: Linsey Gosper. Courtesy of Lismore Regional Gallery.
- **44 / Top** *Wimble's Wayzgoose* 2025. Courtesy of the Museum of Printing, New England Regional Art Museum. **Bottom** *History Futures* behind the scenes tour, Orange Regional Museum. Photo: Olivia Sargent.
- **45 / Top** *TIDELAND: Art + Word* event launch, SECCA. Photo: Chris Sheedy. **Bottom** *Tamworth's Outdoor Gallery* Photograph of Gomeroi knowledge holder Kayleb Waters Sampson. Photo: Danny Dalton as part of the NAIDOC week celebrations.
- **46 / Top** Open Studio *Colour: Inflexions and Interactions* workshop. Courtesy of UNSW Library. **Bottom** Courtesy of UNSW Library.
- **47 /** Western Terrace x ACE Collaboration: Deep Roots. Photo: Garry Trinh.
- **49 / Top** Leah Doeland, *Destined for Landfill Covid Couture*, Object Space Installation, Photo: Peter Collie. **Bottom** The Wilfred Mob weaving on the beach, Numbulwar Numburindi Arts. Courtesy of Australian Design Centre.

- **50 / Top** *Winhangadurinya* (*Reflection*) *Leaves* from the Winhangadurinya Ngurang (Reflection Space) in *Dhuluny: the war that never ended,* Bathurst Regional Art Gallery, 6 July 8 September 2024. Courtesy of BRAG. **Bottom** Photo: Maja Baska Photography.
- **51 / Top** Artmaking and Cultural Workshops. Courtesy of Gosford Regional Gallery. **Bottom** Public program 'Q&A with Jodie Munday and Hannah Gee' within the exhibition *Woven Stories*, 2025.
- **52 / Top** Acmena Students and staff view their work in *SUPERPOWER* exhibition. **Bottom** Lewers: Penrith Regional Gallery, *Penrith Open Studio* artists in their exhibition. Photo: Maja Baska.
- **53 / Top** Maggie Hensel-Brown with project contributors, *Radiance*, (2023) installation view in *Maggie & the OWLS: Light in Space*, Lewers: Penrith Regional Gallery, 2025. Courtesy the artist. Photo: Silversalt Photography. **Bottom** Seve Faleupolu led a free workshop weaving stars with blue box straps for Matariki/Matali'i Maori and Polynesian new year. Photo: Chantel Bann.
- **54 / Top** Life drawing workshop for teens with Ron Mueck, *Pregnant woman*, National Gallery of Australia. Photo: Leighsa Tate. **Middle** Photo: Leighsa Cox. **Bottom** Photo: Andrew Robards.
- **55 / Top** *PAS Open Day Granville 2024.* Photo: Anna Kucera. **Bottom** PAS Bare Skills Youth Program Quiet Space. Photo: Rhiana Elsamouly.
- **56** / Lewers: Penrith Regional Gallery, *Penrith Open Studio* artists in their exhibition. Photo: Maja Baska.
- 57 / Top Australian Museum, The Birds of Australia STORYBOX. Courtesy of Studio ESEM.
 Bottom Australian National Maritime Museum Website Dive Deeper pages screen capture.
 58 / Top Level 5 Makers Space with Ebony Wightman. Photo: Garry Trinh. Bottom Photo:
- **59 / Top** *MCA Mega Draw* 2025. Photo: Eliya Cohen. **Bottom** Courtesy of Museums of History NSW.
- **60 / Top** Friday Night Sounds: Kobie Dee, *MEGAN COPE: Ngumpi Kinyingarra Oyster House,* Newcastle Art Gallery, Australia for New Annual, 2024. Photo: Lachlan Matheson. **Bottom** Photo: Rihana Samouly.
- 61 / Top Photo: Ellen Lowrey. Bottom Photo: Chloe Paul.
- **62** / Lifestyle shot for *Incommon* campaign.

Nicholas Smith.

Accessible Arts Award for Access and Inclusion

- 63 / PAS Bare Skills Youth Program Quiet Space. Photo: Rhiana Elsamouly.
- **65 / Top** Australian Museum, The *Birds of Australia STORYBOX*. On location in Batemans Bay. Photo: Len Glasser. **Bottom** *Level 5, Makers Space with Ebony Wightman*. Photo: Garry Trinh.
- **66 / Top** Artmaking and Cultural Workshops. Courtesy of Gosford Regional Gallery. **Bottom** *MCA Mega Draw* 2025. Photo: Eliya Cohen.
- **67 / Top** Photo: Chloe Paul. **Bottom** M Sunflower in her PAS Granville Studio. Photo: Anna Kucera.
- **68 / Top** Courtesy of New South Wales Lancers Memorial Museum Inc. **Bottom** Courtesy of Freeman Ryan Design.

Credits

Volunteer Achievement Award

69 / Top Barbara Foster Anniversary Event with Stuart Hume. Courtesy of National Trust NSW. **Bottom** Courtesy of Kogarah Historical Society.

70 / Top MRAG volunteer invigilator David Williams and Ron Mueck's Pregnant Woman 2022, on loan from the National Gallery of Australia. Photo: Leighsa Cox. Middle Courtesy of Moree & District Historical Society. **Bottom** Julie Johnstone, S.H. Ervin Gallery volunteer.

ACHAA Awards

71 / Laura Fernando accepts the ACHAA Award for Outstanding Lifetime Contribution to NSW Aboriginal Culture, Heritage & Arts on behalf of Donna Biles Fernando, with Aunty Jeanette Crew.

74 / Portrait of Gary Williams.

75 / Top Courtesy of Albury Library Museum. **Bottom** Courtesy of Albury Library Museum.

76 / Top Jonathan Jones. Photo: Mark Pokorny. Bottom Exhibition view of Dhuluny: the war that never ended, Bathurst Regional Art Gallery, 6 July – 8 September 2024, featuring works by Karla Dickens and Augustus Earle. Photo: Silversalt Photography.

77 / Top Photo: Jaccquie Manning. Bottom Photo: Live Photography Australia.

78 / Top Photo: Andrew Pearson. Courtesy of Tamworth Regional Council. Bottom Courtesy of Tamworth Regional Council.

79 / Top Marika Duczynski, Curator, Indigenous Heritage, Chau Chak Wing Museum, The University of Sydney. **Bottom** Installation view, *Mungari* exhibition 2025, Chau Chak Wing Museum, The University of Sydney.

80 / Historic Dharawal fishing tools, including shell hooks, were displayed alongside contemporary examples on beds of sand collected from Country. The sand was returned after the completion of the exhibition. Exhibition view of Mungari: Fishing, Resistance, Return at Chau Chak Wing Museum, curated by Marika Duczynski. Photo courtesy of Chau Chak Wing Museum The University of Sydney.















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