

**The 2016 Victorian Museum Awards were presented on 14 July at State Library Victoria by Museums Australia (Victoria) – [www.mavic.asn.au](http://www.mavic.asn.au) – the peak body for 1,000+ museums and collecting organisations. The night was hosted by performer, writer, producer, and director, Diana Nguyen and featured a special address by Martin Foley MP, Minister for Creative Industries.**

The Awards, now in their 23<sup>rd</sup> year, are held annually to highlight outstanding achievements in the Victorian museum, gallery, and collecting sector. This special event raises awareness of museums as effective vehicles for engagement with ideas and communities, rewards and encourages best practice by individuals and organisations, and recognises the value of museums within the community. This year we also celebrated 100 organisations in the Museum Accreditation Program (MAP) with a screening of the **100 Museums** short film (available on our [YouTube](#) channel from 7.30pm AEST, 14 July).

Minister for Creative Industries Martin Foley said: *“Victoria is home to more museums than anywhere else in the country, they help make us the creative state. From cultural tourism to education to inspiration, Victoria’s museums and galleries enrich our communities and our lives. These awards recognise outstanding achievement across the sector and promote the diverse ways our museums and galleries engage Victorians, tell our stories and care for our treasures. I congratulate all of this year’s award winners and celebrate their contribution to our creative state.”*

THE 2016 VICTORIAN MUSEUM AWARDS (5 categories & 8 recipients)

**Category 1:** Three individuals were recognised when they won a Museums Australia (Victoria) Award for Excellence. They are Phillip Maisel OAM, Jewish Holocaust Centre, in the Volunteer category, and both Dr Robin Hirst, Museum Victoria, and Martin Hallett, in the Paid Staff category.

Since 1989, Holocaust survivor and volunteer Phillip Maisel has overseen the Video Testimonies Project at the [Jewish Holocaust Centre](#) (JHC). The Testimonies Project has collected 1300 interviews capturing important stories from remaining Holocaust survivors to preserve their voices and provide a resource for researchers.

Dr Robin Hirst received the Excellence Award for his outstanding contribution over 35 years in the sector. Starting his career at the Planetarium in 1981, Robin Hirst has progressed through roles at Scienceworks before moving to Melbourne Museum to manage programs and operations across [Museum Victoria](#). In his senior management roles at Museum Victoria, Robin has worked on developing the State Collection, securing long-term exhibitions of international standing, and developing policy for education and research, customer service, and exhibitions while contributing to the sector with conference presentations, publishing, and work on advisory boards.

Martin Hallett PSM received a Lifetime Achievement Award for his 40 year career that included working on the establishment and launch of the impressive [Culture Victoria](#) website and gaining support for the essential [Victorian Collections](#) website. These projects demonstrate Martin’s vision and dedication to creating access to collections and his contribution to the public enjoyment of museums and cultural collections in Victoria.

**Category 2:** The Archival Survival Award for Volunteer-Run Museums was won by the [Stawell Historical Society](#) for their outstanding dedication over eight years to a major redevelopment of their facilities. The Society succeeded in turning a \$100,000 bequest into a \$1,000,000 multi-purpose building that will enhance their management of the collection and provide a worthy museum for Stawell.

**Category 3:** The Bonegilla Migrant Experience was recognised when it received the Archival Survival Award for Small Museums for developing and implementing a master plan to create a Welcome Centre for visitors, interpretation strategy and branding, conservation works, and commissioned public artworks. The Bonegilla Migrant Experience is a cultural heritage museum in north-east Victoria and a national heritage site of significance that commemorates the history of post-war Australia.

**Category 4:** There were two joint winners in the Museums Australia (Victoria) Award for Medium Museums category, Flagstaff Hill Maritime Village and the Koorie Heritage Trust. Flagstaff Hill Maritime Village was awarded for their remarkable, Middle Island Maremma Project, a world-first environmental project that uses Maremma dogs to protect the threatened Warrnambool Little Penguin colony from foxes, and is maintained by public programs, tours of the island, and a crowdsourcing campaign that raised \$25,000. The story was developed into the popular *Oddball* movie that continues to generate public interest and has lifted visitation to Flagstaff Hill by 34%.

Founded in 1985, the Koorie Heritage Trust is the oldest community-owned and run Aboriginal cultural centre in Australia. The Trust was awarded for their relocation to redeveloped premises at Federation Square in July 2015. The entire collection has been made more accessible by being onsite with over 100 items on display in a unique open storage system.

**Category 5:** The Sovereign Hill Museums Association won the Museums Australia (Victoria) Award for Large Museums for sustainability initiatives across their site. In 2015, this Association became the first museum in Australasia to sign the Green Museums Accord, securing its position as a community and sector leader on sustainable practice.

#### MUSEUM RECEIVING ACCREDITATION IN 2016 (1 Accreditation)

Martin Foley MP, Minister for Creative Industries, presented a certificate to the Medical History Museum for successfully completing the Museum Accreditation Program (MAP) this year. 100 of Victoria's museums are now in this gold-standard program that promotes best practice across all areas of museum management in line with the *National Standards for Museums and Galleries*. There are currently 71 organisations Accredited and a further 29 working towards this goal. In celebration of the 100 Accredited museums milestone, Sylvia Admans from the R E Ross Trust announced and launched a short film and a new geolocation map for the public to discover museums and galleries across Victoria.

#### THE VICTORIAN COLLECTIONS AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN MUSEUM CATALOGUING (3 Awards)

Tim Hart, Director of Public Engagement at Museum Victoria, presented The Victorian Collections Awards for Excellence in Museum Cataloguing to the Federation University Australia Historical Collection, Orbost & District Historical Society, and the Geelong RSL Sub-Branch. These Awards acknowledge the hard work undertaken by these organisations in cataloguing their collections online using Victorian Collections. Since 2009, Victorian Collections has provided a free, easy to use, online cataloguing system for a diverse range of collecting organisations ([www.victoriancollections.net.au](http://www.victoriancollections.net.au)). Developed in partnership by Museums Australia (Victoria) and Museum Victoria, and with over 75,000 objects publicly accessible online from 400 organisations, Victorian Collections makes state-wide cultural treasures accessible and discoverable to the online community.

Further information:

<http://www.mavic.asn.au/awards>

**Photographs of the Awards Ceremony, Award-winning projects, Accredited museums, and selected objects from Victorian Collections are available upon request.**

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**Note for editors:**

Museums Australia (Victoria) was established as the peak body for museums in Victoria in 1994. Our 1,000+ museums include galleries, science centres, Indigenous keeping places, historical societies, historic houses, botanic gardens, zoos, aquaria, cultural centres, and archaeological monuments. Two-thirds of these are volunteer-run. Community museums care for an estimated 8 million objects in Victoria. We support and advocate for the development of quality museums, collections care, knowledge and specialised skills, and support the creative industries with key initiatives including the Museum Accreditation Program and Victorian Collections, the online portal to our State's cultural treasures: [www.mavic.asn.au](http://www.mavic.asn.au) and [www.victoriancollections.net.au](http://www.victoriancollections.net.au)

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