

The 2019 Victorian Museum Awards were presented on Wednesday 26 June at NGV International by AMaGA Victoria – <https://amagavic.org.au>– the peak body for 1,000+ museums and collecting organisations. The night was hosted by Lawrence Leung, multi award-winning Melbourne comedian, actor and screenwriter. Including a special address by Harriet Shing MP, Parliamentary Secretary for the Creative Industries

The Awards, now in their 26th 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.

THE 2019 VICTORIAN MUSEUM AWARDS (4 categories & 4 recipients)

Category 1: One individual was recognised when they won a AMaGA Victoria Award for Excellence: **Norma Grubb O.A.M.** was nominated for this Award for her tireless work as a volunteer at the Benalla Historical Society. Norma joined the committee of the [Benalla Historical Society](#) in 1974 bringing with her a wealth of knowledge in textiles, garment construction, needlework and a strong interest in costume history. Her skills were well suited to the needs of the Society's large costume collection. Norma has been responsible for exhibition selection and presentation, the Society's Accreditation policy's, creating reproduction millinery items, care of the costume collection, and working with and training volunteers.

The judges were impressed with Norma Grubb's high level of work and outstanding dedication and professionalism as a volunteer at the Benalla Historical Society over 45 years. Norma brought textiles, garment construction and needlework skills with her that were invaluable for an organisation known for its costume collection. The judges commented that *"Norma is the heart and soul of the organisation and the Historical Society would not exist if not for her 45 years of work on everything from fundraising, collection care, exhibitions, cataloguing, and progressing the Society's Museum Accreditation."*

Highly Commended Lyn Haupt: Museums Victoria

Lyn Haupt commenced volunteering at the National Museum of Victoria, now Museums Victoria, in 1981 and mainly worked with the mineralogy collection. The judges commended Lyn Haupt's work over 38 years and the passion and scholarship evidenced in her contribution.

Category 2: The Archival Survival Award for Volunteer-Run Museums was won by **The Friends of J Ward** for their success in administering the development of [J Ward](#) over 26 years. The Ararat Old Gaol opened in 1861 to cater for the district's goldrush and closed in 1886. In 1887 the building was reopened as a hospital for the 'criminally insane' and was known as J Ward. J Ward closed in 1991 and in 1993 the Friends of J Ward was formed as a volunteer organisation. Currently a group of 70 volunteers conduct daily tours in one of the few intact old gaols in Victoria. J Ward is a successful tourism enterprise, averaging 11,000 visitors a year. The volunteers undertake tasks including tour guiding, accounts, administration, computing, ticketing, catering, gardening, maintenance, marketing and promotion. Participation as a volunteer at J Ward allows members to develop a greater empathy and understanding of mental health and its history.

The judges were impressed with this nomination and the 26 year commitment of the 70 volunteer Friends of J Ward that conduct daily tours of the site, formerly used as a hospital for the 'criminally insane' in Ararat. The judges commended *"the impressive outreach of the site as a tourism attraction for the region and the obvious passion of the volunteers in creating an excellent visitor experience."*

Highly Commended: Geoffrey Kaye Museum of Anaesthetic History for the Exhibition - *The Rare Privilege of Medicine: Women Anaesthetists in Australia and New Zealand*

The judges appreciated the professionalism of this nomination and exhibition and commended their aspiration to make changes to their practices, based on information learned during the development of this exhibition, to ensure the representation of women in the history of anaesthesia and the collection.

Category 3: The **City Gallery** was recognised when it received the Archival Survival Award for Small Museums for their *Emblazon: Melbourne's coat of arms* exhibition that used objects selected from the City of Melbourne's heritage collection, with new commissions by artist's Angela Brennan, Yhonnie Scarce and Gerry Wedd. *Emblazon* was curated by Alisa Bunbury to explore the coat of arms as an often-unnoticed aspect of the city's history including its past use, continuing presence and contemporary artistic interpretations. The City of Melbourne collection is rich in coat of arms material (only one loan was required for the exhibition). One of its icon objects, a Sèvres vase donated to Melbourne by the Government of France for the 1888 International Exhibition, features Melbourne's coat of arms and triggered the idea for this show. Three artists, with strong bodies of work in ceramics, were asked to interpret the Sèvres vase. The commissioned artworks effectively gave the exhibition a contemporary sensibility and will continue to display well as permanent items of the City of Melbourne's heritage collection.

The judges awarded **City Gallery** for the *Emblazon: Melbourne's coat of arms* exhibition for its innovative approach to presenting the history, development and contemporary viewing of objects in the City of Melbourne's heritage collection. Curator, Alisa Bunbury, created a fascinating exhibition that included three commissioned ceramic works from artist's Angela Brennan, Gerry Wedd and Yhonnie Scarce. The judges applauded this exhibition's stand-out delivery of a traditional subject that engaged with a diverse selection of artists interpreting the subject and achieved excellent visitation and feedback. The judges commented on this *"weaving together of unusual objects and stories to deliver an exciting project using the City of Melbourne's collection."*

Category 4: The AMaGA Victoria Award for Medium Museums was won by the **Immigration Museum** for their innovative and participatory LOVE exhibition. The LOVE exhibition was the latest step in the evolution of the [Immigration Museum](#) from a traditional migration history museum to a more participatory experience that reflects our shared experience through stories that cross time, culture, gender, age, place and sexuality. Storytellers from many walks of life were presented as individuals rather than representatives of particular groups, cultures or experiences. All stories were told by the person who lived the experience, their relative or descendant, or a contemporary community representative. LOVE dramatically increased visitation to the Immigration Museum aided by the digital guide app that was created in-house. The exhibition facilitated a collaborative partnership with Heide Museum of Modern Art, the first time the two organisations have worked together on a project.

The judges awarded the Immigration Museum for their LOVE exhibition that was designed to create a participatory experience and a positive immigration story through deep human connection. The judges were impressed with the curator's active engagement with community individuals to address representational gaps in existing collections and their donors that resulted in loans of new material and artist commissions. The Judges commented that *"this was the type of exhibition that museums need to do to remain relevant"* and they applauded the exhibitions *"resolved presentation, the use of technology, and high level of engagement that will sustain the museums relevance and purpose."*

MUSEUMS RECEIVING ACCREDITATION IN 2019 (3 Accreditations)

Harriet Shing MP, Parliamentary Secretary for the Creative Industries also presented certificates to four museums that had completed the gold-standard Museum Accreditation Program this year: the [B24 Liberator Memorial Australia](#), the [Johnston Collection](#), and the [Mary MacKillop Museum](#). Currently 87 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 78 organisations Accredited and a further 9 working towards this goal. Visit the MAP geolocation [map](#) to discover Accredited museums and galleries across Victoria.

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

Dr Julie Cotter, Senior Program Manager, Victorian Cultural Collections, Creative Victoria, presented The Victorian Collections Awards for Excellence in Museum Cataloguing to Greensborough Historical Society, Uniting Church Archives – Synod of Victoria and Melbourne Legacy. These Awards acknowledge the hard work undertaken by these organisations in cataloguing their collections online using Victorian Collections. Since 2009, [Victorian Collections](http://www.victoriancollections.net.au) has provided a free, easy to use, online cataloguing system for a diverse range of collecting organisations. Developed in partnership by AMaGA Victoria and Museums Victoria, and with over 151,793 public items of 180,000+ total records online from 567 organisations, Victorian Collections makes state-wide cultural treasures accessible and discoverable to the online community.

Further information:

<https://www.amagavic.org.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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Notes for editors:

Australian Museums and Galleries Association Victoria (Museums Australia (Victoria) prior to November 2018) 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: <https://amagavic.org.au> and www.victoriancollections.net.au

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