

The 2020 Victorian Museums and Galleries Awards online presentation was held on Tuesday 8 December by AMaGA Victoria – <https://amagavic.org.au>– the peak body for 1,000+ museums and collecting organisations. The night was hosted by Cal Wilson, Melbourne comedian and author, including a special address by Danny Pearson MP, Minister for Creative Industries

The Awards, now in their 27th year, are conducted annually to highlight outstanding achievements in the Victorian museum, gallery, and collecting sector. This special event raises awareness of museums and galleries as effective vehicles for engagement with ideas and communities, rewards and encourages best practice by individuals and organisations, and recognises the value of museums and galleries within the community.

THE 2020 VICTORIAN MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES AWARDS (7 categories & 10 recipients)

Category 1: The AMaGA Victoria Award for Excellence (Volunteer)

One individual was recognised when they won a AMaGA Victoria Award for Excellence (Volunteer): **Edmond Chiu, A.M** was nominated for this Award for his tireless work as a volunteer at Museum of Chinese Australian History. Edmund joined the museum as a volunteer over a decade ago. After discovering his ability to apply himself to vigorous research work, and with his deep interest in uncovering and recognizing past Chinese Australians, Edmond has been assisting the curator to undertake the research into Chinese Australians who served in the Australian armed service in both World Wars. Edmond assisted in creating the Chinese ANZACs Exhibition in commemoration of the Centenary of the end of WWI. This exhibition continues to be shown across Victoria and Interstate as it has a timeless quality and value to the descendants of those who served. His research work on unrecognized Chinese Australian servicemen and women continues to this day.

The judges were impressed with Edmond Chiu's dedication to researching the topic of Chinese ANZACs, even after exhibition was completed and presented across the country, Edmond has continued his thorough research into their history.

Highly Commended: Del Atkinson, Linton and District Historical Society and Dorothy Morgan, The Johnson Collection

The judges commended the dedication and high level of professionalism of both volunteers in their roles.

Category 2: The AMaGA Victoria Award for Excellence (Paid Staff)

One individual was recognised when they won a AMaGA Victoria Award for Excellence (Paid Staff): **Michael Beattie** was nominated for this Award for his work with the Indigo Shire Council. Michael worked for thirteen years as coordinator of the Beechworth Historic Courthouse, as part of the Burke Museum and Historic Precinct team. Michael has shown a passion for researching, recording, and communicating the history of the court. He provided everyday research assistance to visitors, researchers, and students as well as to other museums, documentary crews and academics. Michael showed constant dedication to interpreting the stories of the courthouse to hundreds of thousands of visitors, through leading walking tours, undertaking re-enactments of trials, managing education tours, and communicating with visitors.

The judges commended Michael Beattie's innovative way of sharing the history of the Beechworth Historic Courthouse, his diverse skills and dedication, and his passion for research and photography.

Highly Commended: Jennifer Levitt Maxwell, Jewish Holocaust Centre

Judges commended Jennifer's focus throughout her career on transforming stories into meaningful experiences, utilising digital and traditional platforms, that inspire positive change.

Category 3: AMaGA Victoria Lifetime Achievement Award

Four individuals were honoured with a AMaGA Victoria Lifetime Achievement Award.

Liza Dale - Museums Victoria

Professor Harriet Edquist, A.M - RMIT Design Archives

Jean McAuslan - Shrine of Remembrance

Peter Hoban - Sovereign Hill Museums Association

Category 4: The Archival Survival Award for Volunteer-Run Museums/Galleries

The Archival Survival Award for Volunteer-Run Museums/Galleries was won by **Her Place Women's Museum Australia and the Women's Mural Documentation Project for 'Re-imagining the Women's Mural'**

'Re-imagining the Women's Mural' project was a collaboration between Her Place Women's Museum Australia (Her Place) and Women's Mural Documentation Project (WMDP) together with the artists of the 1986 Women's Mural: From Bomboniere to Barbed Wire-Megan Evans and Eve Glenn. This virtual mural pays homage to the history of the now demolished Women's Mural: *Bomboniere to Barbed Wire*, a large public artwork (150 x12 metres) created by artists Megan Evans & Eve Glenn in 1986.

The judges acknowledged that this is an important piece of the second-wave feminist history, which can now be remembered in perpetuity, noting the importance of digitisation projects to capture public artworks and their stories. They commended the central role that oral histories play in bringing the artwork history to life and capturing the spirit of the time that they were made in. *"The digital mural preserves important historical documents, images, music, and stories that are so often lost to future generations—particularly women's stories."*

Highly commended: AFI Research Collection, Virtual and Digital Adaptation.

The judges commended new ways the organisation was moving to share collections while engaging existing and new audience.

Category 5: The Archival Survival Award for Small Museums/Galleries

The **Yarra Ranges Regional Museum** was recognised when it received the Archival Survival Award for Small Museums/Galleries for their *My Home, Yarra Ranges (interactive eBook)*. The book, *My Home, Yarra Ranges* connects children with animal stories in the museum's collection. Yarra Ranges Regional Museum launched this interactive book as part of their 2020 Spring School Holidays program. Aimed at Primary School aged children (6–12 years) it featured objects, images and stories from the Museum's collection intertwined with colouring pages, puzzles and games produced by local artist.

The judges were impressed with Yarra Ranges Regional Museum for engaging with and sharing their collection in a new, innovative, and creative way. They commended the organisation for engaging local artists, upskilling staff, and producing an accessible resource available to a broad audience. The judges thought *"the project creatively transferred a child's museum experience to the home environment"* – through incorporating a mix of formats both self-guided and parent led.

Highly Commended: The Johnson Collection, Janet Laurence: *The Palm at the End of the Mind*

The judges commended the ability of the organisation to set up good collaborations and inviting new perspective to challenge the conventions of their spaces and the relationships to nature and culture, collecting and discovery, and the natural environment.

Category 6: The AMaGA Victoria Award for Medium Museums/Galleries

The AMaGA Victoria Award for Medium Museums/Galleries was won by the **Jewish Holocaust Centre** for their moving and significant *Ask A Survivor* website project. Ask a Survivor was developed with the Jewish Holocaust Centre's community of Holocaust Survivors. Over an 8-year period, 46 interviews with 32 different survivors were conducted. Meeting and interacting with a Holocaust survivor is one of the unforgettable highlights of visiting the Jewish Holocaust Centre. Ask a Survivor was created to future-proof this experience. To ensure that the museum could facilitate ongoing meaningful interaction between students and Holocaust survivors. With COVID-19 restrictions, the Jewish Holocaust Centre had to fast track this project and continue to educate students through online workshops.

In this interactive experience, 18 questions most asked by students were curated as an online resource. Students then have an opportunity to pose these questions, compare responses and see the similarities and differences in the survivors' answers.

The judges found the Jewish Holocaust Centre, *Ask a Survivor* website project "A moving and a significant project that was delivered respectfully and with integrity." They acknowledged the importance of capturing survivor testimony in future-proofing these narratives for generations to come and were impressed with the good use of technology, high level of execution and ease of navigation of the website.

Highly Commended: Jewish Museum and Islamic Museum, *Museums Together*

The judges recognised the potential of the project, and the museums as a place to come together to build bridges of understanding, between different cultural communities.

Category 7: The AMaGA Victoria Award for Large Museums/Galleries

The AMaGA Victoria Award for Large Museums/Galleries was won by **Museums Victoria** for their innovative and engaging *Museum at Home* online experience. *Museum at Home* is Museums Victoria's online experience created in response to the closure of the physical museums during the COVID-19 crisis. It connected museum visitors virtually, met them in digital spaces with content and experiences to delight and engage, and provided 'always open' access to activities, collections, and stories from Melbourne Museum, Scienceworks and Immigration Museum. Since its inception in March 2020, Museum at Home has reached more than 19.7 million people online via the creation of more than 200 videos and more than 120 activities for children and families including live and bookable experiences.

The judges commended Museums Victoria for their rapid response to the COVID-19 crisis via *Museum at Home* an impressive and innovative online experience. The judges were impressed by the depth and reach of program, its playful delivery and engagement of diverse audiences. The judges commented that "*Museum at Home provided families and children with outstanding, engaging and educational content during challenging time*".

MUSEUMS RECEIVING ACCREDITATION IN 2020 (3 Accreditations)

Three certificates were presented to organisations that had completed the Museum Accreditation Program this year: the [Daylesford and District Historical Society](#), [Maldon Museum and Archives Association](#) and the [National Vietnam Veterans Museum](#). The Museum Accreditation Program is now in its 27th year and the program aims to guide ongoing development and bring about positive change by supporting organisations to preserve and manage collections and enrich community experiences. Visit the MAP geolocation [map](#) to discover Accredited museums and galleries across Victoria.

THE VICTORIAN COLLECTIONS AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN MUSEUM CATALOGUING (4 Awards)

Dr Julie Cotter, Senior Program Manager, Victorian Cultural Collections, Creative Victoria, presented The Victorian Collections Awards for Excellence in Museum Cataloguing to Brighton Historical Society, Flagstaff Hill Maritime Museum and Village and 8th/13th Mounted Rifles Victoria Regimental Collection. The inaugural Martin Hallett Award for Individual Contribution to Community Heritage was presented to Lynda Tieman of Port Fairy Historical Museum and Archives. These Awards acknowledge the hard work undertaken by these organisations in cataloguing their collections online using Victorian Collections. Since 2009, [Victorian Collections](https://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, 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 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

VICTORIAN MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES AWARDS SPONSORS AND SUPPORTERS

