

The 2021 Victorian Museums and Galleries Awards online presentation was held on Tuesday 5 October by AMaGA Victoria – <https://amagavic.org.au> – the peak body for 1000+ museums and collecting organisations. The night was hosted by Patrick Watt, including a special address by **Danny Pearson MP, Minister for Creative Industries.**

The Awards, now in their 28th 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 engaging ideas and communities, rewards and encourages best practice by individuals and organisations, and recognises the value of museums and galleries within the community.

THE 2021 VICTORIAN MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES AWARDS (7 categories & 7 recipients)

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

One individual was recognised when they won AMaGA Victoria Award for Excellence (volunteer): **Judith Kershaw** was nominated for this Award for her 25 years of commitment as a volunteer at **Port Fairy Museum and Archives.** Judith's love of history was evident from the time she joined Port Fairy Museum and Archives society in 1994. She has guided many projects for the Archives including grants, storage projects and publications. She has had broad impact on the organisation and is a well-loved, respected and passionate member of the community.

The judges recognised Judith's 25-year commitment to volunteering at Port Fairy Museum and Archives. Her passion for history and being a strong community leader. She is an all-rounder and has demonstrated strong community outcomes through her passion for her work.

Highly Commended: Dr Ian Buckland, Beleura House and Garden. The judges gave special commendation to Dr Buckland's work in extending the industry and raising the standard of the organisations work.

Category 2: AMaGA Victoria Lifetime Achievement Award

Michael Aitken was honoured with a AMaGA Victoria Lifetime Achievement for his work with the **Cyril Kett Optometry Museum.** Michael Aitken has been volunteering as an archivist to help organise and catalogue items of historical interest to the profession of optometry since 1961. Starting from small beginnings, the collection became formally established as the Cyril Kett Optometry Museum and Archive in 1971. Since that time over 4000 items and artefacts including spectacles, optometric instruments and equipment, books, art works and ephemera has been donated or acquired, all researched and catalogued by voluntary archivists. Michael has served continuously as an archivist over the 50 years and has been the primary force behind the acquisition and the cataloguing of the collection of items and rare book holdings, while building up a team of volunteers over the years.

The judges commended Michael's contribution to the organisation in every way possible - financially/philanthropically as well as through collection management and cataloguing. He has contributed significantly to the resource levels of the organisation and his impact has been recognised internationally as well as through several awards.

Category 3: Martin Hallett Award for individual contribution to community heritage

Clare Gervasoni, from **Ballarat Heritage Services** and **Federation University** was recognised for her contribution to community heritage with the Martin Hallett Award. Claire is a longstanding and leading user of Victorian Collections since it began in 2010. A leader in her region, she has enabled lots of skill transfer to volunteers and believes strongly in the digitisation of material as a preservation and interpretation tool. She has instigated cataloguing and best practice in many Victorian collections, including work with the Ballarat University library team to catalogue on the system, as well as working for Ballarat Heritage Services. Clare has been a clear and vocal advocate for small and regional community organisations that use Victorian Collections to decision makers.

The judges commended Clare on her Victoria Collections cataloguing practices, her involvement in training individual and groups in digitisation, and sharing outcomes on a range of platforms, from Facebook groups to wikis, exhibitions to digital stories. *“Clare is the consummate champion of preserving and making accessible grass roots community collections using Victorian Collections”*.

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** for their exhibition ***Unmasked***.

Unmasked is an exhibition marking the International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife in 2020 and pays tribute to the nurses and midwives of Victoria and beyond. The exhibition draws on midwifery and nursing's vast history and contemporary stories to acknowledge the immeasurable and collective contribution of nurses and midwives to Australian health care.

The judges acknowledged how moving the exhibition was, it made them cry. The exhibition had a “clear curatorial premise, good exhibition outcome and design scope”. It was well researched and presented using lived experience as well as scholarship. It demonstrated excellence in research, curation, and programming.

Highly commended: The Australian Queer Archives, ‘A History of LGBTIQ+ Victoria in 100 Places & Objects’ project and website. Judges commended such a worthwhile project that sees this important archive develop further.

Category 5: The Archival Survival Award for small museums/galleries

The **Warrnambool Art Gallery** was recognised when it received the Archival Survival Award for small museums/galleries for their ***WAG Maar Nation Gallery and Aboriginal-led Legacy Initiative***. The WAG Maar Nation Gallery and Aboriginal-led Legacy Initiative provides the First Nations people of South West Victoria with a central place for the interpretation of history and culture through exhibition. It also provides a meeting place for education, passing on knowledge, sharing stories and showing contemporary culture to many young people and the greater community.

The judges were impressed with the gallery's initiative in community building partnership. They commended the organisation for developing a new Indigenous curator's role and collaboration between gallery and the local community. The judges thought that the initiative *“clearly demonstrates outstanding work and best practice in First Peoples agency and engagement.”*

Highly commended: The **Beechworth Burke Museum, The Burke Museum Online Cataloguing Program (BMOCP)**. The judges commended the museum for successful adaptation to COVID and creating a good partnership project that strengthens skill levels in the sector.

Category 6: The AMaGA Victoria Award for medium museums/galleries

The AMaGA Victoria Award for medium museums/galleries was won by the **National Wool Museum** for ***On the Land: Our Story Retold*** exhibition. *On the Land: Our Story Retold* is about the past,

present and future of Australian wool. It is about people and places and how we have settled the land. It is the first major exhibition on Australian wool for over two decades. It begins with a major new exhibit on the Wadawurrung people – the Traditional Owners of the Geelong region.

As the name suggests, *On the Land: Out Story Retold* is all about this rich and bountiful land. But there is an underlying tension implicit in this exhibition. How do we reconcile the rich and bountiful social and economic history of the wool industry with the drastic environmental and cultural impact of the industry over the last two centuries? This question is constantly in tension at all moments throughout the experience.

The judges commended the National Wool Museum for developing such a complex and detailed, well researched and considered permanent exhibition on a budget. The exhibition bravely engages with communities and audiences, confronting frontier stories to bring balance to the celebration of wool as an economic and cultural phenomenon across regional Australia, including in the Geelong region.

Highly Commended: Grimwade Conservation Services, the University of Melbourne, CostumeLAB - Conservation in Action HC

The judges recognised the potential of the project, how it educates the public about conservation in a dynamic programming context.

Highly Commended: Geelong Gallery, *Rone in Geelong* exhibition design

The judges acknowledged this exhibition as significant design and audience development achievement for Geelong Gallery that repositions it as a destination for new audiences.

Category 7: The AMaGA Victoria Award for large museums/galleries

ACMI has received the AMaGA Victoria Award for large museums/galleries for *The Story of the Moving Image*,

The Story of the Moving Image is ACMI's new, free, centrepiece exhibition. It spans more than 1600 square metres, taking visitors on an immersive journey through the past, present and future of the moving image across film, TV and videogames.

The exhibition sits at the heart of ACMI's two-year \$40 million dollar transformation and reflects the museum's architectural, programmatic and digital transformation. Featuring more than 900 objects and artworks from ancient shadow puppets to original cameras, iconic costumes, interactives and contemporary artworks, *The Story of the Moving Image* traverses time, countries and cultures.

The judges commended ACMI for such a well-executed project. *This major exhibition renewal for ACMI is built around technologically innovative displays and artist commissions to bring diverse voices into the telling of 'The Story of the Moving Image' - including giving voice to First Peoples. ACMI is a world-leading institution in its field and this project represents a consolidation of its status in Australia and beyond.*

Highly Commended: State Library Victoria, The Rural and Regional Photography Commission

Judges commended this project and how it contributes to the SLV's photography collection and is an example of responsive collecting that meets the SLV's mandate.

MUSEUMS RECEIVING ACCREDITATION IN 2021 (Two Accreditations)

Two organisations, were presented certificates for completing the Museum Accreditation Program this year: the Charlton Golden Grains Museum and the Tatura Irrigation and Wartime Camps Museum.

The Museum Accreditation Program is now in its 28th 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 Kew Historical Society, The Beechworth Burke Museum, Melbourne Legacy and Wangaratta Art Gallery. 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. 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 1993. Our 1000+ 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

