

9 October 2026

## State Library wins prestigious gallery award

State Library of Queensland exhibition *The unbroken spirit of the Kalkadoons* was recognised at the 2026 Gallery and Museum Achievement Awards (GAMAA).

The exhibition, which shared the powerful story of the Kalkadoon people's survival, won the First Nations Open category at the awards, presented at Ipswich Art Gallery.

Kalkadunga visual artist Colleen Sam and her mother, the late Moodinyi Sam, told the stories of their family's resistance during the Frontier Wars in North-West Queensland and the continuation of culture across 4 generations. *The unbroken spirit of the Kalkadoons* featured artworks, archival photographs, digital stories, and a 360-degree digital animation of a Sam family totem, the black cockatoo.

The exhibition also won the 2025 Queensland Reconciliation Award for Education and in 2022, Logan Art Gallery won a GAMAA for the original exhibition.

It is the second consecutive year a State Library exhibition has won the First Nations Open GAMAA – the 2025 winner, *Deaf in dance: feeling the beat*, highlighted the history and impact of the Cairns-based Deaf Indigenous Dance Group (DIDG).

State Library was also a finalist for *Driven: every car has a story* in the Projects category at the 2026 awards. The nostalgia-fuelled summer exhibition celebrated our lifelong connection to cars with an extraordinary collection of historic motoring memorabilia, rare home movies, art and family activities.

**Museums & Galleries Queensland Executive Director, Rebekah Butler**, congratulated State Library of Queensland on this multi-award-winning project.

"The unbroken spirit of the Kalkadoons is an extraordinary example of community-led storytelling that honours cultural authority, lived experience and the enduring strength of First Nations knowledge.

"Through genuine partnership with the Sam family, State Library of Queensland has created a deeply meaningful exhibition that fosters understanding, supports truth-telling and demonstrates the vital role cultural organisations can play in advancing reconciliation.

"We commend the State Library and the Sam family on this outstanding achievement and well-deserved recognition as a winner."

### Media enquiries

[media@slq.qld.gov.au](mailto:media@slq.qld.gov.au) | (07) 3840 7897