

PREMIER;
MINISTER FOR CULTURE AND THE ARTS

JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT

Attention: News Editor/Chief of Staff

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Western Australian indigenous art awards winners announced.

Australia's richest indigenous contemporary art award winners were announced by Premier Colin Barnett at a gala celebration at the Art Gallery of Western Australia this evening.

The Premier congratulated Western Australian Indigenous Art Award winner Patrick Tjungurrayi and Western Australian Indigenous Artist Award winner June Walkutjukurr Richards.

"It is fantastic that a Western Australian artist has taken out the major award - that is open to artists from throughout Australia," Mr Barnett said.

"The Liberal-National Government recognises the significant economic, social and cultural benefits of indigenous visual arts and is committed to working in various ways to support the development of this sector.

"These newly established awards celebrate the diversity and richness of indigenous art from WA and across the country."

Indigenous artists were nominated by their peers for the prestigious new awards.

Culture and Arts Minister John Day said the awards exhibition was a wonderfully varied and dynamic snapshot of current work.

"These awards recognise the outstanding contribution indigenous artists make to the cultural life of the nation," Mr Day said.

"Mr Tjungurrayi was nominated for a group of ambitious paintings that build upon the traditions of the classical Papunya style of geometric designs from the Central and Western Desert. Mr Tjungurrayi is from the Western Desert at Yalangerri (near Jupiter Well).

"June Walkutjukurr Richards from Mirlirrtjarra (Warburton Ranges) won her award for a body of work that features text-based pieces and pictographic scenes of people coming into her community. This award is for a Western Australian artist who is acknowledged as currently creating significant work.

"The People's Choice Award of \$5,000 will be selected by visitor ballots during the exhibition and the winner will be announced on January 6, 2009."

The exhibition features works by 15 artists and an artists' group, and will be on display at the Art Gallery of Western Australia from tomorrow until January 11. Entry to the exhibition is free.

More information is available at: <http://www.artgallery.wa.gov.au>

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