



**MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER ARTIST DENNIS NONA WINS NATIONAL TELSTRA ART AWARD**

Torres Strait Islander artist Dennis Nona has been awarded Australia's premier Indigenous art prize, the ***Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award***, tonight in Darwin.

The coveted **\$40,000 TELSTRA ART AWARD** was announced by Mr Lawrie Mortimer, General Manager, National Indigenous Directorate, Telstra, at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT) in Darwin for the work *Ubirikubiri*.

*Ubirikubiri* is a cast bronze structure of a 3.5 metre crocodile that depicts the story of a legend that took place on the Mai Kusa (River) on the west coast of Papua New Guinea.

Dennis Nona was born on Badu Island in 1973 and is one of Australia's most reputed Torres Strait Islander artists, best known for his linocuts and sculptures. Mr Nona was named as one of Australia's 50 most collectable artists for 2007 by *Australian Art Collector* magazine and his works feature in the collections of most major Australian art institutions and in several important overseas collections.

In addition to the Telstra Art Award, prizes were awarded in four other categories:

**The \$4,000 Telstra General Painting Award**, was awarded to Northern Territory-based artist Angelina George for her work *Near Ruined City*.

**The \$4,000 Telstra Bark Painting Award** was awarded to Margaret Rarru Garrawurra from Arnhem Land for her work *Ngarra Body Paint Design*.

**The \$4,000 Telstra Works on Paper**, was awarded to Alick Tipoti from the Torres Strait Islands for his work *Gubau Aimai Mabaigal*.

**The \$4,000 Wandjuk Marika Three-Dimensional Memorial Award**, sponsored by Telstra was awarded to Laurie Nilsen from Queensland for his work *Goolburriss on the Bungil Creek*.

MAGNT Director Anna Malgorzewicz thanked everyone involved in making this year's Award such a success including Telstra for its continued sponsorship of the Award.

"The Award is identifying new Indigenous artists every year and this year's entries are outstanding," Ms Malgorzewicz said.

"I congratulate the winners on their success as well as all the finalists who managed to contribute to such a wonderful exhibition."

Mr Lawrie Mortimer said the Award had celebrated some of Australia's most talented Indigenous artists.

"Since Telstra began its sponsorship of the Award in 1992, Indigenous artists have exhibited nationally and internationally as well as having their works acquired by cultural institutions.

“We have awarded more than \$500,000 in prize money to talented Indigenous artists across the country,” he said.

“We are committed to developing opportunities for Indigenous Australians wherever they reside and our Next G™ network is now bringing mobile broadband access to 98.8 per cent of Australia’s population, opening up new business and other opportunities in many remote areas.

The Award judges were Fiona Foley and Djon Mundine OAM.

The *Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award* was founded in 1984 by the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory. The aim of the Award is to recognise and promote appreciation and understanding of the quality and diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art from remote and urban based Indigenous artists throughout Australia, working in traditional and contemporary media. The *Award* is an important showcase for both established and emerging artists and has come to be regarded as the premier national event in the Australian Indigenous art calendar.

The **24<sup>th</sup> Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award** will be on display at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory in Darwin from 10 August until 18 November 2007.

**For media inquiries or to arrange interviews/photographs please contact:**

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