

13 August 2010

SA Artist Mr Donegan Wins 2010 Telstra Art Award

A striking painting depicting ancestral stories by SA artist Mr Donegan has been awarded Australia's most prestigious Indigenous art prize at the 27th *Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award* (NATSIAA).

He has been awarded the **\$40,000 Telstra Art Award** for his work titled *Papa Tjukurpa, Pukara* by Minister for Arts and Museums Gerry McCarthy and Telstra Country Wide Executive Managing Director Mr Brett Riley at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT).

The overall Telstra Art Award winner has been selected from the NATSIAA's five category winners for the first time with Mr Donegan's work *Papa Tjukurpa* and *Pukara* also winning the \$4,000 General Painting Award category.

The synthetic polymer paint on canvas, measuring 1.8m x 2m, relays ancestral stories from both Mr Donegan's father's and grandfather's country and is striking for its immensely strong composition held together across a diversity of painting styles from intricate skeins of dots to gestural mark-making.

The painting is of two stories - *Papa Tjukurpa* and *Pukara* – *Papa Tjukurpa* (Dingo Dreaming) represents his father's country and *Pukara* represents his grandfather's country and is a water snake Dreaming story.

Mr Donegan was born at Yanpan, a rockhole near Ngatuntjarra Bore, around 1940, and grew up as a 'bush baby' in country around Blackstone and Mantamaru in Western Australia.

Mr Donegan has family links through the Pitjantjatjara lands, his wife is originally from a place near Kalka and Mr Donegan, now widowed, has returned to Kalka community in South Australia to live with his four children and to be close to his sister Molly Nampitjin Miller.

Mr Donegan is a wonderful wood craftsman, his spears, spear throwers and boomerangs are prized and highly sought-after. He is rich in Story (Tjukurpa) and a strong Law and Culture man.

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

The \$4,000 Telstra General Painting Award - Mr Donegan - *Papa Tjukurpa* and *Pukara*

The \$4,000 Telstra Bark Painting Award - Glen Namundja - *Kunabibbe Ceremony at Manmoyi*

The \$4,000 Telstra Works on Paper - Dennis Nona - *Saulal*

The \$4,000 Wandjuk Marika Memorial Three-Dimensional Award, sponsored by Telstra - Wukun Wanambi - *Bamurrungu*

The \$3000 inaugural Telstra New Media Award - Nawurapu Wunungmurra - *Mokuy*

Telstra Art Award curator Kate Podger congratulated all the winning artists and the pre-selected artists for contributing to this prestigious exhibition which draws from the best of Indigenous art across the nation.

"This has been a wonderful opportunity for me to curate the 27th *Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award*, I wish to thank everyone who has helped make this year's Telstra Art Award a fantastic exhibition, and Telstra for the continued sponsorship of this prestigious Award," Ms Podger said.

Telstra Country Wide Executive Managing Director Brett Riley said how uplifting it was to see the vibrant, thought provoking work of some of Australia's best Indigenous artists.

“The vibrancy and diversity of artworks is a characteristic of these Awards, and this year’s winner is an outstanding work.

“With the inclusion of the Telstra New Media Award this year, we have encouraged artists working in new mediums to bring a fresh way of expression to the Awards.

“The response to the new category has been so positive, that I can announce, in partnership with the Museum, the Telstra New Media Award will become a permanent category within the Telstra Awards, with equal prize money of \$4,000 next year,” continued Mr Riley.

The 27th *Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award* judges were Djambawa Marawili AM and Dr Sylvia Kleinert.

Artworks in this year’s exhibition will be featured on an interactive website www.nt.gov.au/natsiaa, which offers users from around the world the opportunity to view moving images of this year’s artworks and listen to recordings of the story behind the works through a virtual online gallery from 4pm Friday, 13 August 2010.

To follow the Telstra Art Award on Twitter go to www.twitter.com/natsiaa

The 27th *Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award* exhibition will be on display at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory until Sunday, 7 November 2010.

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

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Image: 2010 Telstra Art Award winner Mr Donegan in front of his winning work *Papa Tjukurpa and Pukara*

Images from the media preview featuring winning artists with their works is available online from Friday, 13 August 2010. Go to www.nt.gov.au/magnt/mediaimages, user ID: nretamag, password: tough1

The 27th *Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award* is supported by the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy, an initiative of the Australian, State and Territory Governments.



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