

Media Release

Martin Foley MP
Minister for Creative Industries



Friday, 11 September, 2015

WADAWURRUNG ELDER VOTED THE PEOPLE'S CHOICE

The people have spoken and Wadawurrung Elder and self-taught artist Aunty Marlene Gilson has been voted the People's Choice at the 2015 Victorian Indigenous Art Awards.

Minister for Creative Industries Martin Foley today named Aunty Marlene the winner of the \$5,000 award, which is supported by Creative Victoria, for her large-scale painting *Bunjil's Final Resting Place, Race Meeting at Lal Lal Falls*.

Aunty Marlene is a self-taught artist who took up painting 10 years ago. A descendant of King Billy, an Aboriginal Elder of the Ballarat region at the time of the Eureka Stockade, her work seeks to share Aboriginal culture and history and encourage the younger generation to keep stories alive through their own art.

Bunjil's Final Resting Place, Race Meeting at Lal Lal depicts life in the early 1900s for Marlene's ancestors and early European settlers in the township of Lal Lal, 20km South East of Ballarat.

Marlene's winning work is currently on show at the Art Gallery of Ballarat as part of the 2015 Victorian Indigenous Art Awards exhibition. The exhibition showcases the diversity of Victoria's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts and features more than 40 artworks ranging from contemporary sculpture to traditional crafts. More than 15,000 people have visited the exhibition since it opened in August.

Aunty Marlene will be giving a Twilight Talk at the Art Gallery of Ballarat at 5pm, Wednesday, 16 September as part of the 10th anniversary Victorian Indigenous Art Awards program.

The free 2015 Victorian Indigenous Art Awards exhibition is open daily at the Art Gallery of Ballarat until Sunday 20 September 2015. For more information, visit: www.indigenousartawards.com

Quotes attributable to Minister for Creative Industries Martin Foley

"When the Bracks Labor Government established the Victorian Indigenous Art Awards in 2005, Marlene Gilson was just teaching herself to paint. I can't think of a more fitting way to round out the 10th anniversary year than for the Andrews Labor Government to see Marlene - now a recognised artist - take out the People's Choice Award for this stunning and deeply spiritual work."

"Congratulations to Aunty Marlene and all of the artists who participated in this year's 10th anniversary Victorian Indigenous Art Awards program. If you haven't had a chance to see the exhibition, I encourage you to visit the Art Gallery of Ballarat before it closes on 20 September."

Quotes attributable to Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Natalie Hutchins

"The much deserved People's Choice Award shows just how many people loved and connected with Aunty Marlene's work."

"I'd encourage everyone to see these artists' work and learn more about the profound importance of Victorian Aboriginal art and cultural heritage."