

The editor's desk

Happy Wednesday readers and welcome to CQ Today's midweek edition.

This week I headed over to the Frenchville Sports Club where members of U3A Rockhampton and District were enjoying their Christmas lunch.

U3A (University of the Third Age) is a worldwide organisation which began in France in 1973, bringing together people who have retired from work who want to continue learning and living an active and fulfilling lifestyle.

From discussion groups for financial and current affairs, to writing for pleasure, birdwatching, mahjong, ukulele playing, photography, and armchair travel groups to name just a few, members' lives are enriched by the social and intellectual stimulation received through U3A.

President Cheryl Wickes called the group was "a wonderful way of forming new friendships and learning into your older age", with some members well into their 90s.

Turn to page 17 for the full story
- Matthew Pearce



Detail from 'The Kingfishers Catch', which achieved a finalist spot for the Annie Tan Memorial Watercolour Award. Pictures: SUPPLIED



Cooee Bay artist Michelle Turner.

INSIDE

- EVENTS BILLBOARD page 10
- SOCIAL PHOTOSpages 17, 29
- OPINIONpages 18-20
- TV GUIDEpages 21-28
- COMMUNITY PAGE page 33
- SPORTpages 43-48

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Kingfisher grabs eye

By Shelby Gurney

More than 190 attendees and 35 finalists gathered at the Judith Wright Centre, Brisbane, on Friday, 24 September for the Flying Arts Queensland Regional Art awards, with a Central Queensland artist among the winners.

The increased prize pool for the prestigious annual Queensland Regional Art Awards (QRAA) run by the Flying Arts Alliance elevates the awards to one of the most valuable art awards in Australia.

The finalists were selected by director of the Rockhampton Museum of Art Jonathan McBurnie and come from across regional and remote Queensland, including Rockhampton, Winton, Mornington Island, Moa Island, Townsville, and the Sunshine Coast.

Only a few months prior Cooee Bay artist Michelle Turner secured a finalist spot for the Annie Tan Memorial Watercolour Award with her artwork 'The Kingfishers Catch'.

She has now painted a further victory by

receiving a Highly Commended recognition at the awards ceremony.

"There were only two awards granted in the watercolour section, First Place which went to long time accomplished artist Phuong Ly, and to receive Highly Commended behind an artist such as Phuong is such an honour," she said.

"Unfortunately I wasn't able to attend the Gala event in Brisbane, as I had booked six months prior a three day art workshop in Melbourne with the amazing natural history artist Heidi's Willis."

The artists were judged in nine different categories, although the Highly Commended recipients didn't receive a prize there was only one recipient per judged category.

Michelle said when an artist of any kind first starts to showcase their works or talents to the world, there is that little voice at the back of your head questioning, 'Am I good enough?'

"Being highly commended has cemented, 'Yes', the hard work is paying off, and my work is good enough to show the world," she said.

"I will most definitely be entering the art awards next year, I'm hoping to also enter the local Baynton Awards next year, now that my confidence has lifted.

"I would love to become more actively involved and show my support for our local art community.

"Hopefully I will be lucky enough to get the chance to attend then, it sounds like a great excuse for a new dress."

In the future, Michelle is looking to expand her artistic horizons as her neighbour Sandra Younger is an acrylic artist, who specialises in beautiful nature scenes.

They are considering having their first ever exhibition jointly next year in Yeppoon, as their styles compliment each other making for a wonderful nature display.

All finalists can now be viewed on the Flying Arts Alliance website, with the winners and highly commended award recipients live-posted on Instagram and Facebook.

Art awards recognise regional artists



Director of the Rockhampton Museum of Art Jonathan McBurnie with artists. Pictures: MASIMBA SASA



Director of the Rockhampton Museum of Art Jonathan McBurnie.



The artwork was professionally staged and hung throughout the foyer for guests to see as they walked in, as well as in the theatre, which transformed into a gallery space.



RMOA was on the list of judges for the awards ceremony.



There were 35 finalists featured at the award ceremony.