

MEDIA RELEASE

Jimmy Little Water Tower One of Australia's Best Street Art Drawcards

A giant mural on the Walgett Water Tower that honours legendary singer Jimmy Little has been named as one of the best public art experiences in the nation.

The Jimmy Little Water Tower has been shortlisted for the 2021 Australian Street Art Awards' Best Mega Mural gong.

The Australian Street Art Awards, established in 2018, recognise destinations like Walgett that are using outdoor art to attract visitors, boost their economy and engage their community.

Awards Director Liz Rivers said, "The Awards inform travellers about the magnificent array of publicly-accessible art that can be found in every corner of the country and the communities that have invested in these attractions because they're keen to welcome visitors".

She said smart communities promote their street and outdoor art as a unique landmark – an attraction that visitors can see in only one place - and that makes their destination immediately identifiable, highly attractive and a drawcard for art-loving tourists.

"Investing in outdoor art as a visitor attraction is also clever economics, as the art is typically less expensive to create than more traditional tourism attractions and the pay-off is handsome," Ms Rivers said.

Arts tourists from within Australia are high value visitors – they stay 42.8% longer and spend 55.9% more when travelling than domestic tourists overall, according to an Australia Council for the Arts' Domestic Art Tourism: Connecting the Country Report.

"Being shortlisted in the Awards further cements Walgett's growing reputation as an aspirational destination for everyone who loves to discover visually stunning experiences," Ms Rivers said.

With rigorous judging by tourism leaders, plus second-tier auditing and due diligence, the finalist success of the Jimmy Little Water Tower has the credence of the tourism sector.

The Jimmy Little Water Tower mural will ensure the musician's legacy lives on. Based on a photograph by John Elliott, artist Jenny McCracken has brought the portrait to life. The background was designed by local Gamileroi artist Frank Wright and identifies Walgett, the rivers and local totems of the sand goanna, dragonfly and emu. If visitors look closely they can see Jimmy's wife reflected in his eyes.

The judges said, "This mural project, which was managed by Zest Events International, is a great example of what can be achieved for a community when it is well-conceived and strategically planned to bring benefits to the town, and we love the vibrancy of the chosen colours to help make it stand out as a landmark".

The winners in all 11 Australian Street Art Awards categories will be announced as part of an online celebration on 4 March.

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