

The Australasian Celebration of the International Year of Caves and Karst competition

The Australasian Celebration of the International Year of Caves and Karst competition, a joint initiative of ACKMA, ASF and NZSS had been well attended and the winning entries were notified 18th December 2021.

ACKMA alongside our friends ASF and NZSS provided the \$1,000 grand prize and Ledlenser provided four \$500 vouchers. There were 52 entries in all, in different media. The most popular section was written entries comprising poems and stories. All entries have been provided to the joint partners and ACKMA Editor and Webmaster. You will see entries in our journal, social media and web site in the coming months.

Winner Video entry - 'Adapted to the dark' by Sil Iannello

The judges recognise the original work, the science behind the subject, the importance of the conservation message and the overall flair of the presentation.

Winner Creative arts entry - 'Harwoods hole' by Peter MacNab

The judges recognise the cutting edge techniques of a cave scene of significance which also made the judges feel drawn into the scene.

Winner Photograph entry - 'Croesus wandering' by John Oxley

The judges recognise the ability to achieve depth, reflections and composition which draws you in and the old mythology of the scene Croesus in a modern day image which brings the traditions of mythology of the past into modern day technology.

Winner Stories and poems entry - 'A karst of shadows' by Leah Miller

The judges recognize the skill to play on words, the character and the journey. Leah was also able to create sounds in the heads of our judges through her creative writing.

After carefully assessing all the entries, deciding on the winners of each of the categories, this entry 'A karst of shadows' has been awarded the Grand Prize.

A special thanks to our generous sponsor Ledlenser.

Thank you to all the 52 participants, especially the children's entries, some of which rivaled the adult entries. It was especially interesting to read the inspiration behind the works. There really has been a wonderful amount of creativity on the subject of caves and karst. The ASF, NZSS and ACKMA worked very well together to coordinate and run this competition but it would not be a success if it were not for the participants. Some of which spent months creating their art, cross stitch or writing. Wellington Caves NSW showcased the entire set of entries over the December 2021 school holiday period into February 2022. As mentioned in my December report these can be made available for any cave tourist site for exhibition. I would encourage any cave tourist site and any speleological society to work with their local arts group to run something suitable to celebrate the International Year of Caves and Karst.

A LITTLE ON THE JUDGES:

Domino Houlbrook-Cove

Domino is a passionate landscape photographer and independent artist. Domino's images have won a number of awards and her work appears on national and international tourism websites as well as in brochures, travel planners and magazines.

As an independent artist she has appeared in productions across Sydney, the Blue Mountains and Central West releasing her first CD in 1997. Since moving to NSW's Central West, she has also trained and mentored aspiring singers/performers.

Domino was fondly known as the 'Singing Guide' of the Jenolan Caves, for 25 years. Starting as a casual guide and then moving into various permanent roles including guiding, sales & marketing specialist, meetings and events manager and media liaison. She performed annually in the Carols in the Caves. From 2006-2013 she took on the roles of Producer and Director of Carols in the Caves and associated Festival winning multiple awards.

Lisa Thomas

I am currently considered retired from full time paid work, however manage to spend a large amount of time equivalent nearly to full time work as President of Wellington Arts. Way back in the 1980's I completed a fine arts degree and then working life and family got in the way of being creative!!!! The past 4 years have allowed me to explore my creative urges in a more hands on way but I am enjoying new challenges, the use of new mediums and learning from professionals.

Wellington Arts Centre Inc, as we are registered as, formed in Wellington in 2015 and has now evolved into a growing and vibrant, recognised arts hub within NSW with close to 100 members.

We are 100% volunteer based with a very strong focus in the delivery of a diverse range of community events and projects in and around Wellington NSW. The principal aim is to foster inclusiveness and work effectively on bringing the community together through the arts. Our projects often involve the ability to work with other not for profit organisations within our community and foster partnerships with like-minded artists. Our members group consists of an assorted range of vocations and brings together a wealth of talent not only in the arts but in professional capacities and business skills.

We are very fortunate to have the Wellington Caves complex on our doorstep and look forward to being able to support the 2021 initiative through the arts.

Lisa was awarded Citizen of the Year award on Australia Day 2022 in Wellington NSW for her work in the community of Wellington NSW.

Michael Burge

Michael is a writer, journalist and artist with three decades' experience in the performing arts, broadcasting, media, events and publishing. He is a graduate of Australia's National Institute of Dramatic Art, and ARTTS International (UK). Currently director of the annual High Country Writers Festival, Michael is also curator of The Makers Shed, a New England artisanal gallery; and oversees performing arts tours for Arts North West, the RADO of the NSW New England North West region. His debut novel, a coming-of-age thriller set in rural Australia, will be published in 2021 by MidnightSun. From 2008 to 2012 he enjoyed working as a casual cave guide at Jenolan Caves, where many underground journeys inspired his next full-length work of fiction. Michael's work can be accessed via www.burgewords.com