

## **Premier and Minister for the Arts**

The Honourable Anna Bligh

28/07/2009

### **CAIRNS INDIGENOUS ART FAIR PATRONS REVEALED**

Premier and Minister for the Arts Anna Bligh today announced the Governor of Queensland and Queensland Great, artist and elder Thanakupi, as patrons of the first Cairns Indigenous Art Fair (CIAF) in August.

Premier Bligh also revealed leading contemporary Aboriginal artist Judy Watson and Walkley Award-winning journalist and author Nicolas Rothwell will lead debate as keynote speakers at the CIAF Symposium.

"Due to their high profiles, Her Excellency Ms Penelope Wensley AO and Thanakupi AO will both generate international interest in the Art Fair at Tanks Arts Centre 21-23 August," Ms Bligh said.

"The Governor has a long history as an international advocate for Australian Indigenous art, notably opening the Australian Indigenous art commissions at Paris' Musee du quai Branly when Ambassador to France.

"More recently the Governor toured the Torres Strait to learn more about the region's printmaking movement and arts and craft revival.

"Dr Thancoupie Gloria Fletcher James, known as Thanakupi, is Australia's most significant Indigenous ceramicist, an elder and cultural custodian who has introduced generations of Australians and international visitors to her country and cultural heritage through her innovative school holiday programs.

"This art fair is going to be a major cultural event in the Festival Cairns calendar and has generated a buzz in arts circles around Australia.

"The event us a key element of the Queensland Government's Backing Indigenous Arts program that aims to strengthen the state's Indigenous arts industry by providing opportunities to hone skills, sell work and showcase work to the world.

"Senior artists such as Thanakupi are vital to telling the story of Queensland Indigenous art and I am delighted she is a patron of CIAF."

Judy Watson has represented Australia at the Venice Biennale and is a winner of the Moët et Chandon Fellowship. Nicolas Rothwell is an author and a respected writer on Indigenous art. They will speak at the CIAF Symposium on 21 August, presented in partnership with James Cook University.

CIAF will feature 35 exhibiting galleries, art centres, publishers and other arts organisations, an exhibition, performances, symposium and concert. Tickets are now available. Visit [www.ciaf.com.au](http://www.ciaf.com.au) for details

CIAF is an initiative of the Queensland Government delivered by Arts Queensland, the Indigenous Business Development Unit, Queensland Indigenous Arts Marketing & Export Agency and Cairns Regional Council.

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