
Project: *Remembering Goodna: Stories from a Queensland mental hospital exhibition*

Organisation: Museum of Brisbane

**GAMAA 2008 JOINT WINNER
ORGANISATIONS: STAFF OF 7 OR MORE**

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Remembering Goodna: Stories from a Queensland mental hospital presented the difficult and complex history of Queensland's oldest and largest mental hospital that was founded in 1865. In developing this exhibition, the Museum of Brisbane worked in partnership with The Park Centre for Mental Health (Queensland Health) and Professor Mark Finnane of Griffith University, an expert in the history of the hospital. The exhibition's curatorial team employed processes and principles that ensured that the history of the hospital was presented sensitively, and allowed visitors to engage with it at their own comfort level. The curatorial approach favoured first-hand accounts so that the people who had lived and worked at the hospital had the opportunity to speak for themselves. The stories of patients and hospital staff were told side by side, often presenting conflicting and contradictory viewpoints. The exhibition attracted 60,000 visitors, around 650 of whom left substantial written feedback.

JUDGES' CITATION:

In choosing the *Remembering Goodna: Stories from a Queensland mental hospital* exhibition as the joint Winner in this category, the judges commended the Museum of Brisbane for tackling a confronting subject matter in a sensitive and thorough manner. The Museum's adherence to best practice in developing the exhibition has set high benchmarks for the important task of telling difficult stories. The judges acknowledged that the exhibition had achieved significant outcomes in the community, working to dispel the stigma attached to mental health issues.

Seminar presenters:

Jo Besley is acting Senior Curator at Museum of Brisbane. Her background is in architecture, heritage and community engagement. She also writes articles and reviews in academic and popular publications and is the co-author (with Lisanne Gibson) of *Monumental Queensland: Signposts on a Cultural Landscape* (University of Queensland Press, 2004).

Carol Low was on the curatorial team with MoB on the 'Remembering Goodna' exhibition. She is currently working on the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender History Project.

She comes to the museum field with a community work background. Doing community research, Carol has used community consultation

processes eliciting people's stories. Underlying this work is her commitment to bringing forward those stories and issues that are not generally represented.

The role of modern museums and other public memory sites is not only keeping histories alive but also in playing a role in reconciliation and healing, ties in very much with Carol's approach – her background in South Africa (where she grew up and then more recently completed her museum studies); and her work with historically disadvantaged people and minorities who have experienced dispossession, dislocation and trauma.

Leanne Kelly works as a Project Manager for the Curatorial team at Museum of Brisbane (MoB). Projects prior to MoB include kuril dhagun Indigenous Knowledge Centre at the State Library of Queensland, the Cosmos Centre Charleville, Maryborough Customs House Visitors Centre and The Big Rig at Roma.

Carmen Burton is Program Development Support Officer at Museum of Brisbane. She has worked as an arts and museum administrator at the Museum of Brisbane for the past five years and during this time has provided direct curatorial support for numerous social history exhibitions. Carmen is currently completing a Bachelor of Arts degree in history and cultural heritage and writing and literature.