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MEDIA RELEASE

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Collie triumphs with a triple win at the 2023 Australian Street Art Awards

The town of Collie has secured top honours at the prestigious Australian Street Art Awards. The announcement, released via the Awards Facebook page on Friday, celebrated Collie's rich art scene and its significant cultural and historical contribution to the region.

Taking home the Gold in the category of Best Street Art Experience in Western Australia is the stunning mural 'Reflections' by acclaimed artist Guido Van Helten at Wellington Dam. This captivating artwork has amazed visitors with its intricate beauty and Guido's commitment to the community set him apart in the Collie Mural Trail project. He consulted with locals and explored images from 1890 onwards, culminating in a mural that captures Collie's deep connection to the waters that have flowed through the region for nearly a century.

Adding to the accolades, Collie was also awarded Gold for Best Street Art Trail for its renowned Collie Mural Trail. A finalist against 5 other entries, this unique trail boasts over 40 murals, each telling a story and highlighting the town's living heritage, environment and Indigenous stories, echoing local voices and unique places. Over 35 esteemed Australian artists, including Collie locals, have painted a vibrant narrative that brings together past and present. It has become a magnet for art enthusiasts and tourists alike, drawing visitors from across the country to experience Collie's vibrant outdoor art gallery.

Competing against 8 national finalists, Guido Van Helten's 'Reflections' mural at Wellington Dam also secured the Silver award for Best Mega Mural, further solidifying Collie's reputation as a hub for exceptional outdoor art.

"These awards are a testament to Collie's thriving arts scene and the passion of our community and artists," said Ian Miffing, Shire of Collie President. "The Collie Mural Trail has not only transformed our town into a colourful outdoor gallery but has also boosted tourism and put Collie on the map as a top cultural destination in the South-West."

Collie Visitor Centre Chairperson Chris Martin congratulated those who prepared the submission and the gifted artists who contributed to the Collie Mural Trail. "This is an outstanding result and has raised the profile of Collie as a tourist destination, right across Australia. Guido van Helten's mega mural, Reflections at Wellington Dam is renowned as the "biggest dam mural" in the world and the artworks that contributed to the Collie Mural Trail are truly world-class. Congratulations to the artists and the visionaries responsible. Well done, Collie is truly proud of all your efforts."

Collie Art Gallery Chairperson Trudi Curran stated, “The staff and volunteers who run the Collie Art Gallery are thrilled to see the Arts recognised as one of the highlights associated with our vibrant town and are pleased to be able to welcome the many visitors who are taking advantage of our arts-based culture. Congratulations go to the State and Local Governments and our community who encouraged Guido and the other artists in their mural creations.”

These murals formed part of the WA Government's \$1.5 million trail project, highlighting the government's commitment to growing tourism and supporting arts and culture in regional areas. The important role of the State Government in supporting and enabling the initiatives that led to the awards is recognised. It is a demonstration of what can be achieved through collaboration.

The rigorous judging process, involving tourism leaders and second-tier auditing, provides the winner's designation with the credence of the tourism sector. Collie's recognition in the Australian Street Art Awards is a testament to the town's commitment to excellence in fostering a visually rich and culturally vibrant environment.

Winning these awards enhances and promotes Collie as a tourism destination, attracting visitors who appreciate art and culture. This increased tourism brings economic benefits to the town, supporting local businesses and creating job opportunities. It also helps to raise awareness of Collie's unique identity and encourages cultural exchange between visitors and the local community.

Art lovers are high-value visitors who spend about one-and-a-half times more each day than other domestic tourists and stay about 50 percent longer, according to an Australia Council for the Arts' Domestic Art Tourism: Connecting the Country Report.

Visitors are invited to explore Collie's vibrant outdoor art scene and experience the Collie Mural Trail. Visit <https://www.colliemuraltrail.com/>

About the Australian Street Art Awards:

The Australian Street Art Awards encourage Australians to explore the world-class street and public art that is accessible all year round and found in every corner of the country. The Australian Street Art Awards, established in 2018, recognise destinations that are using public art in its many forms to entertain visitors and engage their community.

<https://www.streetartawards.com.au/>

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