

Get ready to laugh with the launch of the 2025 Bald Archy Prize exhibition

Returning for its 29th year, Australia's premier satirical art prize has attracted one of its largest field of entries, with 48 portraits vying for the 2025 Bald Archy Prize.

The 2025 exhibition was launched at the Watson Art Centre in Canberra today, Friday 7 February.

The Bald Archy Prize was created by the late Peter Batey OAM. Following his death in 2019, administration of the Bald Archy Prize was handed over to the Museum of the Riverina.

The prize provides artists of all styles and standards with an opportunity to create portrait paintings of humour, dark satire, light comedy, or caricature.

Museum Manager Luke Grealy is thrilled with the strong entry numbers for the 2025 Bald Archy Prize.

"Interest in the prize has been gaining momentum since it was relaunched in 2023 after a three-year hiatus," Mr Grealy said.

"We received 48 entries this year, up from 40 in 2024 and more than double the number we received in 2023.

"The standard of entries is really high, and the artists have clearly embraced the concept of celebrating the lighter side of art and the irreverent, larrikin Australian spirit.

"There are plenty of famous Australians, politicians, and 2024 celebrities who get a brush with the art of parody and satire, such as Raygun, Hugh Jackman, Panthers halfback Nathan Cleary, Peter Dutton, Senator Lidia Thorpe, and Costa Georgiadis from Gardening Australia.

"And as a South Sydney fan, I'm not sure about a rather sinister painting of returning Rabbitohs coach Wayne Bennet holding a rabbit featuring the head of superstar Latrell Mitchell!"

It is not just the artworks that are quirky when it comes to the Bald Archy Prize; the long-running judge is a sulphur-crested cockatoo.

In keeping with tradition, Professor Maude Cockatoo will review the portraits and select the finalists for the \$10,000 prize, which will be announced on Friday 21 March 2025.

The 2025 Bald Archy Prize exhibition will be on show at the Watson Arts Centre from 7 February to 23 March, before embarking on a tour across NSW and Victoria.

“It will follow a similar path to our 2024 exhibition, which travelled to 10 venues, from Mansfield in Victoria to Brewarrina in north-west NSW,” Mr Grealy said.

“Our audiences have a well-developed sense of satire, and the humour of the Bald Archy Prize helps them process the major events and people of the year.

“Maude says, in these testing times people need a smile or laugh more than ever.”

The year-long tour will take in Griffith, Mansfield, Brewarrina, Broken Hill, Corowa, Holbrook, Deniliquin, and Temora, before wrapping up in Wagga Wagga in December 2025.

For details of the 2025 tour program, visit www.baldarchy.com.au/tour-info

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Contact 6926 9190 or media@wagga.nsw.gov.au

About Wagga Wagga City Council

Wagga Wagga City Council serves more than 68,000 residents across an area of 4825 square kilometres with an overall budget of \$240 million.

The organisation manages more than \$2.48 billion in assets, including a 2300km road network, Wagga Wagga Airport, Livestock Marketing Centre, and the Oasis Aquatic Centre.

Council also provides important community facilities such as Wagga Wagga Art Gallery, Wagga Wagga City Library, Museum of the Riverina, and Civic Theatre, as well as maintaining countless parks, playgrounds, and sporting facilities to ensure Wagga maintains its reputation as ‘the City of Good Sports’.

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