



Friday 25 February

2021 Telstra People's Choice Award Winner Announced

Sally Scales from South Australia wins the 2021 Telstra People's Choice Award with *Wati Tjakura* in the 2021 Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards, now in its 38th year.

"Thank you for everyone who voted. What an honour to join all the amazing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Artists. I am lucky to paint with my mother and continue the incredible legacy of my family and arts leaders," said Ms Scales



Ms Scales is a Pitjantjatjara woman from Pipalyatjara in the far west of the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands. The Telstra People's Choice Award Winner painted *Wati Tjakura*, an Edible Skink Lizard creation story that took place at Aralya to feature in the 2021 Telstra NATSIAA exhibition, presented by the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT) in Darwin in partnership with Telstra.

"The Wal Mala (army) of Wati Wanambi (snake men) from Malara came and threw spears at Wati Tjakura. He tried to escape but they killed him. His family came down to bury him," explains Ms Scales.

Wati Tjakura 2021 was created with synthetic polymer paint on Belgian linen to the impressive scale of 120 x 300 cm.

Visitors to the 2021 Telstra NATSIAA virtual gallery could cast their vote for their favourite artist to win the Telstra People's Choice Award, one of the six category awards in Australia's longest running and most prestigious Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award.



Ms Scales is the youngest person to have been elected as a Chairperson of the APY Executive Board and is part of the leadership team for the Uluru Statement reform. An emerging artist, Sally turned her focus to her artistic practice in 2020 and held her first exhibition at the [APY Gallery](#) in 2021.

“I extend a warm congratulations to Sally for winning this respected accolade for her striking contemporary work. MAGNT is very excited to celebrate this young artist and formidable community leader. We are honoured to provide a platform to enable Ms Scales to share her law story and traditions passed on from her Elders with broad national and international audiences.” said Marcus Schutenko, MAGNT Director.

2022 Telstra NATSIAA

Entries close on Friday 18 March 2022 at midnight ACST. [Enter now.](#)

Awards Ceremony is on Friday 5 August, 2022

Exhibition opens on Saturday 6 August 2022

Learn more via the [website.](#)

Available to interview

MAGNT Director | Marcus Schutenko

Telstra CEO | Andrew Penn

MAGNT Curator of Aboriginal Art and Material Culture | Rebekah Raymond

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Images

- Artwork image available to [download here.](#)
- Sally Scales, *Wati Tjakura* 2021 synthetic polymer paint on Belgian linen 120 x 300 cm. Courtesy of the artist and APY Collective. Image: Mark Sherwood
- Portrait image: Sally Scales, 2021 Telstra People’s Choice Award winner. Image courtesy of the artist and APY Collective.

About Telstra NATSIAA

The *Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Awards (Telstra NATSIAA)* presents powerful new works which interpret history, spark conversations, and celebrate culture and Country. The *2021 Telstra NATSIAA* features an incredible range of outstanding artworks by some of Australia’s best emerging and established artists.