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MEDIA RELEASE

SCCA RECOGNISES COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS VIA MARKETING AWARDS

The Shopping Centre Council of Australia (SCCA) has awarded \$5,000 each to Bandu Organisation and Clothing The Gaps through its Annual Marketing Awards program, recognising their important work supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Both organisations were nominated by winners of the Community categories at the SCCA Marketing Awards.

Through the SCCA Marketing Awards program, the SCCA provides four \$5,000 grants each year to support community organisations aligned with award-winning community initiatives. The grants are designed to extend the impact of the campaigns beyond the shopping centre and into the broader community.

Bandu Organisation was selected by the team at Charter Hall following their win in the Community Multi category with 'Drawing Us Together'.

Drawing Us Together celebrated Indigenous storytelling, student creativity, and community connection. Delivered across 18 Charter Hall centres, five First Nations authors contributed stories inspired by the 2024 NAIDOC theme, *Keep the Fire Burning*. These stories reached more than 1,200 students nationwide, who illustrated each page and submitted their artwork for community voting. The winning illustrations formed a bespoke storybook for each centre – *Five Hearts, One Flame*. With 282,000 public votes, the campaign amplified First Nations voices, enriched cultural education in schools, and sparked pride, inclusion, and meaningful impact – both emotional and economic – across many communities.

Clothing The Gaps was selected by the team at GPT's Melbourne Central following their win with 'Clothing the Gaps Pop-up Experience'.

Melbourne Central's partnership with Aboriginal-owned social enterprise Clothing The Gaps redefined community engagement in retail. As part of a multi-year collaboration, the 2024 NAIDOC campaign delivered CTG's first-ever pop-up store in an Australian shopping centre, alongside a monumental Shot Tower projection and Melbourne Central's first Smoking Ceremony and Yarning Circle. More than a moment, this campaign reflects Melbourne Central's long-term commitment to supporting First Nations brands year-round through an evolving, purpose-led community program.

Kirby Rogers, Business and Operations Manager, SCCA said: "These projects demonstrate the meaningful role shopping centres can play in supporting and strengthening the communities they serve.

Through initiatives like *Drawing Us Together* and the *Clothing The Gaps Pop-up Experience*, we're seeing shopping centres go beyond retail to create platforms for cultural expression, education and genuine community connection. These are the kinds of projects that leave a lasting impact well beyond the centre environment.

The SCCA is proud to support these initiatives through our Annual Marketing Awards program, helping to extend their reach and ensure organisations like Bandu Organisation and Clothing The Gaps can continue their important work. It's about backing projects that bring people together, celebrate culture and deliver real benefits to communities across Australia."

Aidan Porter, Co-Founder, Director of Community, Bandu Organisation said: “This funding will directly support young First Nations people who are pursuing aspirations in the arts and creative writing spaces. There is an extraordinary depth of talent within our community, and investing in creativity and storytelling is critical to ensuring young people can pursue their goals and continue sharing culture through their own voices. Support of this nature helps remove roadblocks and barriers that can otherwise limit opportunity.”

Laura Thompson (Gunditjmara), Co-Founder, CEO, Clothing The Gaps said: “Our work has always been about community. This partnership helped us share our message in a visible way and connect with more people during NAIDOC Week. It shows what’s possible when Indigenous and non-Indigenous businesses work together over time.”

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