



WA MUSEUM
BOOLA
BARDIP

Attention editor/chief of staff

27 November 2024

WA AIDS Memorial Quilt on display at WA Museum Boola Bardip for World AIDS Day 2024

To mark World AIDS Day on 1 December, the WA AIDS Memorial Quilt will be displayed at WA Museum Boola Bardip as part of a special exhibition celebrating the lives and memories of those represented in its intricate panels.

The Quilt is made up of two large blocks, each handcrafted to honour individuals or groups who lost their lives to AIDS-related illnesses. First unveiled in 1993, the Quilt reflects a Western Australian chapter of the global memorialisation movement beginning in 1987 by the NAMES Project in San Francisco. These panels represent deeply personal tributes, telling the stories of people who lived, loved and were loved in return.

This year's exhibition introduces the *Digital Quilt Project*, a collection of interviews with friends and family members of those memorialised. Created in partnership with WAAC (formerly the WA AIDS Council), these videos share heartfelt memories and offer a deeper understanding of the community's experience.

Helen Wilson, whose son John is memorialised on the Quilt, reflects in one interview, "Back then you couldn't tell anyone that your son had AIDS. They were so terrified by the ads on the TV of the Grim Reaper. They thought if they stood anywhere near you, they'd get it."

Helen considers the Quilt something tangible, a way to read the names and connect with the stories behind them. She also hopes it will help young people better understand the impact of the AIDS crisis in the community.

Judy Nemer, who created the first panel of the Western Australian Quilt in memory of her son Greg, reflects on his life. Greg had been studying to be a teacher before deciding to pursue nursing at Royal Perth Hospital. "[After his diagnosis] he said, 'Mum, all of a sudden my life's going nowhere.' But nowhere was very far from it."

Judy describes the Quilt as a way of showing that families were proud of their loved ones and open about their stories. "We let the whole world know so people would eventually get more support and feel able to share who they are," she explains.

Helen Simondson, Manager WA Museum Boola Bardip, emphasised the Quilt's continuing relevance.

“The WA AIDS Memorial Quilt holds an important place in both Western Australian and global history. It reminds us of the thousands of Australians who died of AIDS-related illnesses and the struggles they faced.

By honouring those too often forgotten or marginalised, the Quilt sends a message that every life matters as we continue to challenge the stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS today.”

Visitors can view the WA AIDS Memorial Quilt and the accompanying *Digital Quilt Project* in Hackett Hall at Boola Bardip from Saturday 30 November - Tuesday 3 December 2024.

For more information, visit <https://visit.museum.wa.gov.au/boolabardip/wa-aids-memorial-quilts-0>

The *Digital Quilt Project* will continue through 2025-2026, with plans to collect additional stories and interviews. If you know someone who is represented on the Quilt and would like to contribute, please contact Miranda Stephens at miranda.stephens@museum.wa.gov.au.

High-Resolution images and interviews can be downloaded via the Dropbox Link –

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/0cb86yd5jdobfx316l3qs/AKx9lrUWISSuY6z73QRe0R0?rlkey=rvoeq8mr9p36734fcxpeqdh4&st=kqgo4m4b&dl=0>

Date: Saturday 30 November - Tuesday 3 December 2024

Venue: Hackett Hall
WA Museum Boola Bardip
Perth Cultural Centre, Perth

Further information: phone 1300134081 or visit [here](#).

Media Contact:

Jasmine Eales

Media and Publicity Officer

E: media@museum.gov.au P: 0422 958 095

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