The Territory’s most prestigious Indigenous Art Award will celebrate its 31st year with its biggest prize pool in history and a new category.

Minister for Arts and Museums Matt Conlan said the increased cash prize for this year’s Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award (NATSIAA), would be a major drawcard for artists around the country.

“The Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award is the nation’s premier celebration of Indigenous art and today’s announcement cements that reputation,” Mr Conlan.

“This year the total prize pool has increased from $60,000 to $75,000 with the cash prize for the overall winner of the Telstra Award set to receive $50,000, up from $40,000.

“This increase in prize money means the Northern Territory will now be home to Australia’s richest Indigenous art award, which is something to be proud of.

“The Awards could not be possible without the support of Principal Sponsor of the Awards, Telstra, and I thank them for their continued and ongoing support of the Awards for the past 23 years.”

Telstra Area General Manager for the Northern Territory, Brian O’Keefe joined Mr Conlan at today’s call for entries to the NATSIAAs at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory and said he was excited that this year’s Awards would also include a new category.

“The introduction of the Telstra Youth Award marks an exciting new chapter in the NATSIAA story as we welcome and encourage the participation of young artists between the ages of 18 and 25,” said Mr. O’Keefe.

The Telstra Youth Award will attract a $5,000 prize.

“This is the first time in the Awards 31 year history we’ve had a specific youth category and marks an exciting period of renewal and change for the Awards,” Mr Conlan said.

“The new Youth Award will significantly boost the Awards’ overall entry numbers and provides a fantastic opportunity for young Indigenous artists to pursue a career in the arts. Entrants in this category may choose to use new media or other forms of art – it’s up to them.

“We have also extended the entry period from about 3 weeks to more than six weeks to allow artists more time to submit their entries.”

The Telstra NATSIAA is the only national Indigenous art award that provides both emerging and established artists with an opportunity to showcase their work in a juried exhibition and Mr Conlan encouraged all Indigenous artists to enter.
“Last year, close to 250 entries were received with the 76 artists selected as finalists having their works exhibited at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory,” Mr Conlan said. “I was blown away by the quality of these works of art, which are an incredible contribution to our premier cultural institution and major tourism attraction in Darwin.”

To mark the 31st celebrations, this year’s Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award comprises the following categories:
- $50,000 Telstra Award
- $5,000 Telstra General Painting Award
- $5,000 Telstra Bark Painting Award
- $5,000 Telstra Work on Paper Award
- $5,000 Wandjuk Marika 3D Memorial Award (sponsored by Telstra)
- $5,000 Telstra Youth Award

The Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory will again present an online gallery of works, acquired through the 31 year history of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award between 1984 and 2013. This online presentation, made possible through generous grant funding received from the Gordon Darling Foundation, showcases more than 220 works including 101 paintings, 33 bark paintings, 33 works on paper and 61 three dimensional works.

The public can also view a selection of artworks in the MAGNT’s Telstra Art Collection on the Google Art Project at www.googleartproject.com.

Members of the public can follow the 31st Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award on Twitter at www.twitter.com/natsiaa and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/telstraartawards.

The 31st Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award is supported by the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy, an initiative of the Australian, State and Territory Governments.

For an entry form contact the Exhibition Coordinator at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory by phone 08 8999 8287, email natsiaa@nt.gov.au, or visit www.nt.gov.au/natsiaa.

Entries close on 21 March 2014 with winners to be announced on 8 August.

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