



Adrian Schrinner
Lord Mayor
MEDIA RELEASE

Brisbane's Ballet Legend honoured with Keys to the City

Queensland Ballet legend Li Cunxin AO will be honoured with the Keys to the City to recognise his outstanding contribution to Brisbane.

Lord Mayor Adrian Schrinner said Li had left an indelible mark on Brisbane's arts scene and his achievements would be celebrated at a ceremony later this month.

"Li has extended the dignity, grace and elegance of ballet into every aspect of his life," Cr Schrinner said.

"Like me, I'm sure many people were saddened to hear of Li's retirement after 11 years at the helm of Queensland Ballet.

"On behalf of Brisbane, I feel it's appropriate to acknowledge the talent, passion and vision that has enriched our creative scene and inspired generations of dancers."

Among his long list of national and international achievements, Li has been pivotal in the growth of the Queensland Ballet, doubling the ensemble, creating a world-class Academy at Kelvin Grove State College and a home for ballet and the arts at the Thomas Dixon Centre in West End.

"For many years, we've enjoyed the great privilege of witnessing Li's achievements come to life both on and off the stage," Cr Schrinner said.

"The Keys to the City are awarded to those who embody the ideals of Brisbane, and few people have had such a significant and enduring impact on Brisbane's art scene.

"I can't think of a more worthy recipient of the Keys to the City."

"As the curtain closes on this chapter of his life, I thank Li for a lifetime of artistic excellence. It has been a true privilege to watch."

The Keys to the City are awarded to acknowledge the achievement or contribution of an individual or organisation in furthering the ideals of the city.

Dating back to medieval times when cities were enclosed by walls, the symbolic gesture can be performed to recognise outstanding achievement in sport, community, or humanitarian work by a Brisbane resident at an international or national level.

Li Cunxin thanked Lord Mayor Adrian Schrinner for honouring him with the title of the 55th recipient of the Keys to the City.

“I’m incredibly proud to accept the city’s highest honour from Lord Mayor Adrian Schrinner,” Li Cunxin said.

“I have devoted so much of my life to Brisbane and Australia’s arts scene and it’s truly special to have this recognised with this incredible honour.

“I am truly grateful. It’s a job that brought me decades of joy and fulfilment, and the last 11 years at Queensland Ballet represents one of the most rewarding chapters of my life.

“To have my life’s work acknowledged with the Keys to the City, the City which my family and I love, it’s a wonderful gesture and one I will always cherish.”

Known recipients of Keys to the City of Brisbane:

1. Mr Keith Payne - 24 September 1969
2. Dame Joan Sutherland 1983
3. Brisbane Bullets – 1985
4. The Bee Gees - 1989
5. The Brisbane Broncos - 30 September 1992
6. Mr Leroy Loggins - 1992
7. Her Excellency Leneen Forde AC - 24 June 1997
8. Savage Garden - 6 February 1998
9. Uncle Herb Bligh - 12 February 1998
10. Dr Clem & Mrs Sylvia Jones - 19 February 1998
11. Mr Pat Rafter - 18 December 1998
12. Mr Mick Doohan - 18 December 1998
13. Ms Vicki Wilson OAM - 5 October 1999
14. Australian Wallabies – 19 November 1999
15. Major General Peter Cosgrove – 16 March 2000
16. Queensland Bulls – 27 March 2000
17. Brisbane Lions – 1 October 2001
18. Mr Steven Bradbury – 21 March 2002
19. Powderfinger – 29 November 2003
20. 2004 Qld Olympic Athletes – 3 September 2004
21. 2006 Qld Commonwealth Games Team – 29 March 2006
22. 2006 Qld Winter Olympic Athletes – 29 March 2006
23. Mr John Knox – 8 November 2006
24. Scouting Queensland – 4 August 2007
25. The Very Reverend Father Gregory Sakellariou MBE – 31 March 2008
26. Queensland Police Pipes & Drums – 23 August 2008
27. QLD Members of the 2008 Australian Olympic Team – 19 September 2008
28. QLD Members of the 2008 Australian Paralympic Team – 29 September 2008
29. Mr Leigh Matthews – 24 November 2008

30. Ms Jude Munro AO – 10 June 2010
31. Girl Guides Queensland – 11 November 2010
32. Brisbane Roar – 15 March 2011
33. Firebirds Queensland Netball Team – 25 May 2011
34. St George Queensland Reds – 11 July 2011
35. Mr Darren Lockyer – 4 September 2011
36. 2012 Olympic Team – 24 August 2012
37. 2012 Paralympic Team – 14 September 2012
38. Brisbane Heat – 22 January 2013
39. Queensland Police Service – 28 February 2014
40. Brisbane Bandits – 16 February 2016
41. 2016 Olympic Team – 2 September 2016
42. 2016 Paralympic Team – 11 October 2016
43. Mr Jeff Horn – 6 July 2017
44. 2018 Australian Commonwealth Games Team – 27 April 2018
45. Women's Brisbane Broncos – 5 October 2018
46. Women's Brisbane Heat – 6 February 2019
47. Red Frogs – 13 December 2019
48. Bushfire Relief Heroes – 7 March 2020
49. Women's Brisbane Lions – 24 April 2021
50. Australian Olympic Team – October 2021
51. Australian Paralympic Team – October 2021
52. Cameron Smith – 22 October 2022.
53. Brisbane's SES volunteers – 24 November 2022
54. The Matildas – 20 August 2023

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