YUUINGAN DHILLA YARI

Indigenous Languages Forum

9 June 2026 | State Library of Queensland



TIME	EVENT
8:30 am	**Registration** plus complimentary coffee and tea available, level 2
9:30 am	**Forum commencement** Key sessions will take place in slq Auditorium 1, level 2 Welcome to Country by Gaja Kerry Charlton Opening remarks by Vicki McDonald AM FALIA, State Librarian and CEO Introduction to the day by Scott Wilson, Master of Ceremonies
9:50 am	**Keynote: Old Stories, New (and Proper) Ways** Common Ground, CEO Gemma Pol and Communications Director Vanessa Morris First Nations languages and stories are not linear; they connect across time and space. This keynote explores how Common Ground creates self-determined, First Nations-led spaces that challenge colonial narratives, celebrate First Languages, support truth-telling, and strengthen language learning, sharing and safeguarding through storytelling projects.
11:00 am	**Morning tea** on the Queensland Terrace, level 2
11:30 am	**Panel Discussion: First Languages in Action** Chair: Scott Wilson Panel: Corey Tutt, Mayrah Dreise, Michael Passi, and Ella Woods This panel brings together speakers working across STEM, education, storytelling, publishing, cultural capability and community-led language initiatives. The conversation will explore how First Languages are being activated in schools, creative projects, children's resources and public programs to support connection, learning and language revitalisation.
12:30 pm	**Indigenous Languages Creative Residency Spotlight** Georgia Corowa will perform alongside Zeek Power, sharing *Yana*, an outcome from her residency project, *Revitalising Iningai Language Through Song*. The song represents a stepping stone in reconnecting bloodlines back to Country through language, music and her paternal Iningai heritage. Sachém Parkin-Owens' soundscape, *Utcha ine bibboon mare – I Dreamt of You*, is grounded in Jandai language, his maternal lineage and Quandamooka storytelling. Created in response to State Library collections and sounds from Country, it will play throughout kuril dhagun during the program.
1:00 pm	**Lunch** on the Queensland Terrace, level 2 **Community Conversation Space open** Drop in, yarn and connect with practitioners, organisations and State Library staff working across First Nations languages, collections, research and community programs.
1:30 pm and 2:15 pm	**Curator tours of *Through Mununjali Eyes: photojournalist Wayne Coolwell*** kuril dhagun, level 1 Led by First Nations Curator Serene Fernando, this tour explores a showcase celebrating the life and legacy of Mununjali photojournalist Wayne Coolwell through five decades of photography, story, culture and connection.
3:00 pm	**End of forum**

Scott Wilson

Scott is a Gooniyandi and Gajerrong man from the Kimberley, with family ties from Broome to Kununurra. He is the co-founder and author of the INDIGIVERSE, which blends his cultural stories and language with the symbol of superheroes. The INDIGIVERSE focuses on language preservation and fostering unity among Australians, celebrating the rich, longest-living cultures of this land.

Gemma Pol

Gemma is a Wiradyuri, Ngemba and Paakantji woman, with Beetson and Higgins family ties. She is CEO of Common Ground First Nations, working across storytelling, systems change and social impact to protect people, Country and culture.

Corey Tutt

Associate Professor Corey Tutt OAM is a proud Gamilaraay man, STEM advocate, author, and founder and CEO of DeadlyScience. Through programs, mentorship and children's books, his work celebrates Indigenous knowledge and inspires First Nations young people in STEM.

Michael Passi

Michael is a proud Torres Strait Islander author, cultural capability practitioner and emerging consultant with more than 25 years' public sector experience. His work centres on cultural capability, storytelling, community engagement, intergenerational knowledge sharing and culturally safe practice.

Serene Fernando

Serene is a proud Gamilaraay woman and the First Nations Curator at State Library of Queensland. With a deep commitment to First Nations storytelling, cultural preservation, and community connection, Serene brings her lived experience, cultural knowledge, and curatorial expertise to every project she leads. As co-curator of *Through Mununjali Eyes*, Serene worked closely with Uncle Wayne and Jo-Anne Driessens to shape this powerful exhibition.

Sachém Parkin-Owens

Sachém is a Quandamooka and African American poet, rapper and musician born in Meanjin. His work blends spoken word, music, and storytelling to explore culture, identity, and social reflection.

Gaja Kerry Charlton

Gaja Kerry is a Yagarabul Elder and cultural custodian with bloodlines across southeast Queensland and the Gulf area. Her language repatriation work spans mapping, publications, education, podcasting and community projects, working with community groups, educators and peak bodies.

Vanessa Morris

Vanessa is a Yorta Yorta, Dja Dja Wurrung and Wiradjuri woman. She is Common Ground's Communications Director, with over 15 years' experience across communications, digital media, broadcasting and First Nations community-controlled organisations.

Ella Woods

Ella works with First Languages Australia to support language communities to grow their capacity to teach language. Her experience spans leadership, business, project management and finance, and she is passionate about supporting community-led projects. Her family are Kombumerri and Mununjali people from the Yugambeh language region.

Dr Mayrah Yarraga Dreise

Mayrah is a Yuwaalaraay and Gamilaraay woman, educator, artist, song woman and language teacher. With more than 35 years' experience across education sectors, her work strengthens cultural capability, student outcomes, language, rights and self-determination.

Georgia Corowa

Georgia is a Bundjalung, Iningai and South Sea Islander woman and an acoustic singer-songwriter and performing artist based on Terranggee (North Stradbroke Island). Her soulful music blends powerful vocals, raw storytelling and cultural connection.

Keep exploring Yuuingan Dhilla Yari

Access the full program page, including keynote, panel and afternoon program details, community conversation space participants, speaker information and recordings from the day once available.

Keep exploring Indigenous Languages resources

Connect with State Library's Indigenous Languages resources, including the Indigenous Languages Map, collections, exhibitions, blogs, workshops and other research pathways.

Stay connected

Join the Indigenous Languages mailing list to hear about future programs, workshops, collection access opportunities and community events.

Yuuingan Dhilla Yari
Friends, basket, talk in Yuggera language [YOO-IN-gan DIL-ah YAR-ee]

Cover art: *Woven Voices* Kykoe (Saisarem, Butchulla and Barada Barna)

Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their continuing connection to land and as custodians of stories for millennia. We are inspired by this tradition in our work to share and preserve Queensland's memory for future generations.

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Indigenous Languages and Arts

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