

# INTRODUCTION

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# VISION, PURPOSE AND ENDURING VALUES

## VISION

A library of influence, inspiring and connecting people through knowledge, storytelling and creativity

## PURPOSE

State Library collects and preserves Queensland's cultural and documentary memory, providing free access to information, fostering knowledge and learning. We partner with local government to realise the potential of public libraries and Indigenous Knowledge Centres.

## ENDURING VALUES

**Access is free and equitable.** We serve people everywhere in Queensland, onsite and online.

**Diversity is celebrated.** We seek and share the diverse stories of Queenslanders.

**First Nations peoples and their knowledge, strength and resilience are centred.** We are committed to respectful processes of truth-telling.

**Our workplace is safe and purposeful.** We respect the expertise of our people.

State Library collects and preserves Queensland's cultural, intellectual and social life through historic and contemporary collections. At the heart of these collections are the people and communities of Queensland. State Library works intentionally over the long term to build and share a trusted record of Queensland. The collections, and the people and communities they represent, inform programming, public engagement and partnerships. State Library embraces diversity and free and equitable access to information so people can thrive through connection, learning, storytelling and innovation.

State Library partners with local governments to support library services statewide. There are more than 325 public libraries and Indigenous Knowledge Centres (IKCs).

State Library is based in South Bank (Brisbane), with offices onsite and in Cannon Hill (Brisbane) and Cairns. It is governed by the Library Board of Queensland. Queensland Library Foundation raises funds to support State Library's collections and services.

State Library provides exhibition content, learning materials, visitor services and marketing for Anzac Square Memorial Galleries. From 1 July 2023 to 2 November 2023, the services were provided under an operating deed between Brisbane City Council (trustee) and the Department of the Premier and Cabinet (DPC). Funding was provided to State Library by DPC. From 3 November 2023, the services are provided under a new operating agreement between Queensland Veterans' Council (QVC) and State Library.

### State Library's role includes:

- collecting and preserving a trusted record of Queensland
- providing free access to information
- encouraging research to deepen the knowledge of Queensland's past and present
- recognising the unique knowledge and culture of First Nations peoples, and working with communities to share their history and culture
- interpreting Queensland stories through exhibitions, events, discussion and debate
- developing an inclusive library service, addressing diverse needs, strengthening opportunities for the expression of ideas and fostering the appreciation of difference
- providing access to collections and services in a range of formats and channels, so they are available to all, regardless of geographical location
- advocating for public libraries and partnering with local government to provide Queenslanders with opportunities to participate fully in the economic, social, political and cultural dimensions of society.

# GOVERNMENT'S OBJECTIVES FOR THE COMMUNITY

State Library's objectives and strategies support the Queensland Government's objectives for the community.

- **Good jobs:** Good, secure jobs in our traditional and emerging industries. State Library is investing in skills by providing all Queenslanders with free access to online learning resources.
- **Better services:** Deliver even better services right across Queensland. State Library is connecting Queensland through our partnership with local government to deliver public library services and IKCs. We foster greater social inclusion through documenting and making accessible Queensland's diverse history and stories, and we build Queenslanders' digital capabilities. State Library is backing our frontline services by delivering world-class reference and information services.
- **Great lifestyle:** Protect and enhance our Queensland lifestyle as we grow. By honouring and embracing our rich and ancient cultural history, State Library is enabling truth-telling through our diverse and rich collections, community engagement and exhibitions. State Library's partnerships are growing our regions by enabling deeply local service provision in public libraries and IKCs.

State Library plays a lead role in delivering the Queensland Government's arts policy, *Creative Together: 2020-2030: A 10-year Roadmap for arts, culture and creativity in Queensland*:

- **embrace Brisbane 2032 across Queensland** – by accelerating programs and services to enhance and build cultural experiences that celebrate what is uniquely Queensland
- **elevate First Nations arts** – by sharing and celebrating First Nations perspectives through language revitalisation, knowledge creation and truth-telling in culturally informed and respectful ways
- **activate Queensland's places and spaces** – enabling statewide access to collections and integrating rich digital experiences into programs, learning initiatives and exhibitions
- **drive social change and strengthen communities** – partnering with local government to realise the potential of libraries and Indigenous Knowledge Centres as vibrant community hubs building community resilience
- **share our stories and celebrate our storytellers** – as a memory institution, intentionally seek, collect and share authentic Queensland stories, and nurture and celebrate emerging writers.

As a member of National and State Libraries Australasia (NSLA), State Library influences and supports NSLA's *Strategic Plan 2023-26: Leading together*, as well as supporting the policies of the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) and International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA).

# CHAIRPERSON OF THE LIBRARY BOARD OF QUEENSLAND

This year State Library launched its *First Nations Strategy 2024-28*, articulating our approach to the delivery of First Nations initiatives.

It builds upon decades of work and relationship building with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and ensures respect continues to sit at the heart of all that we do.

Artwork featured in the strategy tells a story of interconnection. Kalkadoon artist Chern'ee Sutton said her depiction of a weaving mat symbolised 'how each strand weaves together the past and present to create inclusive stories'.

This is one of the most exciting challenges for a global cultural institution: not only creating space for stories to be told but ensuring all perspectives are skilfully woven to reveal a compelling and truthful picture of our state's history.

The progression of truth-telling is pivotal to our *First Nations Strategy* and our custodianship of Queensland memory, which extends well before colonial times. This strategy guides us in strengthening relationships with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, ensures access to collections in culturally sensitive and inclusive ways, and informs decision-making on how and what we collect.

The Queensland Literary Awards (QLAs) and the Queensland Memory Awards (QMAs) seek to elevate storytelling in different but important ways. State Library is a proud part of the literary sector and manages the QLAs in collaboration with sponsors, industry partners and the writing community, with \$238,500 in prize money awarded across 12 categories. In 2023, *The Jaguar* by Sarah Holland-Batt – a collection of poems about the death of her father from Parkinson's disease – took out the top prize.

Former member of The Go-Betweens Dr John Willstead is also familiar with the warm glow of the spotlight and in November he was awarded the \$25,000 John Oxley Library Fellowship at the QMAs. The musician and academic hopes his project, 'Dive for your memory – Queensland music stories', will reignite public engagement with State Library's oral histories while providing fresh digital content for researchers and music lovers.

Both the QLAs and QMAs underscore the importance of our valued donors, whose passion and commitment to the work we do ensures Queensland's history and love of reading is safeguarded for future generations.

In September, I travelled with State Librarian and CEO Vicki McDonald AM, Executive Director Louise Denoon and other board members to Gladstone. Library staff were eager to show us some of the projects funded by the public library and First 5 Forever grants distributed by State Library. These annual board visits to public libraries and IKCs provide the opportunity to learn about the challenges and opportunities in the regions.

Finally, I would like to thank the Minister for the Arts Leeanne Enoch for her commitment and support, as well as my fellow board members, Queensland Library Foundation and those who serve on the library's various committees and advisory groups. I would like to acknowledge Vicki McDonald AM for her continued dedication to the library sector, and the State Library executive team and all the dedicated staff who bring their expertise and passion to work each day.



**Mrs Debbie Best**  
Chairperson  
Library Board of Queensland

# STATE LIBRARIAN AND CEO

Storytelling received star treatment this year with the announcement of Ash Barty AO as our First 5 Forever ambassador.

The tennis champion is promoting our popular statewide, play-based program, which encourages parents and caregivers to talk, read, sing and play with their children. Ash is a new mum and understands the important role of parents in nurturing a lifelong love of learning – we are thrilled to have her as program ambassador for the next 3 years.

The Corner, our much-loved creative sanctuary for children under 8, is also part of our passionate commitment to children and families. This year we revealed bold plans to transform the space: doubling the indoor area and providing more opportunities for sensory and play-based learning activities. It will also serve as a training ground for early childhood educators who work in public libraries and IKCs throughout Queensland.

The launch of our Virtual Veterans gave students of history the chance to experience AI using trusted source material. Charlie the World War I chatbot soldier drew his responses from original wartime letters and diaries from State Library collections, Trove newspapers and Charles Bean's official history of World War I. It is the first time a state library in Australia has used generative AI in this way and has proven especially popular with students keen to connect with history in fun, innovative ways.

To ensure such technological advances can be enjoyed by all Queenslanders, the digital divide must continue to be addressed. State Library received \$9 million in Queensland Government funding over 3 years to boost digital inclusion in some of the state's most remote communities. The Department of Transport and Main Roads funding will enable State Library to help close the digital divide through key initiatives as part of the government's *Digital Economy Strategy*.

Our schools engagement program continued to receive top marks from teachers and students. Curriculum Connect and Live at the Library bring State Library expertise and resources to students across the state. Live at the Library online research workshops, now in their second year, reached nearly 8,000 students with 70 per cent from regional schools. We have also added more teaching resources to our Curriculum Connect program, which drew more than 31,000 page views during the year.

Our First Nations schools engagement program allowed State Library to reach even more children in rural and remote communities, and our new Young researchers program enabled regional students and their chaperones to travel to Brisbane for a variety of cultural experiences including visits to the Gallery of Modern Art, Queensland Museum, Anzac Square Memorial Galleries, Brisbane Festival, and The University of Queensland.

This year, Queensland Library Foundation launched a campaign to help uncover insights from a significant historical treasure – the Colonial Secretary's Correspondence (1822–60). This material includes more than 42,000 pages of correspondence, digitised from the microfilm originals. The collection details the expansion of the colony of New South Wales, up until the establishment of Queensland as a separate colony. Not only does it shed light on the colonial administration of the time, but it is enabling research and provides supporting material for truth-telling. The Foundation's campaign continues to raise funds to help make this extraordinary collection accessible to future generations.

Exhibitions and showcases brought our collections and ideas to life. *Purpose built* explored the transformative potential of architectural design and its role in shaping communities and shifting perspectives of housing. In kuril dhagun, the *Working Country* showcase told the story of Aboriginal stockmen and stockwomen and their pivotal role in Queensland's pastoral industry, and the *Deaf in dance* showcase explored the 27-year history of the Deaf Indigenous Dance Group, who use vibration to sense the rhythms of traditional music. We ended the financial year with the National Photographic Portrait Prize in slq Gallery, giving Queensland audiences the chance to connect and reflect on the lives captured in each mesmerising image.

Our exhibitions, programming and events have all helped boost our onsite and online visitation to record levels, with almost 6.9 million visits in 2023–24.

Everything we have achieved this financial year was due to dedicated collective effort. I would like to acknowledge the valued support of Library Board of Queensland Chairperson Debbie Best, board members and the Foundation Council. And a sincere thanks to members of the executive and all staff for their exceptional service to the people of Queensland.



**Ms Vicki McDonald AM FALIA**  
State Librarian and CEO  
State Library of Queensland

# ABOUT THE LIBRARY BOARD OF QUEENSLAND

The Library Board of Queensland, established in 1943, is the governing body of State Library of Queensland and draws its powers from the *Libraries Act 1988 (Qld)* (*Libraries Act*). The object of the *Libraries Act* is to contribute to the cultural, social and intellectual development of all Queenslanders.

The legislated guiding principles for achieving this are:

- leadership and excellence should be demonstrated in providing library and information services
- there should be responsiveness to the needs of communities in regional and outer metropolitan areas
- respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures should be affirmed
- children and young people should be supported in their understanding and use of library and information services
- diverse audiences should be developed
- capabilities for lifelong learning about library and information services should be developed
- opportunities should be developed for international collaboration and for cultural exports, especially to the Asia Pacific region
- content relevant to Queensland should be collected, preserved, promoted and made accessible.

The functions and powers of the Library Board are listed on page 49. Biographies of Library Board members are detailed on pages 44-45.

In addition to regular meetings of the Library Board, members represented State Library at official functions throughout 2023-24. One committee and 2 advisory groups advise and inform the Library Board on issues that arise within their brief. These bodies also act as important consultative mechanisms with the broader community. The members of the Library Board committee and advisory groups are listed on pages 47-48.

The Library Board periodically travels outside Brisbane to stay informed about regional issues and to strengthen its relationship with local councils and the community.

Under section 7 of the *Libraries Act*, in appointing a Library Board member, regard must be given to the person's ability to contribute to the Library Board's performance and the implementation of its strategic and operational plans. Under section 9 of the *Libraries Act*, a person is not eligible for appointment as a member if the person is not able to manage a corporation because of the *Corporations Act 2001 (Cth)*, Part 2D.6.

In 2023-24, there were 7 Library Board meetings. The table in Appendix A outlines all board members, appointment terms, meeting attendance in 2023-24, remuneration and expenses.

## Observers

The State Librarian and CEO attends all meetings of the Library Board as an observer unless excused or precluded by the Library Board as per section 15 of the *Libraries Act*.

Ms Vicki McDonald AM FALIA, State Librarian and CEO,  
State Library of Queensland

Mr Scott Martin, Senior Executive Director, Agencies,  
Governance and Infrastructure, Arts Queensland,  
Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander  
Partnerships, Communities and the Arts

## Secretariat

Ms Jennifer Genrich, Manager, Strategy and Governance,  
State Library of Queensland

# PHILANTHROPY

## QUEENSLAND LIBRARY FOUNDATION

Generous support from donors, sponsors and grantors through Queensland Library Foundation (the Foundation) directly contributes to the breadth of work undertaken by State Library.

The Foundation acknowledges and greatly appreciates the trust and ongoing generosity of all supporters. Donations through the Foundation in 2023–24 helped State Library conserve historical and culturally significant items and increase physical and digital access to the collections.

### Donor engagement

Through a range of engagement events, donors gained a deeper understanding of State Library collections and programs. The annual Crowd Giving event in October was an opportunity to share the diversity of State Library activities with new audiences. Guests voted to fund a project applying artificial intelligence to transform the way people explore State Library's vast video collections, enhancing accessibility and use. The project was awarded \$30,000 raised through the event.

The Foundation welcomed its Patron, Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM, Governor of Queensland, at a high tea in February. The event was held to thank supporters and celebrate State Library's achievements.

### Queensland Literary Awards

The Queensland Literary Awards, held in September, showcased outstanding authors from across Australia. The awards were made possible by philanthropy and sponsorship. The Foundation acknowledges the support provided by the Queensland Government, The University of Queensland, Griffith University, University of Southern Queensland, University of Queensland Press, Copyright Agency's Cultural Fund, *The Courier-Mail*, Neil and Jenny Summerson, and Susan Hocking and Ian Mackie.

### Queensland Memory Awards

The Queensland Memory Awards recognise significant contributions to the investigation, preservation and celebration of Queensland history. Fellowships are awarded to support researchers, creatives, historians and writers to interpret the collections of John Oxley Library at State Library. The Foundation funded the premier prize, the John Oxley Library Fellowship, valued at \$25,000, along with the John Oxley Library Community History Award, valued at \$5,000. The Foundation acknowledges the ongoing generosity of Dr Cathryn Mittelheuser AM, The Siganto Foundation, the Boughen family, the John Allpass Charitable Foundation and the Mellick family.

### Saving Queensland history

The Colonial Secretary's Correspondence project is revealing new knowledge and improving access to one of the most significant information sources about 19th century Queensland before it became a separate colony. Ken MacDonald AM and Terry White AO provided leadership gifts to kickstart the project, now supported by multiple Foundation donors. This is a funding priority for the Foundation, featured in the 2024 end-of-financial-year appeal. The Reel Rescue project continues the race against time to preserve and digitise thousands of moving images and audio items, with the Foundation's support.

# STRATEGY

## STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-27

The *Strategic Plan 2023-27* details objectives for State Library to deliver our vision.

### Collecting memories

Sharing knowledge and stories through our collections

- **Intentionally collect and share** a trusted record of Queensland
- **Enable respectful truth-telling practices by all** and support Path to Treaty, centred on culturally safe co-design with First Nations peoples
- **Preserve the collection for future generations** through the development of resilient and robust systems and plans
- **Decolonise our collections and practices** to reflect and reveal shared histories and new narratives

### Enriching experiences

Empowering our audiences to be open to discovery, participation and learning

- **Grow literacy, storytelling and lifelong learning** through physical and digital experiences that enable and inspire
- **Attract new audiences** by celebrating and communicating compelling, innovative visitor experiences and programs
- **Build inclusive digital experiences** that are secure, rich and intuitive
- **Prioritise easy to find and use information** however people access collections, services and programs

### People and communities

Building enduring, collaborative engagements and partnerships

- **Advocate the value of libraries** to achieve deeply local outcomes
- **Embrace Brisbane 2032** by enhancing and accelerating services and programs
- **Initiate and collaborate on diverse and culturally informed research** to deepen knowledge
- **Attract partnerships and investment** to enhance service to Queenslanders

### Responsive innovation

Pursuing innovative, sustainable and culturally responsive ways to work

- **Champion an enriching workplace** which is healthy, diverse and culturally responsive
- **Invest in our people** to embrace the opportunities and challenges in the digital age
- **Pursue sustainable, resilient and innovative environments and systems** across all our work
- **Deepen our agility** to ensure flexibility and responsiveness to our changing world

## STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES

We have the opportunity to reach Queenslanders statewide due to our proven experience and capability in digital delivery.

We have the opportunity to contribute to digital inclusion due to our proven experience in digital delivery and effective partnerships.

We have the opportunity to make a significant contribution to Path to Treaty and truth-telling due to our diverse and rich collections, experience in community engagement and strong partnerships.

We have the opportunity to meet and anticipate future client demand through optimising the building spaces due to the resilience of the Millennium Library Project design and our ongoing service planning.

We have the opportunity to deliver transformative services through our strong partnerships and collaborations.

## STRATEGIC RISKS

**Changing community needs and expectations, technology and learning styles** – We must meet changing client needs to sustain audience growth. We will continue to transform, innovate and deliver relevant services.

**ICT infrastructure and security** – We must provide trusted, reliable and secure ICT services and enable access to, preservation of and delivery of digital collections. We will continue to develop strategies and capability, and prioritise funding to update ICT infrastructure.

**Business continuity** – We must manage the impacts of disasters including COVID-19 and extreme weather events. We will continue to review and update our risk mitigation and business continuity plans.

**Digital inclusion** – We must work to ensure Queenslanders statewide are able to access our online services and contribute to the digital economy. We will work with our partners to build digital inclusion and engagement.

**Transformation of library collections, services and programs to meet the digital age and changing community needs** – We must ensure the community understands the value of libraries in a rapidly changing environment. We will build awareness of the role and value that libraries provide.



## OPERATIONAL PLAN 2023-24

The *Operational Plan 2023-24* details the operational strategies for State Library:

- Engage and amplify a process of truth-telling and healing, by enabling treaty readiness through First Peoples' stories, cultural safety of our staff and culturally safe services for all Queenslanders
- Strengthen our offer as a cultural destination
- Implement an audience development strategy to increase engagement with regional Queenslanders
- Attract, retain and invest in a skilled, diverse and culturally responsive workforce
- Increase community engagement with Queensland public libraries and IKCs through the delivery of a marketing campaign
- Plan and deliver fit for purpose, safe and secure digital systems.

There were no modifications to the *Operational Plan 2023-24*.

## PLANS AND PRIORITIES FOR NEXT REPORTING PERIOD

In 2024-25, State Library will:

- strengthen our offer as a cultural destination which enables citizen engagement
- promote truth-telling and healing through First Peoples' stories
- increase engagement with regional Queenslanders to provide free access to information, knowledge and learning
- optimise our physical spaces and digital systems
- promote libraries and IKCs as inclusive community cultural hubs
- foster a culturally aware and capable workforce to provide a safe and inclusive workplace for our visitors, staff, volunteers and contractors
- grow storytelling to empower our audiences to discover, participate and learn.