

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 (IKCs).

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.

The leading reference and research library in Queensland, State Library is also a cultural destination with engaging exhibitions, events and programs. Through collecting and preserving Queensland's cultural, intellectual and social life in historic and contemporary collections, it is building a trusted record for the people of Queensland. The collections — and the people and communities they represent — inform programming, public engagement and partnerships. We embrace diversity and free and equitable access to information so people can thrive through connection, learning, storytelling and innovation.

We partner with local governments to support library services statewide. There are more than 325 public libraries and IKCs.

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

State Library provides exhibition content, learning materials, visitor services and marketing for Anzac Square Memorial Galleries. The services are provided under an operating agreement with Queensland Veterans' Council (QVC). City Parklands Services provides facilities maintenance for the galleries and Anzac Square parklands.

Our 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
- delivering statewide digital inclusion initiatives
- 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 contributes to the Queensland Government's objectives for the community:

A better lifestyle through a stronger economy

- Relieving cost of living pressures through free access to library spaces, collections and services.
- Creating better lifestyles through local government partnerships for libraries and IKCs which contribute to the liveability of local communities.
- Delivering digital inclusion programs to ensure a stronger economy by expanding opportunities to participate in the digital economy.

A plan for Queensland's future

- Preparing young Queenslanders for the future by creating safe, meaningful and memorable experiences onsite, online, and in libraries and IKCs.
- Building world-class cultural experiences for Queenslanders and visitors, contributing to the Olympic and Paralympic Games legacy.

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 working with the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) and International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) to advocate for library services.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR, LIBRARY BOARD OF QUEENSLAND

State Library of Queensland is a place of possibility and opportunity. This strategic focus was reinforced in February with the launch of a new brand – a bold, progressive identity that reflects our future direction.

The chevron in the top-right corner of the new design points forward to new knowledge, ideas and opportunities. It is also echoed in the brutalist architecture of our award-winning South Bank building, which embodies the architects' vision of a place grounded in strength and designed to connect people and communities throughout the state.

One of the many ways we connect with the community is through the popular Indigenous Languages Symposium. The August 2024 event focused on Indigenous literacy and cultural protocols and the second symposium, held in April 2025, explored how technology can be used in the respectful service of language preservation and revitalisation.

In November, State Library launched the *Digital and You* campaign in Cairns as part of our digital inclusion program. Timed to coincide with the Indigenous Knowledge Centre coordinators workshop, the campaign aims to unlock the digital world for all Queenslanders. Digital inclusion is essential to ensure every Queenslanders can benefit from the digital economy – through access to learning, entertainment, business opportunities, employment and essential services. State Library plays a vital role in supporting this goal by providing meaningful pathways for local communities to engage, connect and thrive in a digital world.

Technology also enables us to connect with younger generations in meaningful ways. Virtual Veterans, an AI-driven chatbot developed in partnership with TalkVia AI, was recognised at the inaugural Queensland AI Awards in September and the 2025 VALA Awards. The innovative platform adopts the persona of a World War I soldier, helping students engage with Queensland's wartime history in a personal and interactive way.

The Queensland Literary Awards (QLAs) continue to celebrate exceptional writing talent from across Australia, recognising both emerging and established authors across a broad range of genres. In 2024, Melissa Lucashenko was awarded the Queensland Premier's Award for a Work of State Significance for her novel *Edenglassie*. Managed by State Library in collaboration with sponsors, industry partners and the writing community, the QLAs awarded a total of \$276,000 in prize money across 12 categories.

The 2024 the Queensland Memory Awards (QMAs) recognised outstanding contributions to preserving and celebrating the state's history. Dr Zhila Gholami received the prestigious \$25,000 John Oxley Library Fellowship for her project 'Voices of diversity: collecting and preserving the refugee experience in Queensland'.

Both the QLAs and QMAs highlight the importance of our generous donors, whose passion and ongoing support help safeguard Queensland's rich literary and historical heritage for future generations.

I would like to acknowledge the Minister for Education and the Arts John-Paul Langbroek and the former Minister for the Arts Leeanne Enoch.

I extend my deepest gratitude to my fellow board members, the Queensland Library Foundation Councillors, and all those who serve on State Library's committees and advisory groups. I would also like to thank Vicki McDonald AM for her continued leadership and dedication to the library sector, as well as the executive team and all staff whose expertise and passion make an important contribution to the lives of Queenslanders across the state.



Mrs Debbie Best
Chair
Library Board of Queensland

MESSAGE FROM THE STATE LIBRARIAN AND CEO

The challenges and opportunities of the digital world have centred and shaped our work and partnerships this year.

In October, State Library welcomed over 770 delegates from 70 countries to Brisbane for the Information Futures Summit. The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) event brought global attention to the critical role libraries play in building strong, inclusive and sustainable communities. As IFLA President, I share the sector's concerns around the rise of misinformation and disinformation and their impact on education, public trust and the health of democratic societies. Building cross-sector coalitions that encourage active citizenry and respectful debate is one of the many ways State Library is responding to these concerns.

Educators at this year's Curriculum Connect Symposium are also monitoring the digital landscape to ensure students are equipped with the necessary critical-thinking skills to thoughtfully respond to the rise of artificial intelligence and fake news. Keynote presentations from internationally recognised thought leaders and inspiring sessional speakers helped expand professional practice, with attendees provided with strategies and tools to cultivate critical thinking in their students.

The needs of our youngest Queenslanders are a continuing priority with plans to expand and transform The Corner, our creative space for children under 8 years old and their families. A public fundraising campaign for the popular space was launched in April, with thousands of families enjoying a day of performances and activities at The Corner Big Day Out. Donations will support The Corner's move into a new architecturally designed space focused on encouraging parents and caregivers to talk, sing, read and play with their children.

We also hosted the Now and for their futures: Libraries brain building in the early years national forum, bringing together industry, research and library leaders to discuss the latest research on child development. Experiences and environments in the early years are the foundation for lifelong health and wellbeing, and libraries play a crucial role in this space.

Our *How do you library?* campaign launch in February underscored the value of libraries for all age groups. The statewide campaign, launched at Cooroy Library, aims to expand visitation and encourage deeper engagement and participation at libraries across Queensland by highlighting the diversity of services, programs, resources and surprising things people can do at their local library.

Our exhibitions and kuril dhagun showcases provide opportunities to explore and contextualise our extensive collections. *The unbroken spirit of the Kalkadoons* exhibition, a tribute to survival and the enduring power of culture to heal the land and its people, shares Colleen Sam's family story through paintings, digital stories and archival materials. The exhibition received a 2025 Queensland Reconciliation Award that recognised the respectful engagement and consultation with the Sam family to share an important story.

The *Neon* exhibition explored the history of neon across the state from the 1940s to today, including the artists who transformed glass bending into an art form. We also partnered with the Brisbane Portrait Prize to celebrate the city of Brisbane through contemporary portraiture.

These exhibitions, alongside our popular programs and events, bolstered our onsite and online visitation to more than 6.7 million visits in 2024–25.

I would like to acknowledge the valued support of Library Board of Queensland Chair Debbie Best, board members and the Queensland Library Foundation Council. And a final 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 48. Biographies of Library Board members are detailed on pages 42–43.

In addition to regular meetings of the Library Board, members represented State Library at official functions throughout 2024–25. 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 46–47.

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.

There were 7 Library Board meetings in 2024–25. The table in Appendix A outlines all board members, appointment terms, meeting attendance in 2024–25, 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 Education (until August 2024)

Ms Kirsten Herring, Deputy Director-General,
Arts Queensland, Department of Education (from October 2024)

Secretariat

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

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 2024–25 supported Queensland learning and heritage, helping to conserve historical and culturally significant items and increasing access to collections.

Donor engagement

The Foundation hosted a variety of engagement events designed to deepen donor connections with collections, programs and impact. Donors were welcomed to exclusive morning teas as part of the popular Heritage Talks series, which offered a unique opportunity for donors to explore Queensland's rich history and share stories with fellow enthusiasts.

In February, the Foundation hosted the President's Circle event, *A taste of the Australian Dream?*, featuring architecture and design enthusiast and comedian Tim Ross. The event attracted a full house and celebrated State Library's remarkable architectural collections.

In May, the annual Crowd Giving event introduced new audiences to a variety of projects that pitched for collective funding raised from attendees. The event allocated \$30,000 in support of *Fact or Fiction*, a project that will enable State Library to develop an interactive online program to help students build essential critical-thinking skills and equip them to recognise bias, identify fake news, and distinguish fact from opinion.

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 (UQ); University of Queensland Press (UQP); Copyright Agency's Cultural Fund; *The Courier-Mail*; Jenny Summerson; Susan Hocking and Ian Mackie and their family; and the Talbot Foundation.

Queensland Memory Awards

The Queensland Memory Awards recognise significant contributions to investigating, preserving and celebrating Queensland history. Fellowships are awarded to support researchers, creatives, historians and writers to interpret the collections of John Oxley Library at State Library, revealing new knowledge and stories. The Foundation's President's Circle donors funded the premier prize, the John Oxley Library Fellowship, valued at \$25,000. The Foundation funded the Rainbow Research Fellowship, valued at \$20,000, and the John Oxley Library Community History Award, valued at \$5,000. The Foundation acknowledges the generosity of fellowship donors The Siganto Foundation; the John Allpass Charitable Foundation; the Mellick family; the Heritage Branch, Department of Environment, Science and Innovation; and the Royal National Agricultural and Industrial Association of Queensland.

Saving Queensland history

The Colonial Secretary's Correspondence is a treasure trove of 19th-century documents that reveal the untold stories of Queensland's early days. This project is a bridge to our past, enriching our understanding of who we are and where we have come from. These records are vital for understanding our history, offering insights into the lives of individuals, communities and the decisions that shaped the state. Ken MacDonald ^{AM} and Terry White ^{AO} provided leadership gifts to kickstart the project, now supported by multiple donors to the Foundation. The Reel Rescue project continues the race against time to preserve and digitise thousands of moving images and audio items. As funding priorities for the Foundation, both projects featured in the 2024 and 2025 end-of-financial-year appeals.

Supporting schools

Support through the Foundation has enabled innovation, increased resourcing and extended reach of the schools engagement program, supporting student success and wellbeing. Donors generously enabling projects include the Ash Barty Foundation (First Nations regional schools engagement project) and Keith and Caroline Hamilton (Young researchers program). Engagement with online research workshops that remotely connect students to collections continues to grow, thanks to foundational support from Gina Fairfax ^{AC} and Tim Fairfax ^{AC}.

STRATEGY

STRATEGIC PLAN 2024–28

The *Strategic Plan 2024–28* outlines objectives for State Library to deliver its vision.

Collecting memories

Sharing knowledge and stories through our collections.

- Intentionally collect and share a trusted record of Queensland
- Enable respectful truth-telling practices which centre culturally safe co-design with First Nations peoples
- Preserve the collection for future generations through the development of resilient and robust systems and plans
- Reflect and reveal shared histories and new narratives throughout our collections and practices

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

1. Connection

We create opportunities to reach and connect Queenslanders through engagement online and onsite, innovative digital experiences, responsive services and through partnerships with local government. We will partner to build inclusive communities which are digitally empowered and offer sustainable service delivery.

2. Children and families

We are positioned to achieve statewide impact for children and families through a coordinated and strategic approach to The Corner transformation and First 5 Forever.

3. Digital futures

We can build digital inclusion by combining the physical, technological and skills resources which exist in libraries and Indigenous Knowledge Centres with programs to improve digital access.

4. Truth and trust

We have the opportunity to share the diverse lives and experiences of people in Queensland in trusted and respectful ways through collections, community engagement and partnerships.

5. Strengthen democracy

We have the opportunity to strengthen democracy by sparking courageous conversations and citizen engagement. We will continue to champion intellectual freedom and media literacies.

STRATEGIC RISKS

1. Changing community needs

We must continually adapt to meet the diverse and evolving needs of people in Queensland by delivering innovative, relevant and accessible services.

2. Safety and security

We must manage the impacts of cyber threats, extreme weather events, natural disasters and prepare to respond to emerging risks. We must provide a safe and welcoming place for staff and visitors free from racism, discrimination, bullying and violence.

3. Workforce resilience

We must attract and retain skilled staff and pursue new ways of working. We will prioritise the health, safety and wellbeing of our people by building the capability, diversity and cultural responsiveness of our workforce.

4. Funding

We must advocate to secure funding, generate own-source revenue, and attract new partnerships and investment.

5. Protecting our assets

We must invest in and protect State Library's collections, ICT and physical infrastructure to retain the high level of community trust.

The *Strategic Plan 2024–28* was modified following the repeal of the *Path to Treaty Act 2023* (Qld) on 28 November 2024 and the announcement of the new Queensland Government objectives for the community which were tabled in parliament on 14 March 2025.

OPERATIONAL PLAN 2024–25

The *Operational Plan 2024–25* outlines the operational strategies:

- 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 Indigenous Knowledge Centres 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.

There were no modifications to the *Operational Plan 2024–25*.

PLANS AND PRIORITIES FOR NEXT REPORTING PERIOD

In 2025–26, State Library will:

- increase engagement with regional Queenslanders to provide free access to information, knowledge and learning
- build cultural experiences that celebrate Queensland's unique cultures and identities
- develop new funding models to deliver transformational change for all regions in Queensland, driving economic opportunities, improved social outcomes and greater digital inclusion
- transform The Corner and optimise building spaces to meet demand and deliver positive experiences for visitors.