

STATE LIBRARY OF QUEENSLAND

# CONTENT STRATEGY





## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

State Library of Queensland respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of this land. We extend our respect to Elders, past, present, and emerging, and recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as First Peoples of this country.

We acknowledge the continuation of diverse cultural practices and knowledge systems of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-determination is a human right as enshrined in the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. *The Human Rights Act 2019* (Qld) also recognises the particular significance of the right to self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

## INTRODUCTION

When State Library of Queensland first opened to the public in 1902, it was furnished with books from various sources, notably from the extensive private library of Justice George Rogers Harding. Books on philology, theology, sociology, and the natural sciences were favoured at the time, with the original Board of Trustees hoping the study of history, poetry, and science allowed men a welcome escape from the home.



Although the colonial origins of collections inherited by State Library may still echo, more than 120 years on we have become a cultural institution of influence. Our collections are accessible, inclusive and relevant to the people and communities of Queensland. They are at the heart of what we do as a library. The *Content Strategy* guides what we collect, how we collect and why we collect.

State Library is here for all Queenslanders. Our collections meet the information and recreational needs of people across the state, as well as ensuring the documentary record is accurate and reflects historical truths about Queensland's people, places and stories. Our collections must be relevant to all people, especially those living regionally or remotely.

The *Content Strategy* aligns with our *Strategic Plan 2024–28*, activating our enduring values and strategic objectives. 'Access is free and equitable' is one of these enduring values.

Providing access supports the fundamental human right of freedom of expression – the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas. As a library we are committed to the principles of freedom of expression and support the rights of all people to access information and ideas. Through our collections we collect, preserve and provide access to the many and diverse voices, perspectives and viewpoints of all Queenslanders – past and present.

Providing access that is free and equitable strongly aligns with our *First Nations Strategy 2024–28* and the Queensland Government's *Path to Treaty Commitment*. Access to collections, histories, cultural heritage and traditional knowledge related to First Nations peoples facilitates historical acceptance, one of the 5 dimensions of Reconciliation.

Accessing content enables interrogation of the historical record, assists with truth telling and helps to advance data sovereignty. Making content accessible and discoverable can be a catalyst to reconciling the story of Queensland – ensuring a richer, more inclusive history.

**Vicki McDonald** AM FALIA  
State Librarian and CEO  
August 2024

### IMAGE CREDITS

**COVER:** Greek community day for *Meet Me at the Paragon* exhibition, September 2019. State Library of Queensland. Photo by Joe Ruckli  
**PAGE 2:** Portrait of Nicole Louise Mai-Ra Watson, 2001. Gift of Presence collection. Nicole Louise Mai-Ra Watson a lawyer of Birri Gubba/Munanjali descent and Irish /German ancestry. John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland. Image number: 7487-0001-0031  
**PAGE 6-7:** Murrandoo Yanner crouching next to a fire he started as part of a controlled burn for land management, Burketown, 2020. Hamish Cairns photographer. John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland. Image number: 33243-0002-0005

**PAGE 10:** Story Bridge in the fourth stage of construction, Brisbane, 1938. Part of digitised copy prints from 6377 Story Bridge Photograph Albums. John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland. Negative number: 185327  
**PAGE 11:** Torres Strait Island cray fisherman Charles David and his son Ned with a recent catch, Thursday Island, 2012. John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland. Image number: 18407588080-0001-0007.  
**PAGE 12-13:** Close up of Sulia Gubima's hands as she weaves a palm leaf hat, Boigu Island, 2013. Boigu Island trading day photographs. Sarah Scragg photographer. John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland 2013. Image number: 32198-0001-0002.  
**PAGE 14:** Mangrove tree on Hinchinbrook Island, Queensland, 1984. Ron Gale photographer. John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland. Image number: 405-21-06



## PURPOSE

State Library's Content Strategy provides a decision-making framework for collections. It outlines what we collect, why we collect and how we ensure these decisions are consistent with our enduring values:

- *Access is free and equitable.*
- *Diversity is celebrated.*
- *First Nations peoples and their knowledge, strength and resilience are centred.*
- *Our workplace is safe and purposeful.*

## APPROACH

Through these guiding behaviours we will ensure our collections are relevant, representative and enriching.

### SELF-AWARE

We will have a clear understanding of our positionality when we make collection decisions, addressing historical and current biases that may apply.

*What this looks like: when considering additions to the collection, asking who has that decision-making power? From what perspective is that decision being made? Are there other perspectives that need to be considered?*

### INTENTIONAL

We will be clear, consistent, and transparent in our collection decision making.

*What this looks like: we have a consistent understanding across the organisation of collection priorities and the reasons for our collection decisions.*

### EMPATHETIC

We will deeply listen in order to understand the diverse needs and perspectives of others. We will endeavour to have a better understanding of these contexts as we make decisions.

*What this looks like: operating from a deep understanding of others' perspectives, we make informed collection decisions.*

### DILIGENT

We will apply collection practices that support responsible management of all collections throughout their lifecycle.

*What this looks like: our collection work happens according to ethical frameworks and best practice.*

### COLLABORATIVE

We recognise that expertise exists in other places. We will work collaboratively with our sector partners, communities and institutions.

*What this looks like: working with sector partners, listening and incorporating collaborators' expertise for greater outcomes and impact.*

## HOW WE MAKE DECISIONS

Three criteria are used to assess all State Library collections.

### **Content; Impact; Viability and Accessibility.**

These criteria inform a range of collection tasks including selection, description, preservation, storage, digitisation, discovery, access, engagement and deselection. Significant decisions, including what content we accept, decline and exclude are informed by these criteria.

The 3 criteria must be considered collectively within the context of the collection's intended purpose. The application of factors within these criteria may vary in the appraisal process to ensure that final decisions are informed and intentional. Under each of the criteria, the following factors may be considered.

### **Content**

Collections are assessed for their attributes and qualities they contain. The following factors can be considered:

- historical significance
- provenance
- uniqueness (to State Library's collection and other institutions)
- representation – ability to provide new perspectives and information
- ability to reflect diversity
- quality of information
- relevance of information.

### **Impact**

Collections are appraised for their potential positive outcomes. The following factors can be considered:

- ability to enable, establish or grow connection with diverse audiences and communities
- interpretive and engagement potential
- potential community outcomes
- level of current usage
- level of anticipated usage
- ability to meet needs of target audiences
- ability to meet the needs of regional or remote communities
- ability to support government strategies and priorities.

### **Viability and Accessibility**

In making any collection decision, consideration must be given to the following factors that may influence State Library's ability to make that item accessible. They may include:

- physical condition
- copyright status
- Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property rights (ICIP) considerations
- access requirements that limit access, usage and engagement opportunities
- cost of acquisition and maintenance
- storage requirements (physical and digital)
- level of description provided or required for discovery and access
- level of arrangement and ordering required
- preservation requirements (physical and digital).





## COLLECTIONS

COLLECTIONS AREN'T JUST THE THINGS WE COLLECT: THEY ARE ALSO THE STORIES, THE CONNECTIONS AND MEANINGS AROUND THEM.



## MEMORY COLLECTION

**Collection:** John Oxley Library

**Objective:** To provide a trusted and comprehensive record of Queensland's history.

**Description:** Established in 1934, the John Oxley Library provides a documentary record of life in Queensland, satisfying the requirement under the *Libraries Act 1988* (Qld) that "content relevant to Queensland should be collected, preserved, promoted and made accessible."

As the leading collector of Queensland's documentary heritage, the John Oxley Library is a permanent collection, with a wide range of historical and contemporary content, published and unpublished, collected to reflect events, people, places and ideas that contribute to a deep understanding of Queensland. The content of this collection is paramount, with levels of impact and viability being contributors to the overall value of an item.

**Intention:** For an item or collection to be considered for the John Oxley Library, it must satisfy at least one of the conditions listed below. If it does, it is then assessed according to the 3 key selection criteria of: content, impact and viability and accessibility. A candidate for the John Oxley Library collection must be one of the following:

- substantially related to Queensland or containing significant Queensland content
- written or created by a Queensland person or persons
- published in Queensland (to comply with legal deposit legislation)
- written or created by a corporate body identified as primarily Queensland-based
- illustrated by a Queensland illustrator or artist
- about the areas neighbouring Queensland when they are relevant to Queensland's development:
  - British New Guinea (1884 to 1905)
  - German New Guinea (1885 to 1914)
  - Papua New Guinea, West Papua
  - Fiji, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu (formerly New Hebrides), New Caledonia (particularly Noumea)
  - Cross border areas of New South Wales, South Australia and the Northern Territory
- of historical association leading up to or after the establishment of Queensland as a separate state on 10 December 1859.

**Formats:** Physical and digital formats are collected. Physical formats include manuscripts, published serials and monographs, photographs, realia, diaries, film and correspondence. Digital formats include websites, images, oral histories and digital stories.

*More information regarding the content collected is available in the Memory Collection Content Guidelines*



*State Library is a library for Queensland and a library about Queensland. The content that we acquire, describe, store and make accessible helps us achieve our vision of being a library of influence, inspiring and connecting people through knowledge, storytelling and creativity. With our collections, staff, spaces and services we are able to transform lives, enable people to expand their perspective and find meaning.*

## EXTRAORDINARY COLLECTIONS

**Collections:** Australian Library of Art Collection includes: Australian Art Research Collection; Artists' Books Collection; History and Art of the Book Collection; Lindsay Collection of Pat Corrigan

**Objective:** To provide exceptional examples and context of books as objects.

**Description:** State Library has a strong tradition of collecting items that demonstrate the history of the book, that showcase technological advances in printing and that, as particularly fine examples of library materials, engage the public's imagination. These items form a representative collection of fine printing and rare publications that contribute to an understanding of the history of the book and the art of the book.

The core of the **Australian Art Research Collection** is the James Hardie Library of Australian Fine Arts which was donated as a collection to State Library in 1988. Since that time the collection has been further developed by State Library. The collection was developed as a comprehensive art research collection containing books, including variant editions, exhibition catalogues, ephemera, posters, manuscripts and private press publications. Since 2018 the scope of the collection has focused on items which provide exceptional examples of the book as object.

**Artists' Books Collection.** State Library holds a nationally recognised collection of works of art that use the form or concept of a book. State Library has one of the largest publicly available collections of artists' books in Australia.

**History and Art of the Book Collection.** This collection showcases and preserves the art, craft, history and impact of the printed book.

The **Lindsay Collection of Pat Corrigan** is a collection of published books and manuscripts relating to the Lindsay family of Australian artists and writers. This core of the collection was donated by Mr Patrick Corrigan AM in 1992 and 1997. Since that time the collection has been further developed by State Library as a research collection relating to the Lindsay family. Many of the books contain annotations and additional material such as letters, photographs and press clippings. This is a closed collection.

**Intention:** These collections are built upon a history of collecting exceptional examples of books as artefacts. Development of these collections will be curated and representative. High public appeal, research value and accessibility are key factors in selection for the Extraordinary Collections.

**Formats:** Physical only

*More information regarding the content collected is available in the Extraordinary Collections Content Guidelines*



## INFORMATION COLLECTIONS

**Collections:** State Reference Library Collection; Asia-Pacific Design Library Collection; Government Research and Information Library (GRAIL).

**Objective:** To meet the research and information needs of Queenslanders.

**Description:** State Library actively maintains collections that provide relevant information efficiently and effectively to the Queensland population for both personal and professional needs. Information collections underpin State Library's commitment to provide reference and information services to the State of Queensland, as outlined in the *Libraries Act 1988* (Qld)

The **State Reference Library Collection**, a physical and digital resource includes subscriptions to robust, high impact digital resources that provide quality, current information. The **Asia-Pacific Design Library Collection** is a curated collection of books and journals supporting the design community. The collection focuses on the most recent and relevant design resources. The **Government Research and Information Library** (GRAIL) eresources collection aims to provide relevant information efficiently and effectively to public servants who work in the Queensland Government departments and agencies who are members of GRAIL.

**Intention:** It is vital these collections remain responsive and relevant to changing community information needs. Collecting across the Information Collections is respectful of the commitment to intellectual freedom. Particular attention is given to the quality and currency of information provided by these collections. Consideration is given to providing resources in a broad range of subject areas as well as anticipating future information needs. Priorities for the Information Collections are reviewed annually in response to changing community requirements and usage patterns.

**Formats:** Digital is preferred in alignment with State Library's Digital Strategy. Development of physical formats for the State Reference Library Collection will continue to decrease in response to demand for econtent. Print formats for the Asia-Pacific Design Library Collection and certain subjects such as art and architecture will be collected where physical format is integral to the user experience.

*More information regarding the content collected is available in the Information Collection Content Guidelines*

## PUBLIC LIBRARY COLLECTIONS

- Collections:** Rural Libraries Queensland (RLQ) and Indigenous Knowledge Centre (IKC) Collections; Statewide Collections
- Objective:** To strengthen public library collections across Queensland to enable all Queenslanders to engage in lifelong learning through access to contemporary collections and resources that reflect our diverse communities and encourage critical thinking.
- Description:** The Public Library Collections support the diverse cultural, recreational and information needs of communities across Queensland. **RLQ and IKC Collections** are place-based, and responsive to local community interests and needs. **Statewide Collections** include print and eresources in formats and languages that support all Queensland public libraries to deliver accessible and inclusive collections and services. These collections include dyslexic friendly resources for young people and adults, Manga comics and graphic novels as well as resources for people for whom English is not their first language.
- Intention:** State Library recognises the critical role public libraries and IKCs play in supporting thriving communities. Public Library Collections aim to provide a balanced, appealing, high-quality range of resources, including popular titles and subjects, audience specific content and enduring works. It is important that Public Library Collections are also flexible and receptive to meet the changes within their communities. They are responsive to digital technology trends that encourage reading, learning and literacy. Public Library Collections aim to also support national and state agendas to improve lifelong learning in regional and remote areas.
- In observing and confirming the rights of the individual to seek and access information, all Public Library Collections are provided free and without censorship.
- State Library, in partnership with local government, values and assists the development of local history and community-based collections.
- Resources for Statewide Collections aim to provide access to print and digital resources that benefit all Queensland communities and support changing community demographics and demands.
- Formats:** Physical and digital formats are collected. Format decisions are made according to user needs.

*More information regarding the content collected is available in the Public Library Collections Content Guidelines*







## HOW WE MAKE DECISIONS RELATED TO FIRST NATIONS CONTENT

By including our commitment to First Nations content in this updated *Content Strategy* we are centring First Nations' peoples and communities, their knowledge, cultures and histories. These commitments align with state, national and international frameworks for First Nations collections and provide a foundation for stronger relationships and deep connection with collections.

State Library is a collector and steward of data. Throughout our physical and digital collections are the names and experiences of people. Though the data is stored and protected by State Library, the knowledge and memories are actively held by the community. We will work to build and maintain trust in the management and governance of this data.

State Library recognises the rights of First Nations peoples in the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, particularly the “right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions.” Recognition of First Nations data sovereignty generates a shared understanding of cultural and traditional knowledge contained within our content.

Our work will use Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) protocols to ensure First Nations traditional knowledge and cultural expressions are recognised and protected.

Recognising and prioritising ICIP aligns with State Library's *First Nations Strategy 2024-28 - A plan for reframing relationships*. This policy aims to transform State Library by reframing relationships with First Nations people, cultures, knowledge, and stories.

From selection to engagement, 4 key areas of focus determine how we work with First Nations collections and content.



### **Collecting**

- Prioritise collecting content created by First Nations people, reflecting the diversity amongst First Nations communities.
- Listen to First Nations communities and what they need collected and have access to, now and in the future.
- Be self-aware in our collection assessment, reflecting on the position this work is taken from and the biases that apply.
- Deeply understand our collections to identify opportunities to grow the collection and build new knowledge.

### **Description**

- Centre people, places and events and ways of knowing in our description.
- Implement reparative description and inclusive cataloguing practices to address bias, harmful language and archival erasure in our collections.
- Provide space and ways for First Nations people to contribute to the description of content in their own words.
- Prioritise First Nations content description for increased discoverability and access.

### **Access**

- Acknowledge First Nations peoples as the holders of their knowledge and work with communities to appropriately manage access.
- Consider the wellbeing of First Nations peoples when using our collections.
- Listen and respond to First Nations communities and provide the level of access they require.
- Work with collecting institutions to provide First Nations communities with access to collections regardless of institutional boundaries.

### **Custodianship**

- Respond to requests from First Nations communities for copies of material and information of relevance.
- Assist First Nations communities and councils in planning, developing and managing keeping places.







## GLOSSARY

Archival erasure	Neglecting or mis-characterising people and experiences outside the dominant historical narrative, especially minority communities. [Content Description Principles, State Library of Queensland 2024]
Data sovereignty	Refers to the “right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions.” From Article 31 in <i>United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples</i>
First Nations	This term refers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities in Queensland.
First Nations content	This term refers to collections, stories, language and knowledge belonging to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities in Queensland.
Inclusive cataloguing practices	Description that respects diversity in ethnicity, gender, sexuality, ability, and more. It avoids perpetuating stereotypes or marginalising any group. [Content Description Principles, State Library of Queensland 2024]
Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property rights (ICIP)	<p>ICIP is a multifaceted concept covering all aspects of cultural practice, traditional knowledge, and resources and knowledge systems developed by First Nations peoples as part of their identity, law, lore and culture</p> <p>ICIP – or traditional cultural expression – is described by the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• handed down from one generation to another, either orally or by imitation</li><li>• reflecting a community’s cultural and social identity</li><li>• consisting of a characteristic element of a community’s heritage</li><li>• produced by ‘authors unknown’ and/or by communities and/or individuals communally recognised as having the right, responsibility or permission to do so</li><li>• often created for spiritual and religious purposes</li><li>• constantly evolving, developing and being invested within the community.</li></ul> <p>[NSLA Position Statement May 2023]</p>
Reparative description	Cataloguing to acknowledge and repair the harms of exclusionary descriptions of misrepresented people, places and events. [Content Description Principles, State Library of Queensland 2024]

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