

STATE LIBRARY QUEENSLAND

MEDIA RELEASE

23 March 2026

Trailblazing broadcaster Wayne Coolwell celebrated at State Library

A free State Library of Queensland showcase opening 28 March captures the life and legacy of the late Mununjali broadcaster, author and community leader Wayne Coolwell through the lens of his own camera.

Wayne Coolwell (1956–2025) forged a remarkable career spanning broadcasting, writing, visual arts and community leadership.

Through Mununjali Eyes: photojournalist Wayne Coolwell offers a vital visual archive of over 5 decades of Aboriginal political, social and cultural life told through Wayne’s personal photography.

From professional beginnings at just 15 years old, Wayne’s voice would become best known to national audiences as an ABC sports broadcaster and through *Speaking Out*, the pioneering program that gave First Nations perspectives a national platform.

The exhibition includes rare photographs of First Nations icons including Neville Bonner, Archie Roach, Stan Grant, Ernie Dingo and Ruby Hunter, alongside portraits of Wayne's family and community.

Through Mununjali eyes: photojournalist Wayne Coolwell began as a partnership between State Library and the late Wayne Coolwell, whose leadership, insight and cultural authority shaped its development.

Following Wayne's passing in May 2025, this showcase has been created in close consultation with co-curator Jo-Anne Driessens and Wayne’s family. It is presented in Wayne’s honour, acknowledging his life, his stories and the enduring legacy he entrusted to this work.

Quotes from Minister for Education and the Arts John-Paul Langbroek:

“Wayne Coolwell was an extraordinary Queenslander whose work, life and legacy are still tremendously important today.

"This showcase reminds us of the enduring documentary power of curiosity, empathy and storytelling.

“The Crisafulli Government invests in State Library to support Queenslanders’ access to enriching arts and cultural experiences and collections, delivering on our 10-year strategy for arts and culture, *Queensland’s Time to Shine.*”

Quotes from State Librarian and CEO Vicki McDonald AM:

“Through Mununjali eyes: photojournalist Wayne Coolwell offers a unique visual journal of the people, places and movements that shaped modern Aboriginal Australia.

“These photographs show how Wayne Coolwell was able to capture with equal care authentic moments of quiet personal joy and significant national change.

“State Library is thrilled to celebrate the life of this true cultural pioneer.”

Through Mununjali Eyes: Photojournalist Wayne Coolwell

28 March – 18 October 2026

Open daily 10am–5pm | Free entry

kuril dhagun, level 1 | State Library of Queensland, Cultural Centre, South Bank

slq.qld.gov.au/mununjalieyes | [Media Kit](#)

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Interviews available on request.