



STATE LIBRARY OF QUEENSLAND

FIRST NATIONS STRATEGY 2024-28

A PLAN FOR REFRAMING
RELATIONSHIPS

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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 significance of the right to self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



State Library of Queensland's journey
by Chern'ee Sutton, contemporary artist of the Kalkadoon people.

This painting is my interpretation of State Library's commitment to strong relationships, stories, culture, truth and healing with Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The large community symbol in the centre represents the library as a place of knowledge and experiences where all peoples can gather to learn and share stories. It is painted in colours representing First Nations peoples. The books represent the knowledge and history stored within the library.

The large grey ring surrounding the centre represents the past, with the weaving mat leading from this circle symbolising how each strand weaves together the past and the present to create inclusive stories. The inner ring represents the stories from non-Indigenous perspectives, with the outer ring representing the decolonisation of history and stories from First Nations peoples' perspectives. It represents truth telling, language revival, traditional knowledge and

culture, and an ancient history that is older than any book or recording.

The larger grey icons represent the traditional ways history was recorded and shared through the generations – music, song and dance, oral history passed down from elders, the landscape and the night sky and rock art. The red and yellow circles and lines connected to the centre represent technology which is our modern method of knowledge keeping, visibility and sharing stories and practices.

The smaller community symbols and travelling lines represent the library's continued commitment to partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, ensuring ancient knowledge and culture, as well as recent history, perspectives and languages can be shared through First Nations voices.

The waterholes, mountains and leaves at the edges represent healing country. It also represents the many regions where people live and travel from to access knowledge – from the desert to the bush, to the coastlines and waterways. The large bottle tree in the top left represents growing knowledge, its roots are the strong foundations and history of Australia's First Peoples. The leaves grow, multiply and spread as knowledge is passed on to future generations. The blue lines represent the river where State Library is located.

The boomerang in the bottom left represents people continually returning to seek more knowledge, both ancient and modern. The shield in the top right represents cultural safety at the heart of the library's identity and protecting knowledge for all peoples. The kangaroo, emu and people footprints symbolise a collaborative nation moving forwards and never backwards.



MESSAGE FROM CHAIRPERSON, LIBRARY BOARD OF QUEENSLAND

On behalf of the Library Board of Queensland, I present the State Library of Queensland's *First Nations Strategy 2024-28: A plan for reframing relationships*.

State Library has a long-standing commitment to the First Nations people and communities of this state, and this strategy is an opportunity to advance this commitment.

The Library Board fully endorses the *First Nations Strategy* and acknowledges it forms an integral part of the broader strategic direction for State Library, including our genuine aspiration to reframe our relationship with First Nations peoples.

It is with great optimism that we present the *First Nations Strategy*, and we look forward to joining you in playing a key role on this journey to treaty and truth-telling.

Debbie Best



MESSAGE FROM CHAIRPERSON, INDIGENOUS ADVISORY GROUP

The Library Board of Queensland's Indigenous Advisory Group proudly endorses the *First Nations Strategy*.

As First Nations leaders and advisors to the Library Board we acknowledge this work and the significant contribution made by our Indigenous brothers and sisters across State Library.

The *First Nations Strategy* directly supports a guiding principle of the *Libraries Act 1988* (Qld) that respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures is affirmed. This strategy delivers on our mandate by providing advice to the Library Board on the development of library services for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including the ongoing collection of material and information relating to Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and ensuring that access to this material is undertaken in a culturally sensitive, inclusive, and appropriate manner.

We are confident the *First Nations Strategy* provides the necessary framework and guidance to ensure that together we can build respect, strengthen our relationships, benefit from our knowledge, and share our decision-making.

Cheryl Buchanan



MESSAGE FROM STATE LIBRARIAN AND CEO

State Library plays a critical role in Queensland's First Nations reform agenda. Respectful engagement sits at the heart of our long-standing commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Queensland as we continue to improve and reframe this relationship. This *First Nations Strategy* has been developed as Queenslanders embark on the important journey to treaty and truth-telling.

The *First Nations Strategy* confirms our role in the Queensland Government's commitments to Path to Treaty, Closing the Gap, Local Thriving Communities, and the economic and social legacy building which is part of Brisbane Olympics and Paralympics 2032. This document sets a clear direction on treaty readiness for State Library.

This strategy has been co-designed with First Nations staff and shaped by engagement and consultation at State Library. It demonstrates our commitment to reframe our relationship with First Nations people and communities. I would like to thank First Nations Advisory for guiding us through a strong and engaging process to formulate principles, strategic connections, an implementation framework and the strategic objectives which give focus and priority across our work. This document holds us accountable, and I welcome the challenge now to reflect, to change, and to execute our professional responsibilities in such a way that honours this intent.

The *First Nations Strategy* opens the way for libraries to be better – embracing First Nations knowledge, sharing First Nations stories, and making decisions with First Nations people and communities.

I encourage you to include this strategy in your daily work and in your role with the State Library. I hope the *First Nations Strategy* will be transformational for our people and our organisation through its implementation. We play a positive role in changing the lives of First Nations Queenslanders.

Vicki McDonald AM FALIA

INTRODUCTION

State Library of Queensland is committed to reframing its relationship with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations and contributing to the Path to Treaty process through truth-telling. This commitment includes building on the significant work underway and putting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at the centre of the work we do.

THE QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT FIRST NATIONS REFORM AGENDA

The Queensland Government has committed to a suite of First Nations whole-of-government reforms that aim to improve outcomes and close the gap for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The key reforms relevant to State Library are:

- Human and cultural rights
- Path to Treaty and truth-telling
- *Local Thriving Communities Action Plan*
- *Queensland Government Closing the Gap Implementation Plan.*

Other key Queensland Government commitments which frame State Library's *First Nations Strategy* include the *Queensland Government Reconciliation Action Plan 2023 - 2025* and *Creative Together 2020 - 2030: A 10-year Roadmap for arts, culture and creativity in Queensland.*

QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN 2023 - 2025

The *Queensland Government Reconciliation Action Plan 2023 - 2025 (RAP)* demonstrates the Queensland Government's commitment to building stronger relationships between Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and non-Indigenous Queenslanders.

The *RAP* builds on the collective efforts of departments and statutory bodies to ensure equality, equity, recognition and the advancement of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples across all aspects of society and in everyday life including the Path to Treaty and truth-telling.

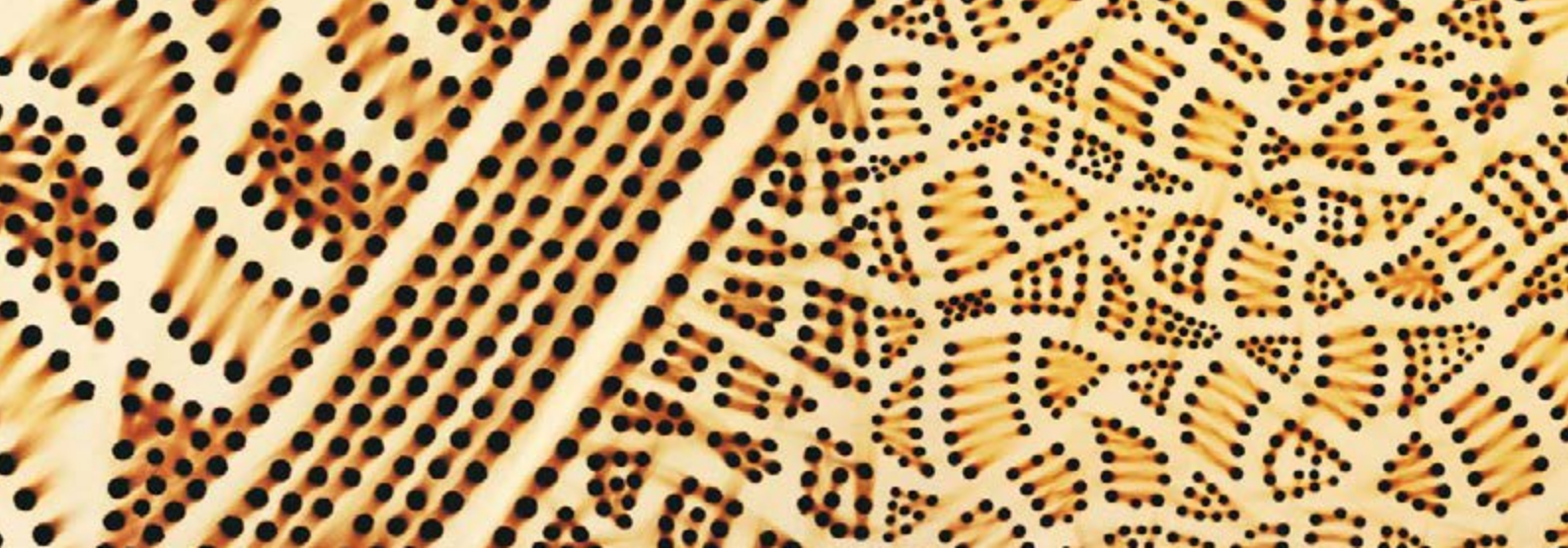
The *RAP* includes engagement activities that aim to build and strengthen partnerships and empower local communities to achieve positive and practical outcomes.

Whilst the *RAP* is not a whole-of-government reform, State Library recognises the importance of reporting against its commitments. The strategies in this document form the response by State Library to commitments under the *RAP*.

CREATIVE TOGETHER 2020 - 2030

Creative Together 2020 - 2030: A 10-year Roadmap for arts, culture and creativity in Queensland is the Queensland Government's 10-year vision which will see Queensland renewed and transformed - socially, culturally, and economically through arts, culture, and creativity. *Creative Together* responds to the significant opportunities for Queenslanders through the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games, acknowledges the continuing impacts of the global pandemic, and supports the Queensland Government's Path to Treaty and truth-telling.

Creative Together looks to the future where the strength of the sector fosters the growth of bold and rich cultural experiences for audiences, arts and culture are valued for the important role they play in enriching Queensland, and a prosperous and creative future is secured for the state.



Creative Together has the following priorities:

- Elevate First Nations arts
- Activate Queensland's local places and global digital spaces
- Drive social change across the state
- Strengthen Queensland communities
- Share our stories and celebrate our storytellers.

HUMAN RIGHTS INCLUDING CULTURAL RIGHTS

The Human Rights Act 2019 (Qld) protects 23 fundamental human rights. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples hold distinct cultural rights, and must not be denied rights to:

- identity, cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, spiritual practices
- language
- kinship ties
- spiritual, material, and economic relationship with lands, waters, and resources, under Aboriginal tradition or Island custom
- conserve and protect the environment and productive capacity of lands, waters, and resources.

STATE LIBRARY'S FIRST NATIONS INITIATIVES

State Library has a significant role to play in supporting the Queensland Government's First Nations reform agenda. In order to deliver on these reforms, State Library is committed to strategies and actions that are in our:

- strategic, operational and branch plans
- *First Nations Recruitment and Retention Strategy 2023 - 2025*
- *Content Strategy and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Collections Commitments*
- partnership with local government to ensure access to quality library services for all Queenslanders, underpinned by a shared strategic vision and a funding methodology
- First 5 Forever family-centred program, which includes the dedicated funding stream 'Elevating First Nations'.

Some of State Library's enduring First Nations initiatives include:

- Indigenous Knowledge Centres
- kuril dhagun
- black&write! Indigenous Writing and Editing Project
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages program.



IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

State Library has developed a framework that provides a high-level overview of the linkages between the Queensland Government's First Nations whole-of-government reforms and the State Library's strategic direction and First Nations initiatives.

<p>State Library of Queensland</p>	<p>Our vision</p> <p>A library of influence, inspiring and connecting people through knowledge, storytelling and creativity</p>	<p>Enduring values</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<p>Queensland Government</p>	<p><i>Local Thriving Communities Agenda</i> to reframe relationships with First Nations Queenslanders</p>		
<p>Queensland Government First Nations reforms relevant to State Library</p>	<p>Queensland Government <i>Reconciliation Action Plan 2023-25</i></p>	<p><i>Human Rights Act 2019</i></p>	<p><i>Path to Treaty Act 2023</i></p>	<p><i>Local Thriving Communities Action Plan</i></p>	<p><i>Closing the Gap Implementation Plan</i></p>	<p>Brisbane 2032 as a catalyst for positive change</p>
<p>How will we get there?</p>	<p>This <i>First Nations Strategy</i> will provide an overarching and coordinated approach to delivering State Library First Nations initiatives and supporting Queensland Government First Nations reforms</p>		<p>The Senior Leadership Team will take responsibility for the implementation of the <i>First Nations Strategy</i> and the delivery of the action plan.</p>		<p>Director, First Nations Strategy will lead the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the <i>First Nations Strategy</i>, providing strategic advice to the Senior Leadership Team and Executive Leadership Team.</p>	
<p>Key documents</p>	<p><i>Creative Together 2020-2030: A 10-Year Roadmap for arts, culture and creativity in Queensland</i></p>	<p><i>Cultural Engagement Framework</i></p>	<p>State Library <i>Strategic Plan 2024-28</i>, annual operational plan and branch plans</p>		<p><i>Content Strategy</i> <i>Digital Strategy</i> <i>First Nations Recruitment and Retention Strategy</i></p>	
<p>First Nations Initiatives</p>	<p>Collection commitments and truth-telling</p>	<p>Programs including black&write! Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages</p>	<p>Local government partnerships</p>	<p>Indigenous Knowledge Centres</p>	<p>kuril dhagun</p>	<p>First Nations Recruitment and Retention</p>

See page 18 for monitoring and evaluation framework.

FIRST NATIONS STRATEGY

This *First Nations Strategy* will transform State Library by reframing relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, cultures, knowledge, and stories. It builds on the work and relationships which State Library has committed to over the last 2 decades. Respect for First Nations peoples and communities is central. The *First Nations Strategy* seeks to build connection, understanding and respect through strong relationships.

The purpose of this document is to anchor State Library strategies and programs, and provide an overarching, clearly articulated, and coordinated approach to the delivery of First Nations initiatives.

We will be held accountable to these commitments and to the delivery and effectiveness of State Library's First Nations initiatives, as well as our efforts in striving to meet the whole-of-government First Nations reform agenda including Path to Treaty and truth-telling. The Brisbane 2032 Olympics and Paralympics present important opportunities for First Nations economic and social outcomes, and this strategy will enable State Library to contribute to this significant legacy.

The *First Nations Strategy* is a living document and will be reviewed and updated regularly to ensure it remains current and impactful. The Director, *First Nations Strategy* will provide strategic leadership in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the *First Nations Strategy*. This will require working closely with the Executive Leadership Team and the Senior Leadership Team to provide strategic advice and ensure shared and coordinated responsibility.

As an organisation, we are committed to recognising and listening to the expertise and advice of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION GOVERNANCE

As a statutory body, State Library's governance and decision-making is well established with mandated accountabilities to the Queensland public.

State Library is governed by the Library Board of Queensland, appointed by the Queensland Government and managed by an Executive Leadership Team responsible for initiatives, services and programs. The Library Board has also established an Indigenous Advisory Group to act as its independent advisory group to support the achievement of a guiding principle in the *Libraries Act 1988* (Qld) that respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are affirmed. The objectives of the Indigenous Advisory Group are to provide:

- advice to the Library Board on policy, projects and strategic matters concerning library and information service provision for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- a forum for discussing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues impacting on library and information services in Queensland
- a formal mechanism for ongoing liaison between the Library Board and Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

State Library will seek to leverage our existing governance mechanisms to embed culturally informed decision-making and effective implementation and integration of our *First Nations Strategy* commitments across State Library's business and operations.



DESIGN PRINCIPLES

A set of design principles underpins the *First Nations Strategy*. These design principles have been tested and confirmed with the Executive Leadership Team, Senior Leadership Team, First Nations leaders, and approved by the Library Board. The *First Nations Strategy* aligns to these approved principles and details the activities to deliver and is embedded in the operations of State Library.



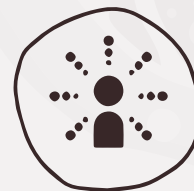
GOVERNANCE

State Library will leverage existing governance arrangements through the Indigenous Advisory Group to embed culturally informed decision making and effective monitoring and evaluation of First Nations commitments.



HUMAN RIGHTS

First Nations peoples' human rights, particularly cultural rights, are at the centre of State Library's commitments to First Nations' peoples.



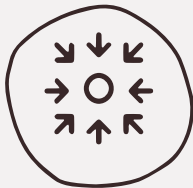
LEADERSHIP

The Senior Leadership Team, with the Director, First Nations Strategy, leads the implementation of First Nations commitments.



ENGAGEMENT

State Library will tailor our ways of working and communicating to meet the needs of First Nations individuals, communities, staff and partners.



CULTURAL CAPABILITY

The Executive Leadership Team supports the development of culturally capable staff, and commitment to a culturally safe workplace.



SERVICE DELIVERY

First Nations senior staff provide expert advice and support to branches for the design and delivery of culturally appropriate services.



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND DELIVERABLES

State Library will focus on 8 strategic objectives over the life of our *First Nations Strategy*.

1. TREATY READINESS AND TRUTH-TELLING

About a third of Australians do not know or accept some fundamental aspect of our shared history. The lack of a shared understanding of our history is a source of ongoing trauma for many First Nations people. Truth-telling is an opportunity for First Nations peoples, governments and organisations to record evidence about past actions and for First Nations people to share culture, heritage and history with the broader community.

We will play a critical role in facilitating the truth-telling conversation for Path to Treaty. As a memory institution and a custodian of Queensland's documentary heritage we will work closely with the First Nations Treaty Institute (Institute) and the Institute Council, to ensure Queenslanders have access to materials on the complex history of this State. State Library will play an important role in supporting the truth-telling agenda and will work closely with the Truth Telling and Healing Inquiry (Inquiry) as we commit to incorporating healing approaches as an integral part of truth-telling.

2. INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE CENTRES

We have an enduring relationship with Indigenous Councils to deliver place based, community led library services through a network of Indigenous Knowledge Centres. State Library will partner with councils to ensure Indigenous Knowledge Centres reach their true potential. We will enhance our support to Indigenous Knowledge Centres to elevate their role in First Nations communities and in relation to cultural knowledges and participation, truth-telling, language maintenance and generation, and social and economic participation.

3. KURIL DHAGUN

State Library will reimagine kuril dhagun and examine the role, space, and operations of kuril dhagun to ensure it honours and welcomes Queensland's First Nations people and communities. We will also pursue opportunities to ensure it is a space of authentic learning, where visitors can experience the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and stories.



4. FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

There are many different Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nations and groups living throughout Queensland in the areas in which we operate. Therefore, we will adapt our ways of working and communicating to meet the diverse needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and communities.

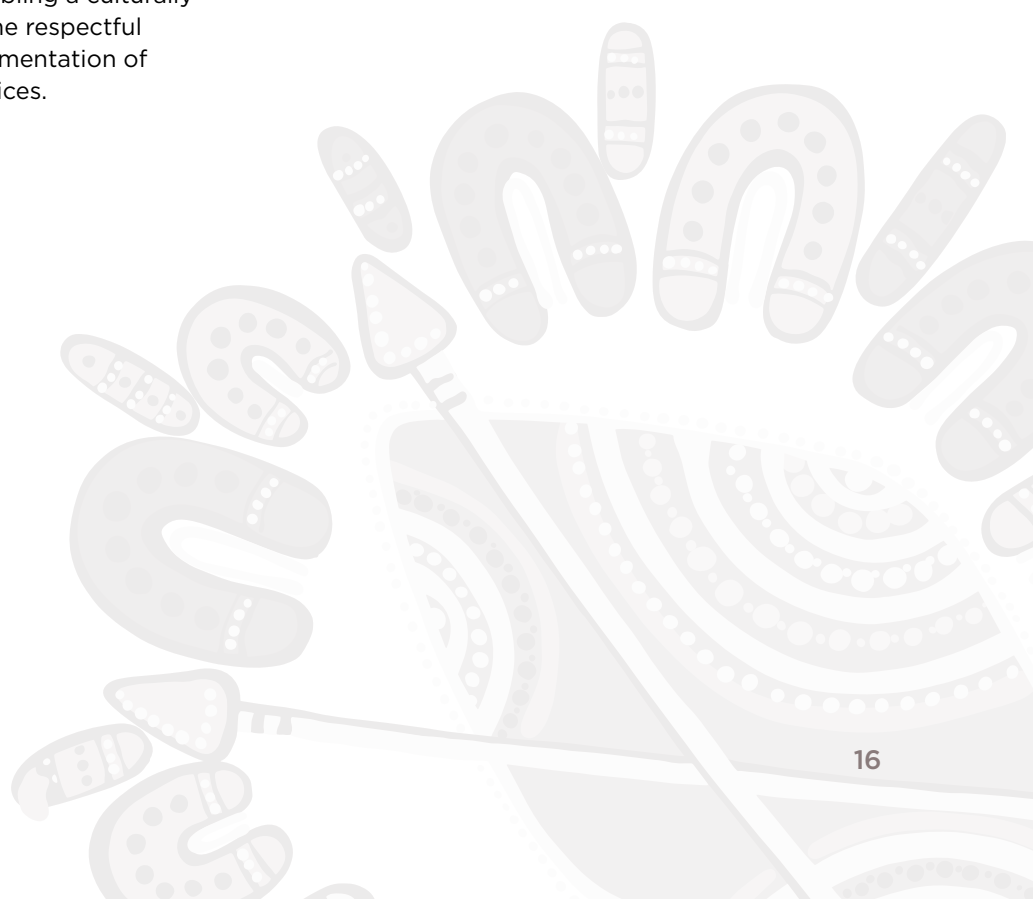
5. FIRST NATIONS RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

We are committed to improving our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employee recruitment, retention, and cultural safety. We will achieve this by advancing, creating and enabling a culturally safe environment through the respectful review, reflection, and implementation of improved policies and practices.

6. COLLECTIONS (INCLUDING DATA SOVEREIGNTY)

State Library is committed to intentional collecting for the Memory, Information and Public Library collections. First Nations histories and contemporary stories are respected and made accessible with a priority to collect content created by First Nations peoples.

Our role as custodians of Queensland memory, particularly through truth-telling processes, will include making accessible our diverse collections, incorporating inclusive descriptive language and ensuring sensitivity information and access reflects First Nations sovereignty. We are committed to connecting First Nations communities with collections.



7. EVENTS, PARTNERSHIPS AND PUBLIC PROGRAMMING

We are committed to the integrity and authenticity of First Nations cultures by honouring First Nations truth, stories, and knowledge in our programs, exhibitions, and public spaces. Programming at State Library foundationally embraces and celebrates the diversity, cultures and knowledges of First Nations peoples. First Nations cultures and perspectives that respect, empower and connect communities is a key pillar underpinning events, partnerships and public programming.

8. ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

We will grow social and economic opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.



For more information and the *First Nations Strategy Action Plan*, visit our website slq.qld.gov.au





MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring, evaluation and reporting on performance is of critical importance, and provides the rigour and accountability to the commitment of the State Library to reframe its relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations, and operationalise the Path to Treaty process through truth-telling.

The Director, First Nations Strategy will be responsible for coordinating State Library's implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the *First Nations Strategy* by working closely with the Executive Leadership Team, which has ultimate responsibility for implementing the strategy and the full suite of deliverables. Reporting will be aligned to the strategies and actions outlined in this document and must account for their effectiveness - not only in meeting the commitments made by State Library but also the whole-of-government First Nations reforms, including truth-telling and treaty readiness.

A detailed monitoring and evaluation framework will be developed so that the State Library Executive Leadership Team can report to the Indigenous Advisory Group and the Library Board on implementation. The monitoring and evaluation framework will also ensure that the Executive Leadership Team, Indigenous Advisory Group, and the Library Board can properly assess the implementation of the *First Nations Strategy* and drive continuous improvement in the development and delivery of State Library programs and services.

The monitoring and evaluation framework will provide assurance to our First Nations partners and communities that State Library is delivering a positive impact. The *First Nations Strategy* includes an *Action Plan* which has been developed as a vehicle to generate and coordinate an organisation-wide approach which centres First Nations peoples.





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IMAGE CREDITS

PAGE 6: MAIWAR Yunggulba by Megan Cope. **PAGE 9:** Kurilpa Country by Lilla Watson. **PAGE 12:** Night by the fire. Photo by Lewis James Media. **PAGE 15-16:** Black Opium by Fiona Foley. Photo by Carl Warner. **PAGE 18:** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Memorial by Liam Hardy with John Smith Gumbula. Photo by PixelFrame. **PAGE 19-20:** State Library of Queensland's journey by Chern'ee Sutton.

