

STATE LIBRARY QUEENSLAND

MEDIA RELEASE

Love letters, a lighthouse and lost histories: Fellowship recipients revealed

The recipients of 6 fellowships, worth \$105,000, and 2 John Oxley Library Medals have been announced by State Library of Queensland today.

Janeth Dean OAM, the recipient of the prestigious John Oxley Library Medal, has been recognised for her important lifetime contribution to Queensland history by documenting and preserving the stories of Muslim communities in Brisbane and beyond.

Lucy Deemal was awarded the \$25,000 John Oxley Library Fellowship for her project *Two Stories, One Place: Aboriginal and Settler Memory in North Queensland*. The community leader from Cooktown will recontextualise and reimagine colonial photographs and documents found within library collections - including diaries, letters and newspapers - through First Nations voices and perspectives.

The role of migrants (from Bundaberg, Tully and Bowen) in shaping Queensland's farming industries at the Ekka will be explored by Royal Queensland Show (Ekka) Fellowship researchers Dr Kaya Berry and Emily House.

A new podcast from Rainbow Research Fellowship recipient Monika O'Hanlon will bring Queensland's queer history to life through the examination of items such as costumes, photos and love letters found in John Oxley Library collections.

The Pine Islet Preservation Society, recipient of the John Oxley Library Community History Medal, will illuminate the social history of the last operational kerosene-fuelled lighthouse in Australia.

The annual State Library of Queensland Medals (previously the Queensland Memory Awards) recognise contributions to the documentation, preservation and celebration of Queensland's memory, past and present.

The State Library of Queensland Fellowships and Medals are made possible by the support of donors through the Queensland Library Foundation.

2026 State Library of Queensland Fellowships and Medals

- **John Oxley Library Fellowship (\$25,000 supported by the Queensland Library Foundation's President's Circle patrons, plus a 12-month residency):** Lucy Deemal for her project 'Two Stories, One Place: Aboriginal and Settler Memory in North Queensland'
- **John Oxley Library Honorary Fellowship (12-month residency):** Rachel Gallagher, for her project 'Mapping Displacement: Freeways, Protest, and the Remaking of Brisbane'.
- **John Oxley Library Medal:** Janeth Dean OAM. Recognised for her important lifetime contribution to Queensland history by documenting and preserving the stories of Muslim communities in Brisbane and beyond.
- **John Oxley Library Community History Medal (\$5,000 supported by the Queensland Library Foundation):** Pine Islet Lighthouse Preservation Society. Recognised for their extraordinary success in preserving the Pine Islet Lighthouse and its social history – one of Queensland's most unique maritime landmarks and the only functioning kerosene-powered lighthouse in Australia.
- **Monica Clare Research Fellowship (\$20,000 funded by the Siganto Foundation, plus a 12-month residency):** Dr Rose Barrowcliffe, for her project 'The Protectors' which will uncover Aboriginal placenames hidden in 1920s Queensland Protectorate records, challenging historical inaccuracies through archival research and descendant interviews.
- **Queensland Business Leaders Hall of Fame Fellowship (\$15,000 funded by the John Allpass Charitable Foundation plus a 12-month residency):** Robert Allen, for his project 'T.C Beirne and the House of the People: Exploring the many lives of businessman, philanthropist and politician Thomas Charles Beirne'.
- **Rainbow Research Fellowship (\$20,000 supported by the Queensland Library Foundation plus a 12-month residency):** Monika O'Hanlon, for her project 'Out of the Archives', a mixed-media documentary podcast series that brings Queensland's queer history to life - one archive item at a time. Each episode begins with a single artefact from the John Oxley Library's collection – a photograph, protest flyer, costume, or love letter – and unpacks the story behind it.
- **Royal Queensland Show (Ekka) Fellowship (\$20,000 supported by the Royal National Agricultural and Industrial Association of Queensland plus a 12-month residency):** Dr Kaya Barry and Emily House, for 'From the regions to the city: stories of sending produce and people to the Ekka'.

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

"Congratulations to the recipients of the 2026 State Library Fellowships and Medals, whose work will bring new insights to Queensland's social and cultural histories.

“The Crisafulli Government invests in State Library to enable Queensland communities to access our shared knowledge, stories and collections and to strengthen the careers of Queensland creatives including writers and researchers.

“The library’s fellowship program delivers on the priorities of our 10-year strategy for arts and culture, Queensland’s Time to Shine by sharing our stories and celebrating our storytellers with local, national and international audiences.”

Quotes from State Librarian and CEO Vicki McDonald AM:

“These important State Library Fellowships support researchers and creatives to interpret our vast heritage collections and treasures.

“Through their work they will bring to light new Queensland stories to share with the world.

“The diversity of projects will provide new insights into our history and expand and enrich our understanding of Queensland and its people.”

Media kit: <https://spaces.hightail.com/space/FMhCPYoqp0>

Website: slq.qld.gov.au/get-involved/awards-and-fellowships/queensland-memory-awards

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Interviews available on request.