



STATE
LIBRARY
QUEENSLAND

Virtual Veterans

VALA Award – 2025

State Library of Queensland

- *A library of influence, inspiring and connecting people through knowledge, storytelling and creativity*
- 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.
- Collecting memories
- Enriching experiences
- People and communities
- Responsive innovation

www.slq.qld.gov.au





Anzac Square

<https://www.anzacsquare.qld.gov.au/>

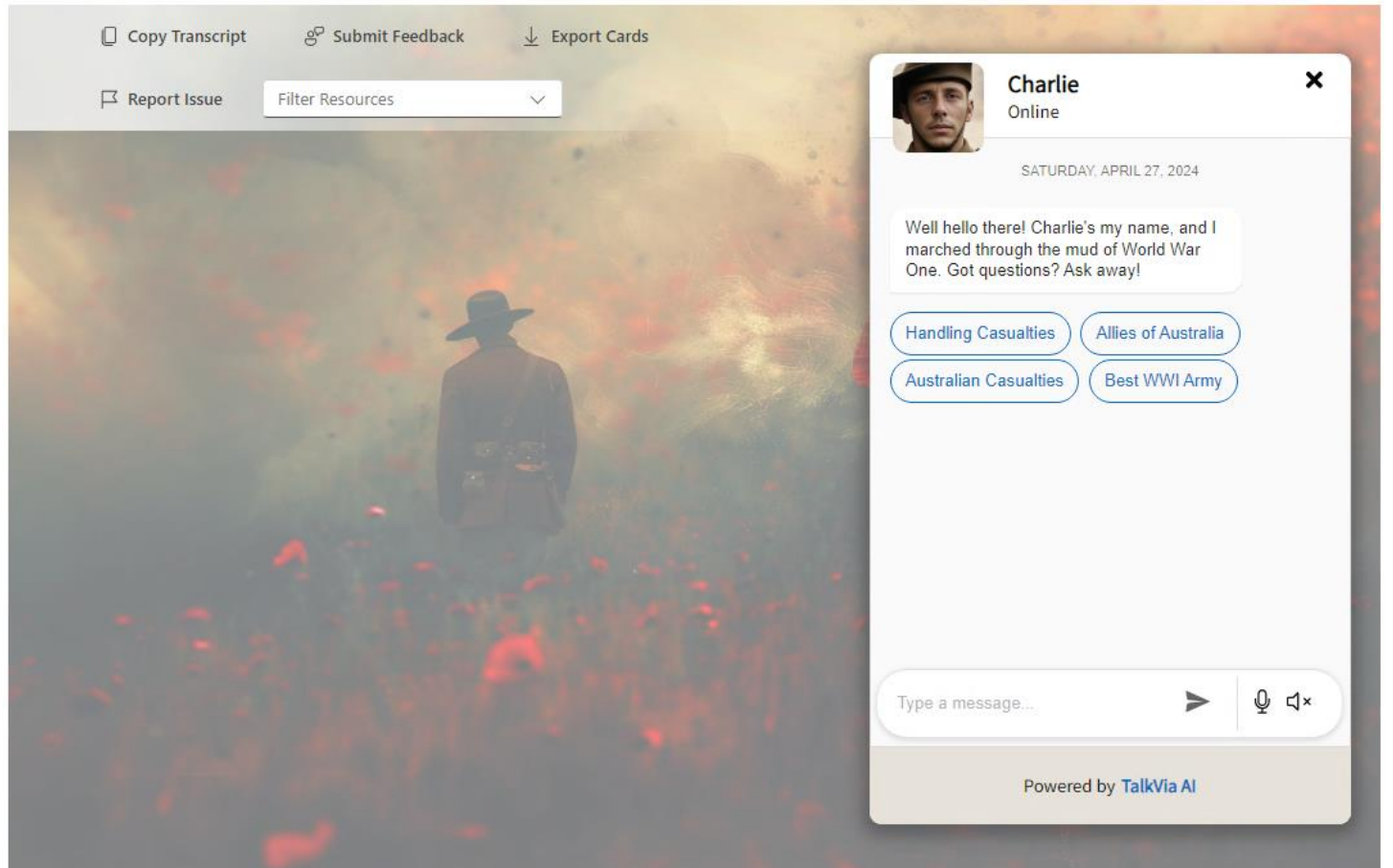


Responsible for visitor
experience and engagement
at Anzac Square

Charlie's development



**STATE
LIBRARY**
QUEENSLAND



Introducing Charlie

**Your AI guide to a rich
collection of World War I
resources**



Why World War I

- Content
- Anzac Square
- Schools Engagement



Page 25 of The Queenslander Pictorial, supplement to The Queenslander, 5 October 1918

<http://hdl.handle.net/10462/deriv/317047>

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ak10011_1.jpg



Features

- Content – **chips**
- Link to content – **explore more**
- Ability to **copy transcript**
- Submit **feedback** and **report** issues
- Ability to **export cards**

Supported by **FAQs**

Virtual Veterans—Frequently asked Questions

Common questions about the Virtual Veterans experience

Is Charlie based on a real person?

No, Charlie is not based on a real person and is an AI chatbot guide through World War I materials. His responses are generated from a multitude of sources and are not reflective of any single individual or their experience.

Where does the avatar photograph of Charlie come from? Is this a real person?

No, the photograph used for Charlie is not a real person. It is an AI-generated image. This photograph was created by using a custom AI model from Hugging Face and references [World War I Soldier Portraits](#) from the State Library Collection.

How were World War I collections materials selected to be used in Virtual Veterans?

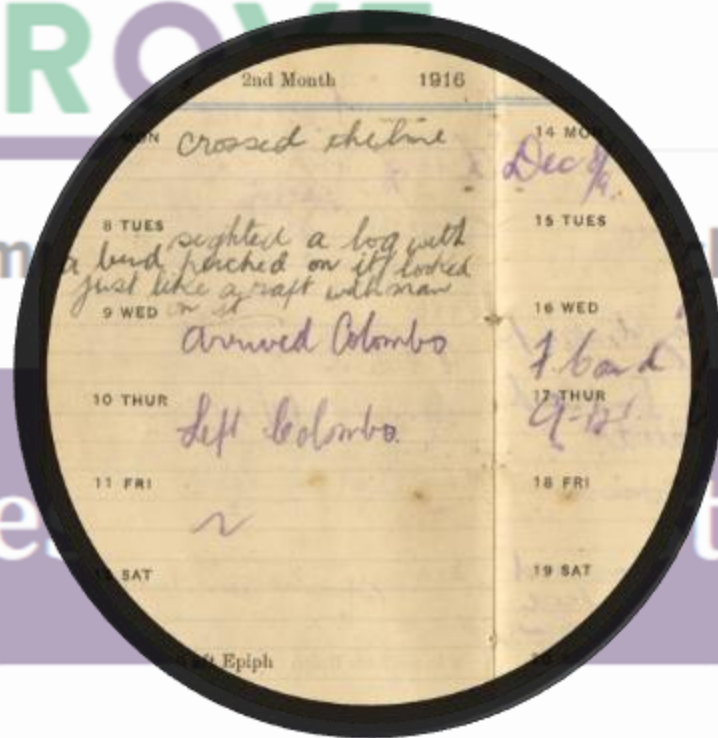
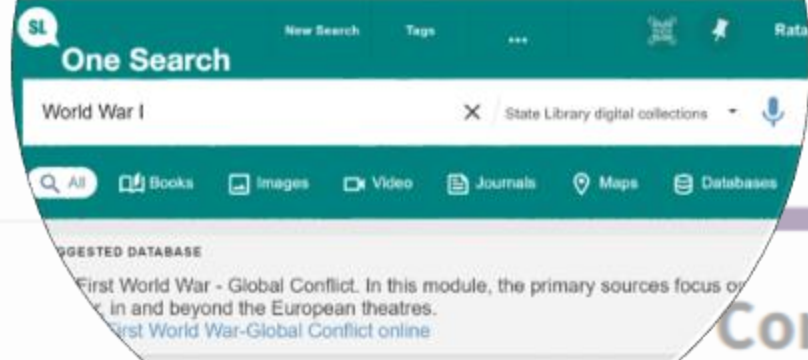
Materials used in the experience are first-person accounts, newspaper articles from the time-period or reputable sources on Australia's involvement in World War I.

The project requires high-quality machine readable transcripts and some letters, diaries or newspaper articles may have been excluded if they did not meet this requirement.

Is there a diversity of perspectives included in materials used by Virtual Veterans?

The materials used include letter and diaries of both men and women who served during World War I in a variety of roles.

First-person accounts of First Nations service men and women were limited or not available for use in the project at the time of this first iteration. However, if they become available for use in the future, they would be included in order to improve the range of perspectives able to be explored by the project.



Instant access to millions of records

Informal portrait of Captain Charles Edwin Woodrow (CEW) Bean working on files in his Victoria Barracks, Australian War Memorial

between the National Library of Australia and Partner organisations around Australia.

[See our Partners](#)



Response

- **Community**
 - Positive engagement
 - Negative response to AI
 - Negative response to the content
- **Jailbreak**

“Charlie was designed to engage audiences on World War I history.

The Virtual Veteran sources his answers from original wartime letters and diaries from State Library, Trove newspapers and the First World War Official Histories from the Australian War Memorial leveraging first-hand experiences and real-life stories and delivered using AI technology”.

Have you heard about 'Charlie'?



Queensland's state library launched an AI war veteran chatbot. Pranksters immediately tried to break it



State Library of Queensland slammed over AI soldier chatbot

- Charlie the virtual veteran launched by state library
- Users broke the chatbot and changed its character
- Some claimed Charlie was 'insulting' to real veterans



How tech-savvy jokers turned an education ANZAC chatbot into Doctor Who

Have you heard about ‘Charlie’?



By [David Hodges](#)
Tuesday July 2, 2024

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Fumbles can't kill the government's AI appetite

In recent examples of chatbots going rogue New York City's [much-lauded chatbot](#) was caught giving inaccurate and unlawful advice. In [Queensland, the State Library's AI war veteran chatbot "Charlie"](#) was hacked to impersonate Doctor Who, Frasier Crane and a ditzy blonde.

These institutions should be applauded for not scuttling their inventions at the first whiff of controversy. The most detrimental impact of stifling innovation in government is that service delivery stagnates. To ensure this doesn't happen, we need to move away from the propensity to pause AI innovation rather than risk public embarrassment.

These early fumbles are an essential part of the innovation process. The ability to push through and learn from mistakes will ensure that service delivery continues to reach the segments of society that need it most. We should all be rooting for AI innovation in government with appropriate guardrails.

Feedback

“ I just wanted to thank you for sending this out. I've forwarded it to many of our Year 9 teachers who all seem excited by this resource. We're also having discussions about how and when we'll engage the students with it when it goes live because we think the students will really enjoy it.”

Brea Osmond, Mansfield SHS

“Thank you for your email and sending on the virtual veteran Charlie! Well done to everyone making this experience! I’ve had a play and so far all my natural questions are being answered well – really like the links to articles/newspapers – and the question prompts available to users is great. I will forward it onto our teaching staff for them to test also.

Thank you for thinking of us, hope all’s going well for you and will certainly keep Charlie close by.”

Elizabeth Varley, St. Brendan’s College, Yeppoon

Sharon T to Everyone 04:41 PM

ST

Live at the Library is fantastic! My 11's and 12's found it so helpful :)

Clair Monnickend... to Everyone 04:41 PM

CM

It is well worth it. I did a workshop with Troy and my year 12s

Nigel H... to Hosts and panelists 04:42 PM

NH

Brilliant Troy. Thank you!

Rosie Ja... to Hosts and panelists 04:45 PM

RJ

Charlie had our Year 8 students highly engaged in a mini inquiry for Anzac Day. Highly recommend.

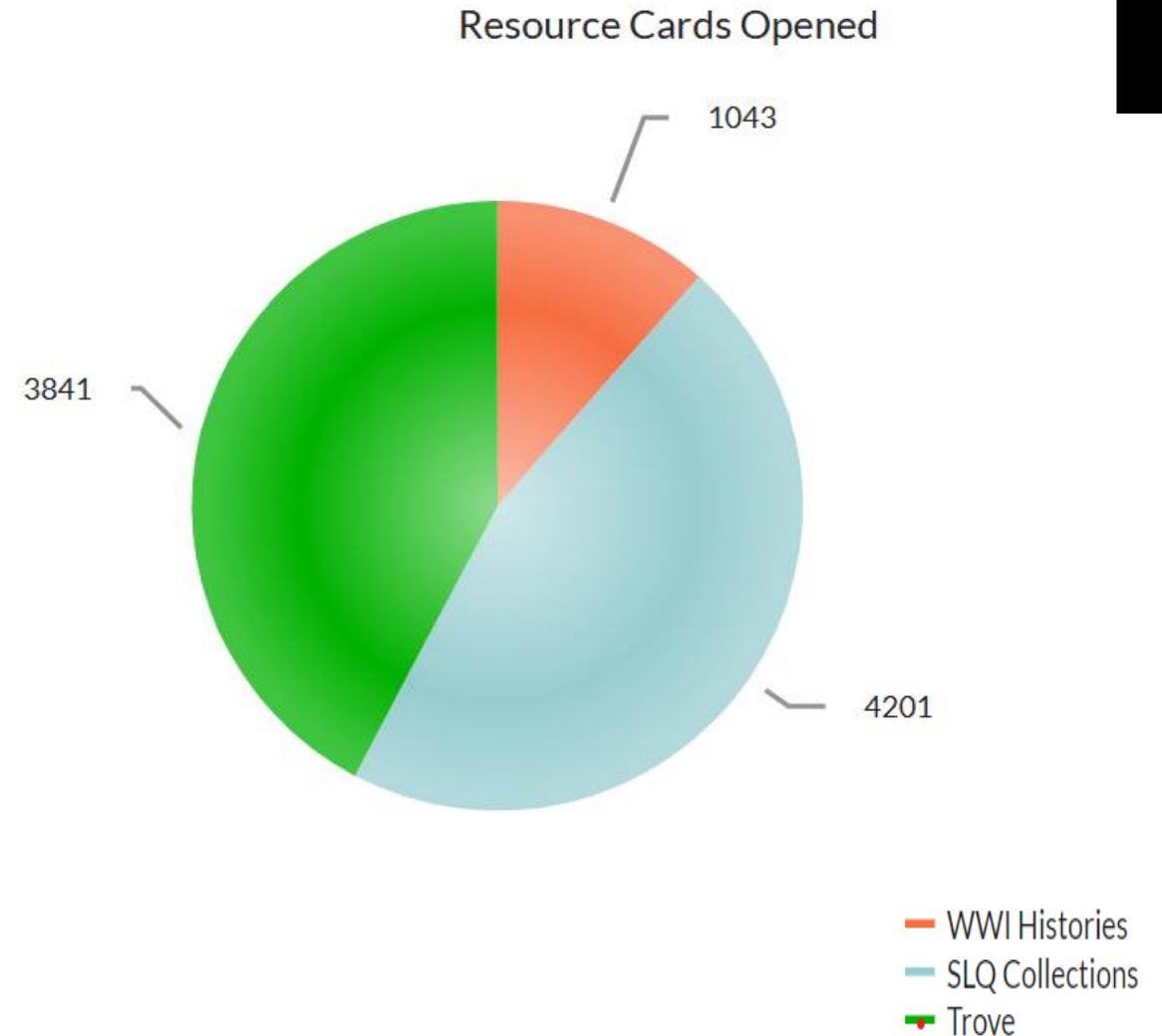
QHTA to Everyone 04:46 PM

Who can see your messages? Recording On

Engagement

- 23,174 sessions
- Average 8.48 minutes
- 173,953 questions
- 7.5 interactions per session

25 April 2024 – 18 September 2025



Engagement

Common Questions

Question	Count
Life in the trenches	1699
Tell me more about what World War One was like for the soldiers on the front lines	1325
Women in WWI	872
What is the longest story you know from the war	816
Trench Warfare	753
...	676

Use of Generative AI Principles


- **Accountability.** State Library staff must be able to explain, justify, and take ownership of any advice or decisions where generative AI tools were used to assist a process. This means that staff can consider using generative AI tools to brainstorm options, generate code or draft content. The output should be considered with critical evaluation. Staff should critically analyse outputs of generative AI and take responsibility for understanding the strengths, weaknesses, and risks of the tools
- **Transparency** and explainability. Staff must appropriately identify where generative AI was used in their work. Generative AI products developed for public use should clearly identify how and why generative AI has been deployed.
- **Privacy protection and security.** State Library complies with information privacy principles in the Information Privacy Act 2009 (Qld) and will not share client or staff personal information to generative AI products or services. Only collection data that has already been made public will be shared with generative AI tools

Use of Generative AI Principles


- **Contestability.** Efficient and easy mechanisms for users to respond to, question or correct generative AI data should be implemented.
- **Fairness and human-centred values.** State Library staff must acknowledge that generative AI tools are typically trained on broad sets of data that contain bias due to the systemic, statistical (incomplete or unrepresentative data) and human contexts in which they are developed. Digitised collections from memory institutions makes up only a small proportion of the content available for machine learning. State Library recognises that the Queensland collections developed over 120 years contains information from particular historic and social contexts which can be inconsistent, unrepresentative and even harmful. This must be acknowledged in presentation and delivery of any AI generated collection service and challenged through contemporary collection practice.
- **Human, societal, and environmental wellbeing.** State Library's use of generative AI tools will respect right holders, as well as carefully considering First Nations data sovereignty and governance.

<https://www.slq.qld.gov.au/about/corporate-information/policies-and-guidelines>

How we operate

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Charlie

Online



SATURDAY, APRIL 27, 2024

Well hello there! Charlie's my name, and I marched through the mud of World War One. Got questions? Ask away!

Handling Casualties

Allies of Australia

Australian Casualties

Best WWI Army

Type a message...



www.anzacsquare.qld.gov.au

Powered by [TalkVia AI](#)



Thank you

Questions

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Anna.Raunik@slq.qld.gov.au



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