

Millennium Liborary Project

Part 3





All images from *Illumination*, opening of the new State Library, 24 November 2006

Millennium Library Project

Celebrated opening

The redeveloped State Library of Queensland, the neighbouring Gallery of Modern Art (GoMA), new entrances at the Queensland Art Gallery and Queensland Museum and integrated outdoor spaces are the world-class results of the Queensland Government's \$291.3 million Millennium Arts Project at the Cultural Centre.

The State Library reopened on 24 November 2006 with the event *Illumination*, a spectacular evening celebration held in the Knowledge Walk to unveil the new building and mark the official recommencement of library services on 25 November 2006. The event title, *Illumination*, quite aptly has many meanings and connotations attached to it – mystical, religious, intellectual and scientific. All of these, ultimately, offer a path to knowledge. Ideas of illumination were embodied through both a conceptual platform and a physical device, using lighting to unveil the new State Library – its building and philosophies.

On 2 December 2006, large crowds attended People's Day, a public gathering to celebrate the completion of the Millennium Arts Project at the Cultural Centre, which involved six years of planning, design and construction.

Remarkable building

The State Library building, redesigned by architects Donovan Hill and Peddle Thorp, is the winner of the 2007 Royal Australian Institute of Architects Brisbane Building of the Year Award.

The new building achieves a dramatic result in reorganising and re-presenting the State Library. The original structure of the Robin Gibson designed building has been opened up and doubled in size. New and diverse settings have been created for users to engage with the State Library and its collections.

As a flowing sequence of spaces, the building is unique and confounds simple description at every turn. Some of the remarkable features include:

- River Decks which extend the Infozone outdoors under the shade of the historic poinciana tree;
- the Talking Circle, which is the outdoor realm of kuril dhagun Indigenous Knowledge Centre;
- the Poinciana Lounge, which offers a panoramic outlook of the Brisbane River across the foliage of the poinciana tree;
- the Red Box, which is ostensibly a connective internal stair between levels 2 and 3, but also offers a sublime space with terraced seating perched above the river edge for quiet contemplation or small gatherings; and
- the Queensland Terrace, decoratively finished with a mirrored ceiling, marble flooring and walls lined with tea cup cabinets, which provides a magnificent setting for public events and collection development activities focused on Queensland stories.

Perhaps the most amazing space is the Knowledge Walk. This open central circulation route passes through the building, both enveloping and exposing visitors to the internal workings of the State Library, while providing an orientation point to the river and city. The Knowledge Walk is a visual platform which unites visitors with the different levels and destinations within the new State Library.



Indoors at ground level are casual spaces, including Infozone; The Corner – a special space for children; The Studio – a flexible space suitable for a range of cultural activities; kuril dhagun Indigenous Knowledge Centre; and production, training and meeting rooms.

Adjacent to the front entry, The Library Shop and Tognini's café share the ground level commercial space. These have buzzed with activity since day one. The Library Shop, retailing a specialised range of publications and merchandise, is operated by the State Library while the café is operated by lessees Mark and Narelle Tognini and their staff.

Fronting the river on the second and third levels, the State Reference Library holds the bulk of the State Library's book collection. Level 3 contains the Tim Fairfax Newspaper Reading Room, as well as the Micrographics area, a popular destination for family history research and access to the State's newspaper collection on microfilm.

On the western side of the Knowledge Walk on levels 2 and 3 are new facilities for public programs, including a double-storey, 350m² international-standard exhibition gallery and a 260-seat auditorium that extends onto the Queensland Terrace.

The riverside of level 4 houses the Heritage Collections Suite, including the John Oxley Library and specialist rooms to facilitate access, display, and provide interpretation and appreciation of the State Library's Heritage Collections. The Queensland Library Foundation's *Imagine* campaign secured funds to enhance many areas within the redevelopment, including the Fox Family White Gloves Room, the Australian Library of Art, the Philip Bacon Heritage Gallery, the Bank of Queensland Heritage Collections Learning Room, the Margaret and Cathryn Mittelheuser Reading Lounge and the Talbot Family Treasures Wall – a 25 linear metre display wall that showcases rotating selections of items from the Heritage Collections.

Not all parts of the library are publicly accessible. The large repositories on the fourth and fifth levels are filled with compactus units. These repositories provide controlled environmental conditions and security for the storage of the State Library collections which include many rare and delicate items.

Level 5 incorporates staff areas, executive offices and the Library Boardroom. While the Collection Preservation area is not open to the public, the activities of the staff are visibly accessible through a display glazed wall along level 5 of the Knowledge Walk.

Relocations accomplished

During the South Bank construction and fit-out, the State Library's 32 kilometres of collection material, 314 staff and equipment were spread across eight sites. Planning for the relocation of collections, staff and equipment was a major task. A suite of interdependent plans was successfully managed by different work units. This planning ensured that the relocation process was executed smoothly and on schedule. An effective library workforce was maintained across all sites during the process ensuring there was minimal disruption to public services and all collections were protected and secure.

The relocation process was carried out prior to the cessation of the lease at West End after 12 years of occupation at the site and coincided with the renegotiation of a ten year lease at the Cannon Hill premises. A major building alteration project at the Cannon Hill premises was undertaken to accommodate Public Library Services, Qld.Comm Books, the Microfilm Unit and the majority of the State Library's newspaper collections.