

20 October 2017

***Jabu Birriny (land and sea)* showcases the artistry of a unique Queensland community**

State Library of Queensland (SLQ) will share the contemporary stories of Far North Queensland's Yarrabah community with an insightful showcase opening on Sunday 22 October 2017.

Jabu Birriny (land and sea) is the culmination of a collaboration between SLQ and the artists of Yarrabah, who are widely regarded for their distinct weaving, ceramics, textiles and prints embodying their connection to Country.

Located on the shore of Cape Grafton, Yarrabah is a dynamic Aboriginal community surrounded by tropical native bushland and mountain ranges united by sandy coastlines and coral reefs.

On show at SLQ will be works from 2017 NAIDOC Artist of the Year Elverina Johnson, as well as Yarrabah Art Centre members Philomena Yeatman, Edna Ambrym, Valmai Pollard, Ruben Ambrym and Michelle Yeatman.

State Librarian and CEO Vicki McDonald said that the project has allowed SLQ's kuril dhagun team to foster a close connection with the people of Yarrabah, supported by Yarrabah Arts and Cultural Precinct and the local Indigenous Knowledge Centre.

"We uncovered more than 100 collection items here at State Library, reflecting the daily life and landscape of Yarrabah; we also had the privilege of sharing these photographs during visits to the community," Ms McDonald said.

"Enabling this increased access for community members also provided State Library with the opportunity to update information within the collection. It was wonderful to identify Yarrabah residents in our photographs, including one treasured image featuring the mothers of some of the *Jabu Birriny (land and sea)* artists."

As well as the vibrant prints, intricately woven vessels and textured ceramics on display, the showcase includes images from SLQ's collection and a series of digital interviews featuring the participating artists, which will also be available online.

Ms McDonald said it was paramount for SLQ that the collaborative curatorial approach to building *Jabu Birriny* allowed space and time for the artists to tell their stories in their own words.

"The video portraits provide a very personal perspective into each artist's creative practice and approach to incorporating their histories and home of Yarrabah into their art works."

Elverina Johnson is looking forward to visiting Brisbane with her fellow artist Aunty Philomena Yeatman for the opening of *Jabu Birriny*.

Together they will offer insights into their artistry through a guided tour of the showcase and hands-on workshops exploring the techniques behind Yarrabah's celebrated weaving and basket making practices.

"Yarrabah is blessed by the natural abundance and beauty of our land and sea environment. As artists, we honour the traditions and stories of our culture and ancestors, and it is very special for us to share this with visitors to kuril dhagun," Ms Johnson said.

“*Jabu Birriny (land and sea)* is just one way in which State Library is working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, community groups and individuals in Queensland to ensure their stories are collected, preserved and shared,” Ms McDonald said.

The showcase will open in kuril dhagun at SLQ from Sunday 22 October. For more information, visit jabubirriny.slq.qld.gov.au.

Jabu Birriny (land and sea) has been co-curated with Yarrabah Arts and Cultural Precinct, a branch of the Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council.

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Interviews and images are available upon request.

Jabu Birriny (land and sea)

22 October 2017 – 4 March 2018

Open daily, 10am–5pm

kuril dhagun, level 1

State Library of Queensland, Cultural Precinct

Free entry

Yarrabah Artist Tours and Workshops

21 October 2017, 10am-1pm

kuril dhagun, level 1

State Library of Queensland, Cultural Precinct

\$30, includes artist-led tour of *Jabu Birriny*

[Book online](#)