

28 June 2018

State Library uncovers hidden histories of Queensland islands

A mother separated from her children and forced to live in a leper colony for over a decade is one of many compelling tales from State Library of Queensland's newest exhibition, *Islands*.

The exhibition, which opens on 30 June, explores the sometimes dark underbelly of Queensland islands like Peel Island, where Phyllis Ebbage was isolated from her husband and young daughters without ever receiving a clear diagnosis of leprosy.

Islands explores the hidden histories of Queensland's islands and aims to reshape our knowledge of these close but faraway places.

From Peel Island's leprosarium and St Helena Island's penal settlement to the story of Eliza Fraser and the development of tourism on Lindeman Island, *Islands* brings together some of the lesser known stories of the state's island life.

A fascinating selection of curios and rare items from State Library's collections include:

- Handwritten notes by one of Phyllis Ebbage's daughters
- Peculiar posters from the early days of tourism on Lindeman Island
- Beautifully intricate marine biology sketches (late 1800s) by biologist William Saville-Kent

Quotes from Minister for the Arts Leeanne Enoch:

"*Islands* shows both the sunny and dark sides of Queensland's diverse island landscape, evoking images of tropical beach lifestyle and desirable holiday destinations, as well as of isolated places of incarceration and for people who were thought to be afflicted with disease."

"This exhibition is another way the State Library of Queensland connects us to its vast collection and enhances our knowledge of Queensland's history by sharing stories, images and moments from our past."

Quotes from State Librarian and CEO Vicki McDonald:

"The experience of those who forged livelihoods on Queensland's many islands is incredibly rich and varied, and reaffirms the diversity of our state's experience."

"The exhibition is an emotive and informative experience, and highlights the often unknown stories of life on Queensland's many islands. It aims to bring a different perspective to the usual surf, sand and sun stereotype."

"State Library is a custodian of Queensland's collective memory and we are uniquely positioned to tell the story of our state through our extraordinary collection items."

Islands: hidden histories from Queensland islands

30 June 2018 — 27 January 2019

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Open daily | Free entry
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Interviews and images are available upon request.