



all yours

Researching Indigenous Languages at State Library of Queensland

This information guide is aimed at supporting individuals and communities in identifying, accessing, documenting and researching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages. It refers to language, cultural, historical and genealogical materials held within the State Library of Queensland that could be utilised as part of language and/or cultural revival processes.

State Library of Queensland

The State Library of Queensland (SLQ) is located in Brisbane and is the primary custodian of Queensland documentary heritage. The SLQ collections include historical and original items as well as published materials and audio-visual articles pertaining to Queensland history. Within their collections are a broad range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander topics including language, culture, history and genealogy.

The collections are physically housed in Brisbane at the State Library of Queensland, Southbank; however there are on-line materials, including exhibitions and other documents available for personal and academic research.

Further details: www.slq.qld.gov.au

State Library Indigenous Languages Strategy

In response to the 2005 National Indigenous Languages Survey Report (NILS), the State Library of Queensland developed an Indigenous Languages Strategy. This Strategy established a framework for SLQ's role in supporting the preservation and promotion of Queensland Indigenous Languages through the work of the community-based Language Centres and language workers.

Under the strategy, the State Library of Queensland is committed to supporting the revival, reclamation and maintenance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages in Queensland through and promoting awareness and interest in the Indigenous languages of Queensland in the broader community.

Key activities under the strategy include:

- Indigenous Languages Researcher position: undertakes research and other activities relating to languages
- kuril dhagun and Indigenous Knowledge Centres: support community language activities and increase awareness of languages
- Community-based training activities: language skills, IT, recording, archival skills, etc.
- Research Discovery Workshops: increase community access/research SLQ collections
- Documentation, including digitisation of materials from SLQ collections

This strategy is currently under review to reflect the current nature of language activities at the State Library and the partnering opportunities with community organisations.

Need further information?

(07) 3842 9857 | kdhagun@slq.qld.gov.au



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About the State Library of Queensland

There are several sections of the State Library of Queensland that are particularly relevant to community members researching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and languages.

John Oxley Library [Level 4]

Within the State Library, the John Oxley Library (JOL) plays a key role in documenting Queensland's history, development and cultural life; historical and contemporary material relating to Queensland languages can be found here.

Further details: [John Oxley Library](#)

kuril dhagun – Indigenous Knowledge Centre [Level 1]

kuril dhagun is a hub within the State Library for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and hosts a range of activities, exhibitions and resources that raise awareness of the diversity of Indigenous cultures in Queensland.

Further details: [kuril dhagun](#)

Indigenous Knowledge Centres

A network of Indigenous Knowledge Centres (IKCs) operate in partnership with Local Government and provide both traditional library services (including information and communication technologies) as well as a means and a place to capture and preserve local history and traditions, including languages. There are twenty-two IKCs across Queensland, predominantly on Cape York and the Torres Strait Islands.

Further details: [Indigenous Knowledge Centres \(IKCs\)](#)

Indigenous Library Services

The State Library of Queensland, in partnership with many other organisations, aims to provide state-wide library services to Queensland Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders. Indigenous Library Services (ILS) advocates for the participation and inclusion of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders in all library services.

Further details: <http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/atsi>

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Languages at the State Library of Queensland

The SLQ collections include a diverse/extensive range of language materials, particularly relating to Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages. Further reference materials may be found in local/regional collections, including public libraries. State Library materials pertaining to Indigenous languages fall into the following categories:

Web-based Materials:

The SLQ website has range of Indigenous language materials available on-line for community access.

- *Virtual/Digital Stories* – there are a number of virtual books available on-line in languages including Butchulla, Gamilaraay, Gunggari, Gudjal and Yugambeh. In addition, a range of digital material, including photos, stories can also be found on the SLQ website.

Virtual Books: www.slq.qld.gov.au/search/eresources/ebooks/virtual-books

e-Resources/Digital Collections: www.slq.qld.gov.au/search/eresources

- *On-line resources* – SLQ have developed a range of resource materials that can support community language revival and has produced a number of information sheets, resource guides, etc.

On-line Language Resources: www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/atsi/languages

Original Materials:

Original Materials refer to the historically rich and diverse range of material such as business records, diaries and correspondence, photographs, artworks and film, original maps and plans, artefacts and decorative art, oral histories and digital stories. Of particular interest for language research are materials collected by pastoralists, Government Officers, Missionaries and other individuals. Such materials including wordlists, vocabularies and other language knowledge dates back to the 1820's and gives an historical insight into how language was spoken and documented at the time of contact.

- **Pastoral/Station Records** – many pastoral properties had Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers and may have collected information on people on the property as well as language and culture. For example, Lammermoor Station via Hughenden was selected in 1863 by Robert Christison who documented over 500 words from the Dalleburra Aboriginal workers on the property.
- **Journals, Diaries, notebooks, etc.** – a range of individuals documented their daily lives in Queensland, including references to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, their culture and lifestyle. Language material may have been recorded in these primary sources. For example, Roth and Meston who were Chief Protectors of Aborigines in Queensland in the 1897-1920's period collated a significant amount of material on the lives, customs and beliefs of the people under their jurisdiction. The *Meston Papers* contain notebooks, press cuttings and journal entries on Aboriginal words and phrases from communities and towns across Queensland. Similarly, the *Margaret Lawrie Collection* records Torres Strait Islander genealogical, cultural and linguistic heritage gathered during the period 1964-1973.

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Languages at the State Library of Queensland (continued)

Published Materials:

Published materials include books, journals/serials, newspapers, rare books and ephemera. In terms of language materials, topics may include:

- Dictionaries on specific Queensland languages, e.g. *Dharambul, the Language of Rockhampton*, Angela Terrill (2002)
- Linguistic surveys, e.g. *Linguistic Survey of South-Eastern Queensland*, Nils Homer (1983)
- Historical texts that include linguistic material, e.g. *Tom Petrie's Reminiscences of Early Queensland*, Constance Campbell Petrie (1932)

Audio/Visual Materials:

The State Library of Queensland holds a range of historical and contemporary audio-visual materials that relate to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander languages.

- Sound Recordings, Tapes, CDs, etc. of language, including songs, stories and linguistic recordings. For example, *Gunggari Language Audio Cassettes* is a collection of five cassette recordings that were made in 1974 with several Gunggari language speakers in the Mitchell area.
- DVDs, Films, etc. on cultural topics either speaking in language or speaking about language in communities. For example, *Retold: A retelling of stories and songs from Myths and Legends of the Torres Strait* by Margaret Lawrie (2010) is a SLQ project that involved Torres Strait Islander community members retelling the stories that were collected during 1964-1973 and providing additional cultural information to complement the original stories.

Further details: www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/atsi/languages

Vimeo Channel

The State Library of Queensland has a number of Indigenous language related digital stories on Vimeo: <http://vimeo.com/40637189>

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Researching the Collections at the State Library of Queensland

The SLQ catalogue enables individuals to research the collections of Original Materials, Published Materials, Audio-Visual and Digital items relating to Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, languages and histories.

- **OneSearch:** Searches SLQ Collections for print and electronic books and journals, manuscripts, videos, images, sound recordings and items from digital collections.

Further details: <http://onesearch.slq.qld.gov.au/primo-explore/search?vid=SLQ>

- **Library Membership Card:** membership provides community members with access to the State Library of Queensland's collections and associated services.

Further details: <http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/services/membership>

- **Tags:** SLQ Collection items relating to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people are gradually being 'tagged' with AIATSIS geographical and language codes to make it easier for research. For example, a OneSearch request on 'Djirbal' will identify two items in the collections; however there may be several different spellings for languages, hence the 'tags' for these items will include the AIATSIS Language Code [y123](#) which will identify fifteen items in the collections. The AIATSIS Geographical Location Code ([Qld SE55-05](#)) will also be displayed in the subject details and provides another identifier for searches.

Community Events/Activities

The State Library of Queensland conducts a range of workshops for community members on topics such as language research, IT, recording skills, archival skills, etc. In addition, there are a number of public talks, information sessions, etc. that may relate to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander topics.

Language Research Discovery Workshops - during the year SLQ usually holds two workshops to enable community members and language workers to access materials in the collection.

Seminars, Lectures, Talks, etc. – SLQ hosts a range of activities, including topics relating to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultures; regular sessions are also held at kuril dhagun including *Yarning Time* and *A Night by the Fire*, featuring Community Elders and other speakers.

Learning Programs and Workshops – SLQ conducts training and learning activities on a range of topics/themes; language-related training activities include community language workshops; recording; use of IT; archival skills, etc. Such learning opportunities are generally held on-site while off-site activities may be negotiated with the State Library.

Further details: www.slq.qld.gov.au/whats-on

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Genealogy at the State Library of Queensland

SLQ also has a range of materials in their collections that relate to community and family histories that also contain language references. These materials can support communities in documenting their local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander history. To support community members, SLQ has developed a number of Information Guides on researching family history as well as identifying potential sources within the collections. Further details: <http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/family-history/atsi>

Of particular interest to communities are the following items:

- *Tindale Collection* - During 1938 and 1939 Norman Tindale recorded genealogies as part of the Harvard - Adelaide Universities Anthropological Expedition. Tindale created genealogies which could include up to three generations, sometimes recording language names and relevant tribal family. The State Library of Queensland holds copies of these genealogies and portrait photographs from Aboriginal communities at Yarrabah, Cherbourg, Mona Mona, Palm Island and Woorabinda. Tindale also visited two Aboriginal communities in northern New South Wales at Boggabilla and Woodenbong. Further details: <http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/family-history/atsi/tindale>
- *Margaret Lawrie Collection* - Between 1964 and 1973, Margaret Lawrie recorded many Torres Strait Islander genealogies (family trees) and other cultural information including vocabularies, music and photographs. The material relates to seventeen Torres Strait Islander communities. Further details: <http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/family-history/atsi/margaret-lawrie>

On-line Exhibitions

The SLQ website also hosts a range of **on-line exhibitions**, including materials from the collection which have been digitised and made available online. Topics/themes for on-line exhibitions include:

- Bipotaim: Stories from the Torres Strait
- Broken Links: The Stolen Generations in Queensland
- Retold: A retelling of stories and songs from *Myths and Legends of the Torres Strait*.
- Queensland Stories – Responses to the 2008 Apology

Further Details

For further information on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages at the State Library of Queensland, please visit:

kuril dhagun, State Library of Queensland

Stanley Place, South Brisbane Qld. 4101.

PO Box 3488, South Brisbane Qld. 4101.

Telephone: (07) 3842 9836 Fax: (07) 3842 9893

State Library Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages Webpages:

www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/atsi/languages

State Library Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages Blog:

<http://blogs.slq.qld.gov.au/ilq/>

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