



STATE LIBRARY OF QUEENSLAND

Content Strategy

Introduction

Founded in 1896, State Library of Queensland's collections have been intrinsic in the organisation performing its role as the leading reference and research library in Queensland.

A trusted collector of content, State Library is responsible for collecting and preserving a comprehensive collection of Queensland's cultural and documentary heritage, providing free access to information for all Queenslanders through state-wide library services and partnering with over 320 public libraries and Indigenous Knowledge Centres (IKCs). We are one of many institutions responsible for the stewardship and care of Queensland's documentary heritage and utilise our established experience and expertise to lead in this space. The collections that State Library acquires, manages and makes accessible allow us to meet the object of the *Libraries Act 1988*, "to contribute to the cultural, social and intellectual development of all Queenslanders."

This Content Strategy articulates how State Library's collections support the organisation's vision: *Inspiring possibilities through knowledge, stories and creativity*. Providing a high-level framework for the holistic management of collections at State Library, this strategy provides a common approach to all of State Library's collections. It highlights the purpose of each area of collecting and frames the collecting approach to ensure that State Library's content meets the needs of its users now and into the future.

Vicki McDonald

State Librarian and Chief Executive Officer



Intentional Collecting

State Library's collections serve multiple purposes: a trusted record of Queensland's history, an enabler of new enterprise and an inspiring insight into the world of print. To meet these diverse needs, State Library must be able to justify why it collects particular material. By identifying what content is important, and why it is important, State Library can resource and effectively prioritise collection activities.

The content managed by State Library falls into four broad categories: Memory Collections, Information Collections, Public Library Collections and Extraordinary Collections.

Selection Criteria

State Library's collections are assessed according to three broad criteria: content, usage and viability. This common approach to appraisal allows a deliberate and consistent collection decisions to be made.

These criteria inform a range of collection tasks including selection, description, preservation, storage, digitisation, access, engagement and deselection. To gauge the level of value in undertaking any activity, these three criteria must be considered collectively and in conjunction with the collection's intended purpose.

Each collection will require different factors to be taken into consideration. For example, Memory Collections, which provide a documentary record of Queensland and are preserved long-term, have a strong focus on content, particularly with historical and cultural significance. An Information Collection, for example a subscription to a database, however, may need to demonstrate high levels of usage to be considered.

Content

An appraisal of content looks at beneficial or important qualities of an item or collection. The following factors may contribute:

- Level of historical significance
- Level of cultural significance
- Provenance
- Uniqueness — availability of content available through other institutions
- Representation — ability to provide new information above what is currently in the collection
- Quality of information
- Currency of information
- Documentary value
- Research value
- Aesthetic appeal
- Recreational value

Engagement

State Library is committed to engaging users through its collections. Tailored approaches to engage users will apply to each collection category and be driven by the desired outcomes. This will acknowledge the intended channels of engagement and includes a range of activities from social media activation, collection talks, reference services, professional development, exhibitions and online delivery. This engagement is only possible when collections are discoverable and accessible to users.

Usage

Usage is a key consideration for making decisions around State Library's collections. The following factors contribute to determining the extent of an item's benefit to users:

- Level of current usage
- Level of anticipated usage
- Interpretive potential for engagement (physical and online)
- Ability to meet needs of target audiences
- Alignment with broader agendas or strategies
- Potential for re-use and creation of new knowledge

Viability

In making any collection decision, consideration must be given to the following issues that may influence State Library's ability to make that item accessible. They may include:

- Physical condition
- Copyright status
- Access restrictions that limit access, usage and engagement opportunities
- Level of description required
- Level of arrangement and ordering required
- Preservation requirements (physical and digital)
- Storage requirements (physical and digital)
- Cost of acquisition and maintenance



Legislative and policy framework

- *Libraries Act 1988*
- State Library of Queensland Strategic Plan 2019–2023
- Content Guidelines
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Collections Commitments

Eight guiding principles relating to State Library's function are within the *Libraries Act 1988*. The following outlines State Library's commitment and approaches to each, in the context of the Content Strategy.

1. Leadership and excellence should be demonstrated in providing library and informational services;

We will demonstrate excellence in our collection-related activities through a rigorous process of evidence-based decision making to meet users' needs, both now and in the future.

We will play an important leadership role in collaborating and coordinating collection-related activities across institutional and government boundaries to ensure Queenslanders have access to the content they require.

2. There should be responsiveness to the needs of communities in regional and outer metropolitan areas;

We are committed to providing the widest possible access to our content.

We will ensure our collecting reflects the breadth of the state.

We will work in partnership with Rural Libraries Queensland and Indigenous Knowledge Centres to support their communities' content needs.

We will work with all Queensland public libraries to ensure efficient and effective access to a range of online and specialist resources.

3. Respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures should be affirmed;

We will actively collect material created by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to ensure the collection reflects the diversity and uniqueness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experiences.

We will recognise the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to their own cultural heritage.

We will gain a clearer understanding of the breadth and representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experiences to inform strategic and targeted collection building.

We will work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to identify, contextualise and prioritise material to collect.

4. Children and young people should be supported in their understanding and use of library and informational services;

We will provide a range of resources to engage and excite children, young people and their families.

We will engage with schools and the education sector to ensure our collections are relevant and utilised by children and young people.

We will collect the experiences of children and young people to ensure a full record of Queensland's documentary heritage.

5. Diverse audiences should be developed;

We will ensure that our collections reflect the diversity of Queensland.

We will ensure that our content can be used by diverse audiences.

6. Capabilities for life-long learning about library and informational services should be developed;

We will support life-long learning by empowering users to discover, use and re-interpret content through their lives.

We will build the digital literacy of our communities by providing a range of resources and learning experiences.

7. Opportunities should be developed for international collaboration and for cultural exports, especially to the Asia-Pacific region;

We will seek opportunities to take our unique Queensland content to world-wide audiences.

We will provide opportunities for Queensland residents to engage with design and culture from the Asia-Pacific region.

8. Content relevant to Queensland should be collected, preserved, promoted and made accessible.

We will recognise the richness of Queensland's documentary heritage, and actively collect, preserve, promote and share it.

We will support public libraries to engage with their local community and build documentary heritage collections.

Memory Collections

Objective

To provide a trusted record of Queensland's documentary heritage.

A wide range of historical and contemporary content is collected to reflect events, people, places and ideas that continue to shape Queensland. These collections are a resource for current and future generations wishing to understand Queensland.

Relevant collections

- John Oxley Library Collection

Intent

State Library is a leading collector of Queensland's documentary heritage. The John Oxley Library, founded in 1934, has a role in housing Queensland's collective memory. Content belonging to this category is retained as an important record of Queensland's history, past and present.

Selection

Candidates for the collection are appraised according to three broad criteria that ultimately determine whether they are acquired: content, usage and viability. All three factors are considered in their appraisal.

It is critical that the management of these collections, at each stage of the lifecycle, contribute to developing a deeper picture of Queensland and its history. The content of these collections is paramount, with levels of usage and viability issues being contributors to the overall value of an item.

Material may be acquired in a range of formats, from traditional paper-based materials and photographs to digital files.

Engagement

We are committed to providing effective channels for the community to discover, access, use and re-use our unique Queensland collections. Increasing the visibility collections will be a priority. As a custodian of these unique and significant collections we are committed to increasing access, through digitisation, enhanced description or full-text indexing.

Through a wide range of activities, we aim to provide multiple levels of engagement with our collections including: online engagement, exhibitions, tours, events and fellowships. We will actively build and connect with the community to foster deeper engagement with the collection, encouraging debate and discussion across the breadth of topics relevant to Queensland.

Information Collections

Objective

To provide information services to the people of Queensland.

Information Collections underpin State Library of Queensland's commitment to provide reference and information services to the State of Queensland, as outlined in the *Libraries Act 1988*. State Library maintains collections to provide for the information needs of all Queensland residents as well as focused collections intended to meet the specific requirements of identified audiences.

Relevant collections

- State Reference Library Collection
- Asia-Pacific Design Library Collection
- Government Research and Information Library eResources Collection

Intent

Information Collections are intended to meet a specific need; to provide relevant information efficiently and effectively to the Queensland population. It is vital these collections remain responsive and relevant to changing community information needs. The value of these collections lies primarily in their ability to meet these needs and they are not retained in order to contribute to the state's collective memory.

Selection

The collecting focus is responsive to the existing and future research needs of the community. Particular attention is given to the quality and currency of information provided by these collections. Support for State Library's exhibitions and programs is also a selection consideration. Digital content is preferred when selecting new material, in alignment with the intent of State Library's Digital Strategy.

Engagement

State Library is committed to providing people throughout the state with information and building their capability to find that information. Through unmediated access to content and the support of skilled library staff, access to information should be intuitive and efficient. State Library also reaches particular audiences via targeted online and onsite engagement.

Public Library Collections

Objective

To support public libraries and Indigenous Knowledge Centres (IKCs) across Queensland to deliver efficient and effective library and information services in their communities. The collections are funded through the Public Library Grant, which is provided by the Queensland State Government through the Library Board of Queensland.

Relevant collections

- Rural Libraries Queensland (RLQ) and IKC Collections
- Statewide Collections

Intent

These collections support the information, recreation, literacy and cultural needs of the communities they serve. The collections (fiction and non-fiction) aim to provide a balanced, appealing, high quality range of resources, including popular, bestselling and enduring works.

Selection

Resources are provided in a range of formats and languages to ensure collections are inclusive and accessible.

Collections are flexible and constantly changing. Multiple copies may be acquired for popular resources, and items with limited usage may be withdrawn.

Collections include resources for all community members, from babies to the aged, and support literacy and lifelong learning.

Engagement

Each public library serves their community and provides a safe, welcoming destination for all. Collection-based programs and partnerships enable public libraries to build communities which are informed, engaged, empowered and participatory.

Extraordinary Collections

Objective

To provide exceptional examples of books as objects.

This collection showcases material to demonstrate the physicality and format of the printed book as well as reflecting its art, craft, history and impact.

Relevant collections

- Australian Library of Art Collection
- Australian Art Research Collection
- Artists' Books Collection
- History and Art of the Book Collection
- Lindsay Collection of Pat Corrigan

Intent

State Library has a strong tradition of collecting items that demonstrate the history of the book, that showcase technological advances in printing and that, as particularly fine examples of library materials, engage the public's imagination.

These items form a representative collection of fine printing and rare publications intended to elicit wonder. They must be of high historical significance to the history of book, rather than to a collective understanding of Queensland. High public appeal and high accessibility are essential to State Library's extraordinary collections.

Selection

These collections are built upon a history of collecting exceptional examples of bibliographic and printed material, often with the generous support of individuals and businesses. Development of these collections will be highly-considered and representative.

Engagement

State Library is committed to showcasing its exceptional bibliographic material. Through a range of activities, we aim to provide physical experiences with these collections, providing the public with an opportunity to see and engage with unique library materials. Opportunities to engage with the schools and education sector will be explored.

© State of Queensland (State Library of Queensland) 2020



This policy is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 licence. You are free to copy, communicate and adapt this work, so long as you attribute the State Library of Queensland.

For more information see creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0

slq.qld.gov.au



State Library
of Queensland



Queensland
Government

Cover image: *The Great Barrier Reef of Australia: its products and potentialities*, 1893, William Saville-Kent. London : W.H. Allen.

Page 2: *Our Sporting Greats* launch, photo by Joe Ruckli.

Page 3: Child finding books, Atherton Library, photo by Sarah Scragg