

23 April 2019

Indigenous radio makes waves at State Library

Stories of rebellion and reclamation will be explored in a new State Library of Queensland showcase opening 4 May that celebrates the first Indigenous radio station in an Australian capital city.

I heard it on the radio: 25 years of 98.9FM Murri Country traces the protest movement of the 1980s and 90s when land rights were gaining momentum, and how the station's powerful contribution to the Australian media proved a catalyst for change.

After starting out as Murri Hour on 4ZZZ Radio in 1984, 98.9FM launched as 4AAA Murri Country, Brisbane's only country music station, and made its first broadcast on 6 April 1993.

Radio was one of the few avenues for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to tell their own stories, providing an accessible platform to raise social and political issues such as the push for reconciliation.

Country music, with its characteristic elements of heartache and storytelling, also resonated with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, becoming a vehicle for tales of dispossession and rebellion.

Popular country music artists including Troy Cassar-Daley, Lee Kernaghan, Keith Urban, Archie Roach, Kasey Chambers and Uncle Kev Carmody have supported 98.9FM over the years.

Through historical photographs, ephemera and digital stories, this free showcase recognises the years of activism and commitment from 98.9FM to carve an important place both in Indigenous community as well as in Australia's media landscape.

Exhibition highlights:

- Live broadcast and free concert featuring popular country music legend Roger Knox from 3pm on Saturday 4 May
- Mock recording studio with mixing desk and recording equipment
- Story and legacy of the late Tiga Bayles (presenter of the iconic 'Let's Talk' segment for 15 years)
- Historical photos of the studio, early broadcasts, key personalities and events
- Historical and contemporary posters, stickers and merchandise

Quotes from Minister for the Arts Leanne Enoch:

"How wonderful to see State Library showcase the legacy and impact of legendary radio station 98.9FM."

"The station is a pioneer for First Nations media and influenced a new generation of journalists."

"To this day 98.9FM continues to connect listeners to hard-hitting current affairs and presents a platform for new Queensland country artists."

Quotes from State Librarian and CEO Vicki McDonald:

"State Library is an inspiring community place for all people from all backgrounds to share ideas, knowledge and stories."

Media enquiries

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Interviews and images are available upon request.

“Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-owned media has played an influential role in shaping Queensland, giving community a voice and a space to be heard.”

“In this showcase, you will learn more about the people behind 98.9FM over the years, their persistence and hard work to drive change.”

“Historical items from 98.9FM’s archives will be added to the State Library collection, ensuring a record of 98.9FM’s immense contribution will be available for future generations.”

I heard it on the radio: 25 years of 98.9FM Murri Country

4 May — 6 Oct

Open daily | Free entry

kuril dhagun, level 1 | State Library of Queensland, Cultural Centre, South Bank

slq.qld.gov.au/whats-on | #slq989FM

I heard it on the radio live

3–5pm, Sat 4 May | Queensland Terrace | Free

Featuring Troy Jungaji Brady, Chris Tamwoy, Sue Ray and Roger Knox, hosted by ABC Radio presenter Rhianna Patrick

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