State Library of Queensland resources

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages — Resource guide

This resource guide provides information about materials held within the State Library of Queensland (SLQ) that could be used in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander language revival processes.

SLQ is the primary custodian of Queensland documentary heritage. Collections are housed in the library building at Southbank, Brisbane. They include original historical items, as well as published print and audiovisual materials about a range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander topics, such as language, culture, history and genealogy. There are also extensive online materials, including exhibitions and the library catalogue, available for personal and academic research.

Key starting points are:

- the SLQ homepage www.slq.qld.gov.au

- SLQ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queensland www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/atsi

Sections within SLQ

John Oxley Library (JOL)

The 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: www.slq.qld.gov.au/about-us/corporate/john-oxley-library

kuril dhagun Indigenous Knowledge Centre

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

Further details: www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/atsi/kuril-dhagun

Indigenous Knowledge Centres (IKCs)

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

Further details: www.slq.qld.gov.au/about-us/indigenous-knowledge-centres or http://libraries.slq.qld.gov.au/home/browse_by_ikc

SLQ Indigenous Languages Strategy

In response to the 2005 National Indigenous Languages Survey Report (NILS), SLQ developed an Indigenous Languages Strategy, supporting the preservation and promotion of Queensland Indigenous languages through the work of the community-based Language Centres and language workers.

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

Key activities under the strategy include:

- Indigenous languages research

- kuril dhagun and Indigenous Knowledge Centres, which support community language activities and increase awareness of languages

- community-based training activities, including language skills, information technology (IT), recording and archival skills

- Research Discovery Workshops, to increase community access to SLQ collections

- documentation, including digitisation of materials from SLQ collections.

Further details www.slq.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/74728/SLQ_-_Indigenous_Languages_Strategy.pdf

SLQ languages collections

The SLQ collections include a range of language materials, particularly relating to Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages.

Original materials

These include a diverse range of historically rich materials, 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 — date back to the 1820s and give a historical insight into how language was spoken and documented at the time of contact.

- **Pastoral and station records** — Many pastoral properties had Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers, and collected information about them, including their language and culture. For example, Robert Christison documented over 500 words from the Dalleburra Aboriginal workers on his selection, Lammermoor Station via Hughenden, from 1863.

- **Journals, diaries and notebooks** — Individuals who documented their daily lives in Queensland usually included references to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, their culture and lifestyle. Language material may also have been recorded in these primary sources. For example, Roth and Meston, who were Chief Protectors of Aborigines in Queensland from 1897 to the 1920s, 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

- The *Margaret Lawrie Collection* records Torres Strait Islander genealogical, cultural and linguistic heritage gathered during the period 1964–1973.

Web-based materials

The SLQ website has a range of language materials online for school and community access.

- **eResources** – SLQ provides access to a large number of authoritative eResources: online journals, newspapers, magazines and websites www.slq.qld.gov.au/search/eresources

- **Virtual/Digital stories** — Virtual books are available online in languages including Butchulla, Gamilaraay, Gunggari, Gudjal and Yugambeh. A range of digital materials, including photos and stories can also be found on the SLQ website.

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

  - Digital Stories: www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/queensland-stories

- **Online resources** — SLQ has developed a range of resource materials that can support community language revival including information sheets and resource guides.

  Online language resources: www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/atsi/languages/queensland

Published materials

These include books, journals/serials, newspapers, rare books and ephemera. Search the OneSearch catalogue, or start at: www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/atsi/languages/resources. In terms of language materials, topics may include:

- Dictionaries on specific Queensland languages, e.g. *Dharambul, the Language of Rockhampton, Australia* (Angela Terrill, 2002)

- Linguistic surveys, e.g. *Linguistic Survey of South-Eastern Queensland* (Nils Holmer, 1983)

- Historical texts that include linguistic material, e.g. *Tom Petrie's Reminiscences of Early Queensland* (Thomas Petrie & Constance Campbell Petrie).

Audiovisual materials

SLQ holds a range of historical and contemporary audiovisual 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, *Erub era kodo mer: traditional and contemporary music and dance from Erub (Darnley) Torres Strait* (2010) is a CD selection of language songs, including hymns collated by the Torres Strait Regional Authority.

- DVDs and films on cultural and historical topics including either speaking in language or speaking about language in communities. For example, Contemporary Stories features a range of digital stories and videos documenting the stories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Themes include:

  - 98.9FM Radio interviews with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

  - Cherbourg Stories; Woorabinda Stories

  - Cape Treasures.

Further details: www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/atsi/contemporary-stories

Researching SLQ's collections

The SLQ catalogue enables individuals to research the collections of original materials, information collections and digital resources 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: Click on the search icon on the home page, or use this short link http://tinyurl.com/k432wrx, (which takes you to this page: http://onesearch.slq.qld.gov.au/ primo_library/libweb/action/search.do?vid=SLQ&fromLogin=true)

- **Library membership** — Provides community members with access to SLQ's collections and associated services.

  Further details: www.slq.qld.gov.au/services/ecard

- **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 research easier.

  For example, a OneSearch request on "Djirbal" would identify two items in the collections, however, there may be several different spellings for languages, hence the "tags" for these items would include the AIATSIS Language Code (y123) which would identify fifteen items in the collections. The AIATSIS Geographical Location Code (Qld SE55-05) would also be displayed in the subject details, providing another identifier for searches.

Genealogy

SLQ has a range of materials in their collections that relate to community and family histories. These materials can support school 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: www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/family-history/info-guides/atsi

- **Norman Tindale genealogical 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 language groups. SLQ holds copies of these genealogies and portrait photographs from Aboriginal communities at Yarrabah, Cherbourg, Mona Mona, Palm Island and Woorabinda, as well as from two Aboriginal communities in northern NSW: Boggabilla and Woodenbong.

  Further details: www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/family-history/info-guides/atsi/tindale

- **Margaret Lawrie collection** — Between 1964 and 1973, Margaret Lawrie recorded many Torres Strait Islander genealogies and other cultural information including vocabularies, music and photographs, relating to 17 Torres Strait Islander communities.

  Further details: www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/family-history/info-guides/atsi/margaret-lawrie

Online exhibitions

The SLQ website hosts a range of **online exhibitions**, including materials from the collection which have been digitised and made available online. Topics/themes for online exhibitions vary according to programs; online exhibitions current at the time of publication include:

- Strait Home: www.slq.qld.gov.au/straithome/straithome

- Transforming Tindale: www.slq.qld.gov.au/showcase/transforming-tindale

- ReTold: A retelling of stories and songs from *Myths and Legends of the Torres Strait* www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/atsi/contemporary-stories/retold

Further exhibitions: www.slq.qld.gov.au/showcase

Community events and activities at SLQ

SLQ conducts a range of workshops for community members on topics such as language research, information technologies (IT), recording skills and archival skills. In addition, public talks and information sessions may relate to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander topics.

Language research discovery workshops — SLQ usually holds one or two workshops each year to enable community members and language workers to access materials in the collection.

Regional research workshops/White Gloves tours — SLQ also conducts regional workshops in community and regional centres to increase access to language materials in the collection.

Seminars, lectures and talks — SLQ hosts a range of activities 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 and themes, some of which may be language-related. 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

Visiting SLQ

In addition to formal events such as seminars and conferences, SLQ hosts community research groups who wish to visit SLQ in Brisbane and explore their collections. School community groups are encouraged to contact the State Library to organise visits.

Further details: www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/educators

More information

Please email langtrial@qsa.qld.edu.au, phone (07) 3864 0310 or visit the QSA website www.qsa.qld.edu.au and search for "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages".