

2019

A YEAR IN LIBRARIES



Australian Library and
Information Association



AUSTRALIAN
PUBLIC LIBRARY
ALLIANCE

 National
and State
Libraries
Australia



Introduction

People are often surprised by the scope of libraries. We're a small sector with a big reach.



There are **5,000 members** of the Australian Library and Information Association.



13,650 library locations in metropolitan, regional and remote Australia.



27,500 workers in libraries and information services.



12.9 million users in communities, schools, universities, TAFEs, government departments, research agencies, hospitals, NGOs, law firms, banks, media channels, technology companies and other knowledge-based enterprises across Australia.



\$2.8 billion is the estimated annual investment in library and information services in Australia.

Only the National Library of Australia and government department libraries are directly funded by the Commonwealth Government, but federal priorities are reflected in the programs and services delivered in metro, regional and remote Australia by school, public, university, TAFE and special libraries, and by our state and territory collecting institutions.

Here is a snapshot of the ways libraries have supported industry, health, education, communications and the arts at a national level during 2019, including celebrating the UNESCO International Year of Indigenous Languages and the Australian Year of the Public Domain.

Commonwealth Government engagement

The breadth of library interests is reflected in our submissions to government inquiries – during 2019, we have contributed to 18 reviews and investigations – and in our engagement with politicians, advisors, Departments and agencies about a wide range of policy areas.

While libraries' fit with arts and culture is clearly understood and recognised, submissions by the library sector in 2019 have included input, guidance and recommendations relating to Higher Education Standards, Mental Health, Artificial Intelligence Ethics, Infrastructure, Nationhood, Data Sharing and Release, Indigenous Knowledge, Regional Connectivity and Digital Medicines.

The role of government and other special libraries featured in *The Mandarin* in October 2019, with the heads of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Australian Institute of Criminology expressing the importance of library staff and resources.



Launch of Library Lovers' Day 2018 at Parliament House



Launch of Australian Reading Hour 2019 at Parliament House

Libraries are active participants in the Parliamentary Friends of Museums, Library and Galleries, with GLAM¹ Peak colleagues, and the Parliamentary Friends of Australian Books and Writers, as part of Books Create Australia. Parliamentary Friends events in 2019 have garnered non-partisan support for Library Lovers' Day (14 February) and the Australian Reading Hour (19 September), the latter assisted by the Australian Government Department of Communications and the Arts.

Libraries are also highly active in relation to the Australian Government's commitment to the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), with specific mentions of our contributions included in the 2018 Australian Voluntary National Review. In September this year, library leaders and government representatives gathered in Canberra to initiate a further project to develop SDG stretch targets for the sector.



Sustainable Development Goals roundtable meeting for the United Nations High Level Week at ALIA House

¹ Galleries, Libraries, Archives, Museums (GLAM)

Digital inclusion

Libraries have been strong advocates for digital inclusion for more than 30 years. We were early adopters of digital technologies, not only to support our own operations, but also to improve customer services and help our clients build their own tech skills.



Connected and safe online

This year, libraries have continued to be an active partner in eSmart Libraries, the cyber safety initiative created by the Alannah & Madeline Foundation, with funding from the Telstra Foundation; the Tech Savvy Seniors program, again with Telstra; and the Be Connected program, run by the Office of the eSafety Commissioner and Department of Social Services, with Good Things Foundation as the network partner manager.

Through public libraries, we reach some of the least connected people in society, but digital inclusion activities are also critical in school, TAFE, and academic libraries, where students may have varying levels of digital literacy, and in special libraries, where, for example, clients need help accessing vital information contained in electronic databases and in identifying authentic information from the morass of results generated by an online search.

We have stories about intergenerational learning, technology training for culturally diverse groups, digital access to local history collections, helping people digitise their personal collections, running coding classes, and providing local communities with opportunities to interact with robots, virtual reality and other advanced technologies.

The purpose of all these activities is to help people connect to the internet, have positive online experiences, improve their digital skills, build their confidence and be prepared for the next wave of technological innovation. Today, digital inclusion is core to what a library delivers.



My Health Record

Mid-2019, the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) was awarded a \$1 million contract by the Australian Digital Health Agency to provide consumer health education training for library staff through public and health libraries, which ALIA is in the process of rolling out with the Australian Public Library Alliance and Health Libraries Australia.

Education

Libraries provide formal learning assistance in schools, vocational and higher education, and informal learning through programs in public libraries. Special libraries such as government, health, law and corporate libraries, often provide support for staff who are studying for higher qualifications. Libraries help users with the many different literacies which are required to navigate the world today, not only the traditional skills of reading and writing, but also information literacy, STEM and digital literacy.



Early literacy

For the early years, we estimate there are some 121,000 storytimes for young children in libraries around Australia, attracting 3.1 million participants, through local initiatives and whole of state programs such as Better Beginnings in WA and First 5 Forever in QLD. Every year, the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) runs National Simultaneous Storytime. In 2019, the campaign reached more than a million children and families in Australia and New Zealand.

In 2016, libraries partnered with other organisations in the early childhood sector to deliver the Australian National Early Literacy Summit. Out of this summit came the National Early Language and Literacy Strategy Coalition. In 2019, the Coalition is in discussions with the Departments of Education, Health, Social Services and the National Indigenous Australians Agency about progressing a national early language and literacy strategy.

School libraries

Students Need School Libraries has been a major initiative 2019. This media-led campaign has been well supported by children's authors and illustrators, and has brought the issues around funding and the reduction in qualified staff in school libraries to a wider audience. It has increased the understanding by parents of the importance of a well-resourced school library in achieving the best outcomes for their children.

2019: The International Year of Indigenous Languages



2019 | INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF
Indigenous Languages

Libraries across Australia are focused on improving services for people identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, whether they live in cities, towns or remote communities. Libraries are working to maximise the use of their facilities, develop thoughtful programs, take a more respectful approach to sensitive materials, expand cultural learning opportunities for library and information professionals and recruit more Indigenous staff to be the future custodians of our collections.

The International Year of Indigenous Languages has provided us with further impetus and these examples from our national, state, territory and public libraries demonstrate our energy and commitment.

Raising the status of Australian Indigenous languages on the world stage

After a decade of lobbying, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) and the National Library of Australia have succeeded in adding AUSTLANG codes to the Library of Congress MARC Languages Codes list – the standard classification used by libraries worldwide. AUSTLANG is a definitive thesaurus of Australian Indigenous languages with over 1,200 records of language varieties, developed by AIATSIS.

This achievement means that where previously materials in Indigenous languages were catalogued under a catch-all 'Australian languages' descriptor, adding AUSTLANG codes identifies the specific language or languages used, making materials easier to discover for researchers and historians. There will be a flow-on effect to the National Library of Australia's Trove platform, which will launch new features such as a dedicated Indigenous languages search field in 2020.

Representatives from the National Library and AIATSIS have been actively encouraging the uptake of AUSTLANG codes among Australian libraries and during NAIDOC Week in 2019, National and State Libraries Australia libraries' staff and volunteers took part in a 'code-a-thon'. By week's end a total of 8,017 records in the Australian National Bibliographic Database (ANBD) received an AUSTLANG Indigenous Australian language code, with 465 unique languages represented in this total.

Reviving community languages

Since 2006, State Library of Queensland's Indigenous Languages Program has supported community language revival in over 105 language communities. The program is a partnership with the Australian Government Department of Communication and the Arts and has supported over 105 language communities across Queensland.

Each week during 2019 the State Library has promoted a Queensland language word in its 'Word of the week' campaign to raise awareness of this rich diversity. 2019 is also the 50th anniversary year of Eric Carle's *Very Hungry Caterpillar*, and the State Library has developed resource kits to help public libraries work with language communities to translate the popular children's book.

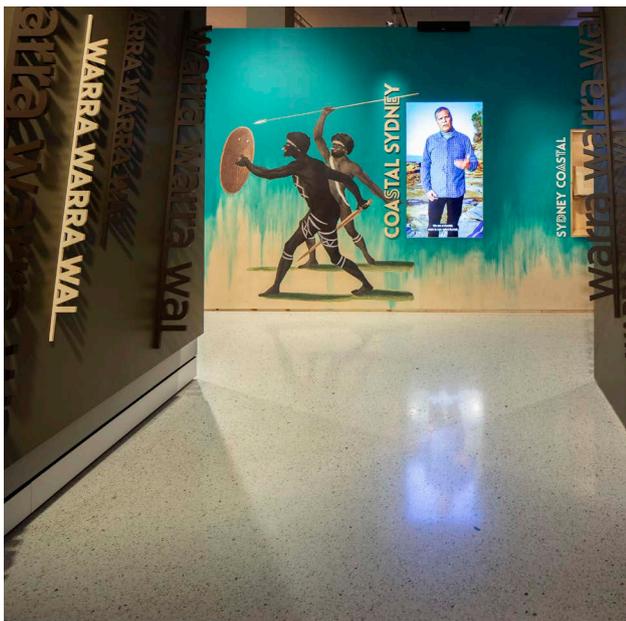
There have been public lectures and talks, regular Elders and community gatherings focusing on languages, and *Jarjum Stories*, a showcase celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's books and storytelling, opened in the Library's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander space, *kuril dhagun*, in October. In November, *Spoken: celebrating Queensland languages*, will open as a major exhibition exploring the survival and revival of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages throughout Queensland in SLQ Gallery.



Heather Napururla Anderson, *Skin Names*, 2019, synthetic polymer paint on cotton canvas © Heather Napururla Anderson/Barkly Arts

Contemporary artists inspired by old knowledge

The State Library of South Australia, in conjunction with the Art Gallery of South Australia, is hosting an exhibition as part of the 2019 Tarnanthi Festival of Contemporary Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander Art (18 October 2019 – 25 January 2020). Titled *Ankkinyi Apparr, Ankkinyi Mangurr – Our Language, Our Designs*, this exhibition brings together stories, language, and art. After retrieving archival recordings of Warumungu speakers, seven artists from Barkly Arts at Tennant Creek, NT, were inspired to remember their old people, old stories and old knowledge. The paintings created range from ancestral stories to depictions of traditional healing, the arrival of whitefellas and station life. The historic audio recordings play alongside the paintings and contemporary videos in this multi-modal exhibition that evokes the sounds and colours of Warumungu Country.



Living Language Exhibition at State Library of NSW

Bringing Indigenous languages home

The *Living Language* exhibition at the State Library of NSW celebrates the resilience of Aboriginal languages and re-contextualises original historical documents with interviews featuring language custodians on Country. The exhibition seeks to remind visitors that the true authority over Aboriginal languages always was and always will be Aboriginal people.

Adding to the story are significant early wordlists borrowed from overseas collections. The notebook of William Dawes records not only individual words of Sydney Coastal languages, but also conversations. Some of the Awabakal language from the Newcastle region is preserved in American linguist Horatio Hale's notebook, which returns to Australia for the first time since it was written more than 150 years ago. Materials featured in the exhibition have been digitised and returned to communities to support their ongoing language work.

Libraries and literacy in the APY Lands

Public Library Services (PLS), part of the State Library of South Australia, is working on a pilot project to deliver a library service to the Kaltjiti community in Fregon. With support from the Libraries Board of South Australia, PLS has partnered with the City of Charles Sturt to deliver this project, which is on track to see a library in operation by the end of 2019.

At the same time, the Libraries Board of South Australia is providing funding to support the Indigenous Literacy Foundation (ILF) Book Supply, Book Buzz, and community literacy projects. Popular standard English children's picture books are used with translation stickers printed in local Indigenous languages. Parents can read to their children in their own language and communities can write their own stories and produce their own books. These are sold and the community makes some money. With support from the Libraries Board of South Australia, ILF has delivered a total of 3,600 books to APY Lands communities to date.



Table created by the community in preparation for the new library



Proposed facility for the new library



Community consultation with Kaltjiti service providers and Charles Sturt and PLS staff

A new lease of life for bilingual books for babies

During 2019, the Northern Territory Library has hosted talks, film screenings, presentations and an exhibition of artworks from Simon Normand's 'Carpentaria Mapping Project', which maps Indigenous languages and knowledge. Of special note is the library's Bilingual Baby Board Books project, which originally ran from 2010 to 2017 and has been given a new lease of life in 2019, with the production of 11 ePub versions of the library's Bilingual Baby Board Books, as well as four animated versions available through the iTunes store.

Libraries in the nation's capital

Libraries ACT's nine public libraries and the ACT Heritage Library have celebrated and promoted the International Year of Indigenous Languages through a variety of programs and a calendar of events.

For International Mother Language Day in February, Libraries ACT hosted Ngunnawal and Wiradjuri guest presenters who shared stories, language and culture with the Canberra community. In Reconciliation Week, the libraries partnered with three Child and Family Centres from the northern, southern and western districts of the ACT to run 'Tracks to Reconciliation' events for Koori preschool and playgroup children. These included trips to the library and special Wiradjuri guest presenters sharing stories, including words from Wiradjuri language.

For NAIDOC week, libraries had story times running simultaneously across nine branches which included teaching the children 'If You're Happy and You Know it' with the names of the body in local Ngunnawal language, and a Wiradjuri alphabet and vocabulary colouring in sheet activity created by a local Wiradjuri man.

This year, the Ngunnawal words for 'hello' (yumma) and 'goodbye' (yerrabi) have been included in the opening and closing of early childhood programs, and in welcome songs. Ngunnawal words are also incorporated into Giggle and Wiggle and storytime programs. An acknowledgement of country suitable for young children has been developed this year and is being used before all children's programs.

On Indigenous Literacy Day, all branches participated in a book swap to raise funds for the Indigenous Literacy Foundation, and a special Indigenous Literacy Storytime was run simultaneously across the public library branches, with books being read sampling Indigenous languages from a number of remote Australian regions.



Larry Brandy, Aboriginal storyteller presenting in Wiradjuri at Gungahlin Library during Reconciliation Week, July 2019

The Return of Cultural Heritage Project

The Return of Cultural Heritage Project, led by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) working in partnership with First Nation's communities around Australia, is part of a larger narrative seeking to support the cultural resurgence of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It will strengthen the signal both to Australia and globally that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture is respected, celebrated and valued. Funded by the Australian Government, this is a scoping project that will run until 30 June 2020, and is one of a suite of initiatives to mark the 250th anniversary of Cook's first voyage to the east coast of Australia.

The project aims not only to explore and facilitate the return of cultural heritage objects, including audiovisual and documentary heritage, but will also document the breadth and depth of material held by overseas collecting institutions, developing an appropriately accessible database that will be a legacy of the project. As well, and very importantly, it will seek to build relationships between overseas collecting institutions and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The project team has so far discovered over 200 institutions holding Australian First Nation's cultural heritage material, and has contacted around 170 of those. Of these, many have been openly willing to work with the project, which has eventually narrowed this wealth of possibility to two pilots: Illinois State Museum (US) and Manchester Museum (UK) which are, between them, returning items to five language groups. All communities welcome their return.



Close up of Bardi Jawi shields. Courtesy of Claire Martin, Illinois State Museum

"As one of the ceremonial leaders of Central Australia, I am, on behalf of the senior ceremonial Elders of Central Australia and beyond, very happy to hear and see that the artefacts will be coming back to the original beds and caves where they will sleep for the rest of their time. It will bring back power and strength for our Dreamtime constitution. The men of the desert will be very grateful for the objects returning back home."

Aranda Senior Ceremonial Elder, Braydon Kanjira



The Illinois State Museum return has been successfully completed. In October an official handover ceremony was conducted at Springfield to repatriate 42 culturally significant objects from its collection back to Aranda and Bardi Jawi Nations. Community ceremonies have since welcomed the objects back to Country.

The Manchester Museum return will take place at the end of November at Australia House in London, and in February 2020, with an unconditional return of 43 culturally significant objects, including 12 secret/sacred objects, from the Museum's collection directly back to Aranda, Gangalidda Garawa, Nyamal and Yawuru Nations.

Many of the items returned will be used in ceremonies over the coming months and years.



Gangalidda Garawa feather ornament made of emu feathers. Courtesy of Manchester Museum



The first delegation from the Return of Cultural Heritage project, led by AIATSIS: (L-R) George Godfrey (Potawatomi), Dr Brooke M Morgan (Illinois State Museum) and Russell Davey (Bardi Jawi).

“We’re excited and happy that the Bardi material is coming home and believe that this is the right thing to do. These items were taken a long time ago but we’re glad that the museum looked after them and are now returning them back to the rightful tribe. Other important things are missing too and a lot more work needs to be done, and we’re glad it’s happening. We’d like to thank the Australian Government for their help.”

Senior Bardi Lawman, Kevin George



View of a smoke over the ocean and Broome from Roebuck Bay, photographer Iain Johnston.

“The repatriation of our sacred cultural heritage items is a fundamental part of the healing and reconciliation process, both within our communities and between our mob and the State. Bringing these sacred cultural heritage items back to Country is important and necessary for the purpose of cultural revitalisation – because locked deep within these items is our lore; our histories, our traditions and our stories.”

Mangubadijarri Yanner, Representative for the Gangalidda & Garawa Native Title Aboriginal Corporation (RNTBC)

2019: The Year of the Public Domain

After many years of lobbying by libraries and other stakeholders, from 1 January 2019, millions of items from our national collections – from Captain Cook's carrot marmalade recipe and Henry Lawson's letters to war posters and theses – fell out of copyright for the first time, finally becoming free for all to use. This release was thanks to changes to copyright law voted in by Parliament, the *Copyright Amendment (Disability Access and other Measures) Act 2017*, giving unpublished materials the same copyright term as their published counterparts.

Australian libraries and archives declared 2019 the Year of the Public Domain to celebrate the decision and have been releasing materials that are invaluable for students, researchers and historians. These are just a few examples.

Libraries Tasmania

The change in public domain legislation has made it much more straightforward to digitise a set of fascinating log books collected by Sir William Crowther. To date there has been uncertainty about authorship, as the captain is not necessarily the recorder. As Tasmania is an island, maritime activities are particularly significant in the history of the colony and the state. The digital images of this record series are available to view online. Digitisation is ongoing with new items being added regularly.²

State Library of Queensland

The State Library of Queensland enjoyed great success in 2019 with its award-winning *Home: A Suburban Obsession* exhibition, based on 60,000 photographs of Queensland homes by Frank and Eunice Corley. The exhibition featured a visualisation and tagging tool open to the public, resulting in the generation of tens of thousands of tags, comments and photographs which have enhanced catalogue records for the underlying collection and fostered a sense of community between Queenslanders from Bundaberg to Beenleigh.

The Frank Corley Collection provides the source material for this exhibition. Given that Frank and Eunice Corley are both deceased, with no surviving children, and that no other information was able to be obtained regarding copyright ownership or transfer, the photographs were classified as orphan works and a determination was made at SLQ to make the material available online.³

State Library Victoria

In January 2019, more than 170,000 non-culturally sensitive, out-of-copyright images in State Library Victoria's digital image pool became accessible via new viewers that offer an improved interface and International Image Interoperability Framework (IIIF) support. Over the year, the image pool has grown to 200,000 public domain images and text, which are available for anyone to use without restrictions. The library actively encourages use to support digital scholarship, and creative partnerships.⁴

State Library South Australia

Items by Sir Ross Smith are held in the Ross and Keith Smith Collection at the State Library South Australia. Ross was an aviation pioneer, famous for his part in the epic prize-winning flight from England to Australia in 1919, the centenary of which is celebrated throughout this year. This significant achievement paved the way for postal and commercial flights to Australia. The personal papers of Sir Ross have been digitised, and are now available for anyone to use without restrictions (including some identified orphan works now in the public domain amongst other material relating to Ross and his brother Keith and the Great Air Race) These items form part of the learning resources that ensure students and researchers can find everything they need to explore and understand the story of the epic flight and has fostered creative partnerships.⁵

² <https://stors.tas.gov.au/AI/CRO82>

³ <https://explorer.corley.slq.qld.gov.au/>

⁴ <https://www.slv.vic.gov.au/images>

⁵ <https://digital.collections.slsa.sa.gov.au/pages/ross-keith-smith> and <https://epicflightcentenary.com.au/>



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Claire Martin, Illinois State Museum
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Manchester Museum
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