



State Library of Queensland Response to Draft Queensland Drive Tourism Strategy 28 November 2012

Since 1902, the State Library of Queensland has been providing free library services. It ensures that 'Queensland memory', the State's documentary heritage, is collected, preserved and made accessible. It is also a major research centre, and an advocate and financial partner of over 340 public libraries, including 22 Indigenous Knowledge Centres.

The State Library at South Bank, in Brisbane's cultural precinct, is an award winning building which hosts an array of free programs, exhibitions, information services and provides a portal into Queensland's heritage. Welcoming more than 1.4 million people each year, the State Library is a 'starting point' for many international visitors to Queensland.

Together with the extensive network of libraries throughout Queensland, State Library is seeking to partner with Queensland historical societies, community museums, galleries, private collectors and other cultural and collecting institutions over the coming years to foster a distributed collection of Queensland memory.

Part one: Queensland history driving a new generation of tourists

Heritage tourism, unique opportunities await

Heritage tourism is Queensland's untapped market. Every community in Queensland has a unique local story to tell and a heritage treasure to discover. Collectively they create memorable journeys for Queensland's driving tourists; a road map to the state's history and heritage.

Queensland boasts more than 400 museums, galleries, keeping places, and other heritage organisations with over 1,000 employees and more than 20,000 volunteers all with specialist knowledge about local history.¹ A network of 340 public libraries across Queensland provides an extensive array of heritage material. The distributed collection of Queensland memory includes historical objects, photographs, landmarks, maps, manuscripts, books, and oral histories for domestic and international tourists to discover, explore, use, share, and remember.

Of the 950,000 domestic visitors and 360,000 international visitors who tour Queensland by road each year², it is highly probable that as part of their journey each has contributed to co-creating Queensland memory. From visiting a local museum or heritage landmark or participating in a town's festival to sharing holiday snapshots with friends online, each has contributed to and engaged with Queensland's history and heritage.

Co-creating Queensland memory is one of four State Library of Queensland strategic priorities for the next 5 years. State Library is working to make visible, showcase and celebrate the diverse knowledge, stories, culture and creative outputs from people around the state, especially from Queensland's unique Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

¹ Museum and Gallery Services Queensland, Submission on Australian Heritage Strategy, http://www.magsq.com.au/01_cms/details.asp?ID=928, p1

² Queensland Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and Commonwealth Games, <http://dtesb.qld.gov.au/tourism-industry/queensland-drive-tourism-strategy>, p9

cultures.³ Heritage tourism provides unique opportunities to grow knowledge of and appreciation for Queensland memory.

Heritage tourism is about unique stories, personal connections, and memorable experiences. It is about authenticity, nostalgia, and those 'Mmm, I didn't know that about Queensland' moments. Heritage tourism triggers people to share their experiences with friends and family, which increasingly is happening online via social media and using new technologies such as smartphones and iPads.

Queensland's treasured heritage

Mary Poppins author PL Travers was born in Maryborough in 1899. The acclaimed Queensland author is celebrated as a local with a statue in town and the old bank building in Herbert Street is known locally as the 'Mary Poppins House' after Traver's most famous work that Walt Disney made into a movie. Each year, Maryborough celebrates their unique history with the world's only Mary Poppins festival – a week long signature event for the Fraser Coast region.⁴

Towns and cities across Queensland have strong heritage treasures to promote and build on. With the right injection of marketing zeal towns can be transformed from being short stops along a journey to destination places. Supporting the marketing of heritage-inspired events both locally and regionally, will promote a greater understanding of a town's unique offerings and attract more visitors and for longer stays with direct flow-on effects for the local economy.

Queensland has an established heritage network of museums, galleries, libraries and cultural centres. The network is predominantly supported by over 20,000 volunteers (mainly an ageing population) who are knowledgeable about local history and passionate about sharing it with others. This resource is vital to the drive tourism sector and heritage tourism specifically.

Many heritage venues across Queensland are themed (e.g. Cobb and Co Museum in Toowoomba and the Hou Wang Temple in Atherton), providing significant scope to create heritage-themed journeys throughout Queensland catering to niche interest markets and complementing the Tourism Queensland Drive Routes when promoted regionally and across regions.

Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage is diverse and dynamic. With increased funding from governments at all levels Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities can be supported to nurture, create, and promote opportunities to share their unique histories and cultural heritage. For example, using local Indigenous language to name streets and places is one way of incorporating more Indigenous knowledge in the visitor experience. State Library is ideally positioned as a leader within a network of 340 public libraries, including 22 Indigenous Knowledge Centres, to support the development of local history collections that reflect Queensland's significant Indigenous history.

The reality of being online

Online platforms are transforming the way people research places and stories, and share their experiences with friends and family. Self-drive tourists go online to research the places they want to visit or to digitally map their driving route identifying key venues and landmarks to visit. Increasingly, travellers are using smartphones and iPads to access information instantly and easily. The uptake of QR codes as a way of communicating information means that Queensland's history can be shared with a scan using smartphones and iPads. For

³ State Library of Queensland Strategic Plan 2012-2016, <http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/about-us/corporate>, p3

⁴ Fraser Coast Regional Council, Mary Poppins Festival, <http://www.marypoppinsfestival.com.au/index.aspx?page=35>

example, rest stops for drive tourers can be transformed into places to learn about local history using traditional interpretative signage and enhanced with QR codes for a more interactive experience when travelling throughout the region.

With Australia's ageing population including the growth of the baby boomers, and their desire to travel, more people want to stay connected with more turning to blogs and social media such as Facebook, Flickr, and Twitter. Harnessing the energy of social media to share information and promote heritage tourism experiences will be vital in the rapidly changing world of information exchange. The statistics reveal the reality of online communication.

Since its launch in February 2004, Facebook has attracted over one billion users, half of which use Facebook on a mobile device.⁵ Of Australia's population, approximately 55% or 11.7 million are users of Facebook. The largest demographic in Australia is 25-34 year old, with 53% being female and 47% male.⁶ Other platforms demonstrate that social media is fast becoming the preferred communication tool for people over 35 years with 55% of Twitter users, 63% of Pinterest users, 65% of Facebook users, and 79% of LinkedIn users being 35 years or older. The average Facebook user is 40.5 years old while Twitter is 37.3 years old.⁷ Over the next decade, more Queensland tourers will be using online platforms to find information and to communicate about their adventures with others.

Online platforms are also fast becoming interactive spaces to share information and images about history. HistoryPin⁸ was launched globally in July 2011 and now has approximately 200,000 photos, videos, audio clips, and stories pinned to the world map. HistoryPin was established to help people come together across different generations, cultures and places, around the history of families and communities. One of HistoryPin's features is a mobile app that geolocates the user and then shows a map of the location with all content that has been pinned nearby including historical photographs taken on that spot. The user can take a photograph and upload instantly to the map or share it through other platforms including Twitter, Facebook, and Google+. Multiple stories from many viewpoints can be added to a single image, building up a collective memory of a place or event. HistoryPin also has the capacity to include themed content via tours and collections. For example, State Library has created a tour of Queens Street in Brisbane over time, with the photographs taken from almost the same spot from colonial times to the present. HistoryPin provides an interactive element to heritage tourism and provides a space to share individual experiences and to tell stories about Queensland.

As network connection improves throughout Queensland, geolocating will transform how people can access and share information. Local stories, historical information, photographs, digital stories, and even literature can all be communicated to visitors driving through Queensland places via smartphones and iPads using geolocating technology. The future of Queensland drive tourism could be a series of highly interactive and immersive experiences.

History creating a future

Drive tourism in Queensland is built on the offerings of local communities. Every city and town in Queensland has a unique heritage and history. While government and industry partnerships are vital to the development and sustainability of road infrastructure, so too are the creation and marketing of interesting products that capture the imagination of visitors and immerse them in experiences to remember.

⁵ Wikipedia, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Facebook>

⁶ Social Bakers, <http://www.socialbakers.com/facebook-statistics/australia>

⁷ Pingdom, Report Social Network Demographics in 2012 <http://royal.pingdom.com/2012/08/21/report-social-network-demographics-in-2012/>

⁸ <http://www.historypin.com/>

Queensland's network of heritage venues, community museums, historical societies, galleries, and local libraries can provide significant benefits to the drive tourism market. Opportunities to network, collaborate, and co-create Queensland memory will mean a stronger and more diverse Queensland heritage tourism experience. Harnessing the power of online interactions will open a new world of communication both to share information with visitors but also for visitors to share their memories of Queensland with others.

State Library of Queensland, as a key collecting and cultural institution, is working to support Queensland communities in the collection, creation, sharing and promotion of their local history and heritage which has significant implications for the future and sustainability of Queensland's tourism industry.

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Part two: the role of public libraries

Queensland's public libraries and Indigenous Knowledge Centres are a significant component of Queensland's drive tourism infrastructure. While many libraries in small communities are co-located with visitor information centres, all fulfil the role as trusted and known sources of information for visitors. Practical information supporting journey planning and in depth background which enriches visitors' experience of communities and regions is provided by libraries from their own collections and by providing access to digital resources via public access computers and increasingly through provision of WiFi access.

Visitors use libraries and their online facilities as a gateway to a wide range of information including accommodation, road conditions, route planning, weather, local history, tourist attractions and events. To this extent libraries play a role across many of the objectives identified in the draft strategy.

A recently published study of the socio-economic value of Queensland public libraries found a significant return on investment in public libraries, including their part in supporting tourism. In describing one of the case study libraries it indicated that:

The role of Fraser Coast libraries also extends into acting as a tourist information centre. Like many other library services across the state, many visitors go to the library to seek local information and guidance. Tourism is a key economic driver for the region and the library service actively promotes regional activities, programs and attractions to visitors to the region.⁹

The public library plays a number of roles supporting drive tourism:

The library building as tourist attraction

Many libraries are of interest to visitors because of outstanding architecture, their history, or their contribution to a streetscape. The Charters Towers Excelsior Library is located in an historic pub building and is an integral part of the Charters Towers heritage streetscape. Tambo library is in an iconic courthouse building. The heritage listed Cairns City Library is a repurposing of the beautiful Cairns City Council chambers.

Many libraries are part of multipurpose complexes or cultural precincts which attract visitors both to see the local community on display and to find information. Dogwood Crossing at Miles features a gallery and IT centre as well as a library. Its dramatic architecture was

⁹ The Library Dividend Technical Report: A Study of the socio-economic value of Queensland public libraries. An independent report by SGS Economics and Planning for State Library of Queensland. 2012.
http://plconnect.slq.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/225864/the-library-dividend-technical-report.pdf

designed as a drawcard for visitors. The Ingham Library is part of the Tyto Wetlands Visitor Information Centre with a gallery and visitor information centre featuring interpretive displays about the wetlands in which the centre is situated. The Georgetown library was built to house the TerrEstrial centre, a major mineral collection, the town's major tourist attraction. Many libraries share premises with museums and galleries.

The Millmerran Library was built with a small gallery space which enabled it to display paintings of local, world renowned artist, Kenneth Robertson Macqueen, whose work is also held at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art. Consequently the Millmerran Library is now part of the international Macqueen pilgrimage.

The library as a source of tourist information

All libraries provide tourist information, whether formally or as part of their broader information access brief. Most libraries carry tourist brochures and their staff provide directional and reference services and internet access for visitors. Libraries co-located with visitor information centres and other service providers make it possible to maintain extended opening hours. These centres are designed as the first port of call for visitors in places like Birdsville, Bedourie, Karumba, Normanton, Injune, Windorah, Goondiwindi, Ingham and Georgetown.

This has particularly been evident in communities participating in regional tourism promotion ventures like the Matilda Highway, where the 9 towns highlighted on the highway, from Cunnamulla to Karumba, each have public libraries servicing visitors and in Normanton and Karumba's case, extended opening hours during the tourist season. This pattern is repeated in all the drive routes promoted by Queensland Holidays.

The library as communication centre

Public libraries are often the only providers of public access computers in small communities. These are heavily used by driving tourists, particularly longer term travellers like grey nomads and backpackers, to keep in touch with friends and family.

Libraries play a vital role for visitors during times of natural disaster, both by providing the means to access current conditions and warnings via the Internet and as a post disaster communication post. In the aftermath of Cyclone Yasi in February 2011, the Tully and Innisfail libraries were open and providing Internet and mobile phone recharging services.

Libraries as providers of reading material for tourists

Public libraries have traditionally tried to cater for non resident reading needs through provision of temporary memberships, and for those passing through quickly, exchange collections which do not need to be borrowed.

Rural Libraries Queensland (RLQ), a partnership between State Library of Queensland and 28 local governments operating 68 libraries in rural and remote Queensland, will be offering a new library card in 2013 entitling users to borrow from any of the RLQ libraries and return to any other, which will be a major benefit for drive tourists.

Libraries as research centres for tourists

Many tourists like to undertake research as part of their holidays. This can arise from a desire to learn more about the community being visited or from a specific interest like family history which may have played a part in the decision to visit a particular area. A network of local collections of oral histories, manuscripts, maps, books, artworks, objects, and photographs is available through libraries throughout Queensland in both large and small libraries.

The local studies collection at Thursday Island is often used by visitors to find out about the history and culture of Torres Strait, often as part of a four wheel drive tour of Cape York. The microfilmed copies of local newspapers are regularly used by visitors to Barcaldine and

Longreach libraries for a variety of research projects. Visitors to Barrier Reef communities like Cardwell and Mission Beach use the library to find out about the marine life they have come to see.

Indigenous Knowledge Centres (IKCs) provide both traditional library services as well as a place to capture and preserve local history and traditions in 20 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The Draft Queensland Drive Tourism Strategy makes particular mention of Cape York infrastructure. While this is largely concerned with roadside and camping infrastructure, the presence of 8 IKCs in Cape York communities is an important potential resource for tourists. There are a further 9 IKCs in Torres Strait communities, of interest to Cape York four wheel drivers continuing northwards.

The library as a participant in cultural events

Most libraries play a role in promoting special community events which are often major tourist attractions. Local government usually plays a key role in organising such events and the library is an obvious conduit of information about such events to the community. Libraries can also be actively involved in celebrations and festivals.

The Ingham Italian Festival is based at the home of the library, the Tyto Wetlands precinct. The Yungaburra library is opened on Saturday mornings co-ordinating with the monthly the markets held in the park in which it is situated. These markets are the oldest and biggest in the Atherton Tablelands and very popular with visitors.

The Julia Creek Library is a key facility supporting the annual Dirt and Dust Festival with over 2,600 visitors. The library is a recruiting centre for volunteers supporting the festival and opens for the triathlon, the festival centrepiece, as a communication centre for athletes and spectators.

In identifying local government as a key partner in growing drive tourism, special consideration should be given to the public library network, its history and ongoing development of support for drive tourism. The extensive network of public libraries, particularly in small and remote communities, provides unique information and communication coverage of Queensland drive tourism destinations and routes.

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