

How we do it

Lead whole-of-government initiatives that recognise, acknowledge and maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and heritage.

Administer the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003*, *Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage Act 2003* and *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities (Justice, Land and other Matters) Act 1984*.

Lead the co-design process to develop a Queensland Government Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages policy.

Lead the implementation of the whole-of-government *Queensland Government Reconciliation Action Plan 2018–2021*.

Build cultural capability across the public sector.

Work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders to build civic pride, culture, heritage and celebration in engagement programs.

Government objectives: Keep communities safe; Give all our children a great start

Snapshot of achievements

Developed
new proposed legislation to recognise
Torres Strait Islander child rearing practice

85%
of customers **satisfied with services** provided through the
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage Online Portal,
exceeding our target of 75%

25,558
cultural heritage search requests completed

Responded to
625
requests for **historical records** relating to
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders

Safe, caring and connected communities

The department supports safe, caring and connected communities that value culture and heritage, through our commitment to build on and embrace community strengths, culture and heritage, and by supporting programs and projects that have been co-designed and ensure service outcomes.

Queensland is unique in that it is home to the two distinct cultural groups—Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples—whose enduring cultures deepen and enrich the life of this great state.

Recognition of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples is the cornerstone of a range of initiatives within the department promoting reconciliation, the preservation and celebration of traditional and contemporary languages, and ensuring Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples have equal opportunities to engage in Queensland’s vibrant culture.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage

The department protects Queensland’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage through administering the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003* and the *Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage Act 2003* (the Cultural Heritage Acts).

The Cultural Heritage Acts require land users to take all reasonable and practicable measures to ensure their activity does not harm cultural heritage. The department manages an award-winning cultural heritage database, which is accessible to land users through an online portal to ascertain whether any cultural heritage sites and places have been previously recorded on the database. The database provides an accessible search process that enables land users to meet their duty of care obligations established by the Cultural Heritage Acts.

Key achievements

During 2019–2020, the department achieved the following:

- 85 per cent of customers satisfied with services provided through the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage Online Portal, exceeding our target of 75 per cent
- enabled 25,558 cultural heritage searches to be performed on the cultural heritage online portal
- conducted six online portal and mapping GIS training sessions to assist Traditional Owners to report and record cultural heritage sites and places
- approved and registered 23 cultural heritage management plans in accordance with Part 7 of the Cultural Heritage Acts.

Performance measure			
Percentage of customers satisfied with services provided by the department through the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage online portal			
Year	Target	Actual	Status
2016–2017	Baseline established	82%	⊙
2017–2018	70%	85%	△
2018–2019	75%	85%	△
2019–2020	75%	85%	△

LEGEND: △ Exceeded target; ⊙ Target met; ◡ Working towards target

Review of the Cultural Heritage Acts

The review of the Cultural Heritage Acts provides an opportunity to ensure the appropriate balance between protecting and conserving cultural heritage, and facilitating business and development activity in Queensland.

The review of the Cultural Heritage Acts commenced in May 2019, which included the release of a consultation paper. The purpose of the review was to examine whether the legislation:

- is still operating as intended
- is achieving outcomes for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other stakeholders in Queensland
- is in line with the Queensland Government’s broader objective to reframe the relationship with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- should be updated to reflect the current Native Title landscape.

During 2019–2020, the department conducted face-to-face consultation sessions to review the Cultural Heritage Acts. Across the state, stakeholders have provided their feedback and the department is currently considering the next steps in light of the Queensland Government response to the COVID-19 pandemic. More information about the review of the Cultural Heritage Acts is available at www.datsip.qld.gov.au/ch

Key achievements

During 2019–2020, the department progressed the review of the Cultural Heritage Acts by:

- hosting 18 public consultation forums, with more than 300 participants
- holding 22 stakeholder meetings, with more than 150 participants
- receiving 70 submissions on the consultation paper.

Community and personal history services

During 2019–2020, the department continued to provide community and personal history services that are free and can be requested at any time. This service is in response to the *Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody* and the *Bringing Them Home* report, which recommended that Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples should be provided with access to government records and be assisted to trace their family and community histories.

The most commonly requested records are for evidence of ‘forcible removals’; proof of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent; date of birth confirmation to assist with the creation of retrospective birth certificates by the Queensland Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages. The department also undertakes requests for Native Title research.

Key achievements

During 2019–2020, the department:

- responded to 625 requests for historical records relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

Recognition of Torres Strait Islander traditional child-rearing practice

The Queensland Government is committed to introducing new laws to recognise Torres Strait Islanders families’ continued use of Torres Strait Islander traditional child rearing practice. Generations of Torres Strait Islander children have been raised in supportive and loving family environments where shared child rearing cultural practices have been the traditional approach.

Since November 2018, the department has undertaken community consultation, including engaging three Eminent Persons who worked closely with the Queensland Government and Torres Strait Islander communities, to inform the development of a new legislation that legally recognises the cultural practice.

Ms Ivy Trevallion former Chief Justice of the Family Court of Australia; the Honourable Alastair Nicholson; and Mr Charles Passi were engaged to provide legal, cultural and general expertise during the complex and culturally-sensitive consultations with Queensland’s Torres Strait Islander community.

Feedback from these community consultations highlighted that:

- legal recognition through transfer of parentage is desired to legally reflect an individual’s cultural identity and lived experience in order to be given the same rights and safeguards as other Queenslanders. This includes a birth certificate and legal identity that reflect their lived experience and cultural identity; and making day-to-day activities such as school enrolments, access to Centrelink support and obtaining a driver’s licence easier
- any process for legal recognition must be affordable, accessible, culturally-appropriate and confidential

- Torres Strait Islander culture is about community and not one individual person, and the best interests of the community is in the best interests of the child, because if the community is strong, the child will be supported
- legal recognition would be in the best interests of the child because they would have: a place in family and community; connection to culture; equal rights in succession in terms of legal and family issues; and identification that reflects who they are.

Key achievements

During 2019–2020, the department:

- held additional targeted consultations, to those conducted in 2018–2019, with key stakeholders and the Eminent Persons
- developed the new, proposed legislation to provide for the legal recognition of traditional Torres Strait Islander child rearing practice, based on the extensive community feedback.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages are intrinsic to the unique cultural heritage of Queensland, and are important in maintaining Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ connection to culture, community and identity, and in building resilience.

The Queensland Government’s inaugural Indigenous Languages Grants program, co-funded by the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and the Department of Education, was launched in May 2019. The program was established to support community-led initiatives across the state to maintain and revitalise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages in Queensland.

The United Nations General Assembly declared 2019 as the International Year of Indigenous Languages, and this provided a further opportunity to promote the need for continuation and celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages and to reaffirm Queensland as a state with a strong commitment to cultural values, diversity and heritage.

Key achievements

During 2019–2020, the department:

- was a partner in the co-design of *Many Voices: Queensland Government Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Language Policy*
- funded 31 programs totalling \$100,000 as part of the inaugural Indigenous Languages Grants program supporting initiatives including language apps and dictionaries, oral language recordings and activities to teach traditional and contemporary languages to school children. Details of successful grantees and funded programs can be found at www.datsip.qld.gov.au/ilg. Due to the impact of COVID-19, program delivery has been extended to 31 March 2021.

Queensland Reconciliation Action Plan

The department oversees the implementation of the *Queensland Government Reconciliation Action Plan 2018–2021*, and is responsible for coordinating its implementation through the Cultural Agency Leaders committee.

The *Queensland Government Reconciliation Action Plan 2018–2021* demonstrates the Queensland Government's commitment to building stronger relationships between Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and non-Indigenous Queenslanders. It aims to build on our collective efforts to ensure equality, equity, recognition and advancement of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples across all aspects of society and in everyday life.

The *Queensland Government Reconciliation Action Plan 2018–2021* includes a suite of engagement activities that will build on and strengthen partnerships and empower local communities to achieve positive and practical outcomes.

The department is also responsible for leading whole-of-government initiatives that promote reconciliation, including provision of funding for Reconciliation Queensland Incorporated and the implementation of the Celebrating Reconciliation Small Grants program.

Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, Queensland Government agencies celebrated National Reconciliation Week in different ways. This included podcasts, sharing videos on the meaning of reconciliation, virtual yarns and online painting sessions.

Given the changes to the Reconciliation Action Plan reporting arrangements, data for the 2019–2020 financial year will be collected in the first quarter of the 2020–2021 financial year.

Key achievements

During 2019–2020, the department:

- developed the first *Queensland Government Reconciliation Action Plan 2018–2021 Annual Report* on key achievements in the first year of the Reconciliation Action Plan, and a copy of the report will be provided to Reconciliation Australia in 2020–2021
- released the Queensland Government Starting the Journey Cultural Capability Foundation Training Package to build public sector staff cultural capability.

Culturally significant events

National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) Week is the most significant cultural celebration on the calendar for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders, and presents an opportunity to raise awareness and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and customs.

Each year the department delivers a statewide promotional campaign to support all Queenslanders in celebrating NAIDOC Week within their communities, including community funding and support for local events, promotional materials, sponsorship and special events.

In 2019, NAIDOC Week was held from 7 to 14 July with the national theme: Voice, Treaty, Truth—Let's work together for a shared future. To support NAIDOC activities across the state, the department awarded 61 NAIDOC Week community grants totalling \$45,950 for local initiatives to celebrate the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Key achievements

During 2019–2020, the department:

- supported the delivery of NAIDOC Week celebrations and community events across Queensland through funding and in-kind support
- awarded 61 NAIDOC Week community grants totalling \$45,950 to support local initiatives that raise awareness and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and customs
- partnered with local councils to light up prominent buildings and landmarks in Toowoomba, Mackay, Rockhampton, Townsville, Cairns, Torres Strait and Brisbane during NAIDOC Week.

Celebrating Reconciliation Small Grants program

The Celebrating Reconciliation Small Grants program encourages all Queenslanders to participate in National Reconciliation Week and to commemorate two significant milestones in our national history: the anniversary of the 1967 Referendum and the 1992 High Court Mabo decision.

Key achievements

During 2019–2020, the department:

- approved funding for 48 reconciliation events across Queensland totalling \$250,000.

Due to the impact of COVID-19, the funded reconciliation events planned for 2020 have been rescheduled to coincide with National Reconciliation Week celebrations in 2021.

Future directions

In 2020–2021, our department will continue to support safe, caring and connected communities.

Partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders to embrace community strengths, culture and heritage.

Ensure the legislative framework values and protects culture and heritage.

Work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders to build civic pride, culture, heritage and celebration through engagement programs.

Maximise opportunities to support and value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders' history, culture and heritage.

Continue to develop the department's community and personal histories services' customer satisfaction survey.

Continue to implement of the whole-of-government *Queensland Government Reconciliation Action Plan 2018–2021*.

Build cultural capability across the Queensland public sector to help agencies develop and implement culturally responsive programs and services.

2020–2021 PERFORMANCE MEASURES	2020–2021 TARGETS
Customer satisfaction with cultural heritage services provided by the department	75%
Average cost per cultural heritage search request processed	\$33
Average cost per community and personal histories request processed	\$5,310
Total cost per hour of community participation policy	\$106