

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 through the Cultural Agency Leaders committee.

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

**New legislation to recognise
Torres Strait Islander traditional child-rearing practice**
passed on 8 September 2020 and received
Royal Assent on 14 September 2020

12,202
cultural heritage search requests completed
(as at 30 November 2020)

Responded to
268
requests for historical records relating to
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders
(as at 30 November 2020)

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 so they can 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

The department:

- enabled 12,202 cultural heritage searches to be performed on the cultural heritage online portal
- approved and registered seven cultural heritage management plans in accordance with Part 7 of the Cultural Heritage Acts.

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.

The department is currently considering the next steps for the Cultural Heritage Acts review, following the Queensland Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and other financial impacts. More information about the review of the Cultural Heritage Acts is available at www.datsip.qld.gov.au/ch

Community and personal history services

The department continued to provide community and personal history services that are free and can be requested at any time. This service fulfils recommendations in response to the *Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody* and the *Bringing Them Home* reports, 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; and 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

The department:

- responded to 268 requests for historical records relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

Recognition 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.

The Queensland Government committed to introduce new laws that recognise Torres Strait Islander families' continued use of Torres Strait Islander traditional child-rearing practice. This commitment was fulfilled by the *Meriba Omasker Kaziw Kazipa (Torres Strait Islander Traditional Child Rearing Practice) Act 2020* (the Act) being passed on 8 September 2020.

This historic Act was informed by community consultation undertaken by the department in 2018 and 2020. The three Eminent Persons; Ms Ivy Trevallion, the Honourable Alastair Nicholson, and Mr Charles Passi, worked closely with the Queensland Government and Torres Strait Islander communities to inform the development of the new legislation which legally recognises the cultural practice. This included leading complex and culturally sensitive consultations with Queensland's Torres Strait Islander community and participating in a design workshop with government, members of the Kupai Omasker Working Group, legal experts and key stakeholders.

Key achievements

The department:

- facilitated the enactment of *Meriba Omasker Kaziw Kazipa (Torres Strait Islander Traditional Child Rearing Practice) Act 2020*.

The Meriba Omasker Kaziw Kazipa (Torres Strait Islander Traditional Child Rearing Practice) Act 2020 is the first Act in Queensland to include Torres Strait Islander languages in its title; and is a further step to embed the importance of culture, family, connection and self-determination for Torres Strait Islander children and their families (lore), and recognising and acknowledging this in Queensland law.

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

The department:

- launched a second round of the Indigenous Languages Grants on 9 August 2020 to coincide with International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples. Twenty-eight programs totaling \$200,000 will support initiatives including language signs, apps and dictionaries, oral language recordings and activities to teach traditional and contemporary languages to school children
- finalised applications for the Indigenous Languages Grants program on 31 December 2020. Further details can be found at www.datsip.qld.gov.au/ilg
- partnered with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Language Working Group and Department of Education and State Library of Queensland in the co-design of *Many Voices: Queensland Government Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Language Policy*. The policy was launched on Indigenous Literacy Day on 2 September 2020.

Queensland Government 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 providing funding for Reconciliation Queensland Incorporated and implementing the Celebrating Reconciliation Small Grants Program.

Queensland Government agencies celebrated 2020 National Reconciliation Week in a variety of ways. This included podcasts, sharing videos on the meaning of reconciliation, virtual yarns and online painting sessions.

Key achievements

The department:

- delivered the first *Queensland Government Reconciliation Action Plan Annual Report for 2018–2019* highlighting key achievements in the first year of implementation. A copy of the *Queensland Government Reconciliation Action Plan 2018–2021* and the *Queensland Government Reconciliation Action Plan Annual Report 2018–2019* can be found at www.datsip.qld.gov.au/rap

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 2020, NAIDOC Week was scheduled for 7–14 July with the national theme: Always was. Always will be. Due to COVID-19 public safety arrangements, the NAIDOC Week activities were postponed to 8–15 November 2020.

Key achievements

The department:

- supported the delivery of NAIDOC Week celebrations and community events across Queensland through funding and in-kind support
- partnered with local councils to light up prominent buildings and landmarks in Brisbane, Cairns, Mackay, Rockhampton, Toowoomba and Townsville 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

The department:

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

The funded reconciliation events planned for 2020 have been rescheduled to coincide with National Reconciliation Week celebrations in 2021. Details of 2020 successful grantees and funded events can be found at www.datsip.qld.gov.au/recgrants