

Queensland's Cultural Precinct

Growing arts and cultural participation and partnerships in regional communities

Queensland's Cultural Precinct has a strong presence in regional communities across the state, through touring programs and exhibitions, artist workshops and residencies, performance simulcasts, collections loans, virtual access to collections, digital engagement projects, research and internships. These activities grow regional participation in arts and culture and support professional development of artists and arts and cultural workers. Some of the major ways the institutions at the Cultural Precinct have engaged with regional communities in recent years are outlined below.

Torres Strait Celebration: an example of cross-precinct collaboration

In July-October 2011, the institutions at the Cultural Precinct collaborated in a landmark program of exhibitions, performances and workshops celebrating Torres Strait arts and culture. *The Torres Strait Islands: A Celebration* showcased traditional and contemporary arts of Torres Strait Islander people and highlighted significant Torres Strait collections held by Queensland's cultural institutions.

The Queensland Art Gallery|Gallery of Modern Art contributed an exhibition *Land, Sea and Sky: Contemporary Art from the Torres Strait Islands*, featuring over 200 works by more than 40 artists. This was the largest ever exhibition of contemporary art from the region. The State Library of Queensland exhibited some of its most significant historical and documentary material from the Torres Strait in the *Strait Home* exhibition, including the Margaret Lawrie Collection. The Queensland Museum presented *Awakening: Stories from the Torres Strait*, featuring ceremonial masks, objects collected by pioneering anthropologist Alfred Cort Haddon and archaeological findings. The Queensland Performing Arts Centre co-presented *Belong* – two new dance works by Bangarra Dance Theatre – and also hosted the fourth Mabo Oration organised by the Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland.

More than 80 performers from the Torres Strait participated in the opening weekend celebrations at the Cultural Precinct and more than 350 000 people attended the exhibitions, performances and workshops over nearly four months.¹

Queensland Art Gallery|Gallery of Modern Art

The Queensland Art Gallery|Gallery of Modern Art has an active regional program that includes touring exhibitions and lectures, children's programs and professional development for regional gallery staff.

¹ Note the attendance figure includes attendees through the doors of the Queensland Art Gallery|Gallery of Modern Art and Queensland Museum and it cannot be confirmed all visited the Torres Strait exhibitions. Data included from the State Library of Queensland and Queensland Performing Arts Centre is confirmed as attendees at their Torres Strait programs.

Touring exhibitions and lectures

Between 2010 and 2012, the Queensland Art Gallery|Gallery of Modern Art has toured exhibitions such as *Frame by Frame: Asia Pacific Artists on Tour* to two regional communities; *Namatjira to Now* to seven regional communities; *Contemporary Miniatures* to nine regional communities; and *IN BED by Ron Mueck* to four regional communities. A total of 84 363 people have attended these touring exhibitions to date. A case study about the tour of *IN BED* by Ron Mueck is available on the Arts Queensland website (http://www.arts.qld.gov.au/docs/QAG_In_Bed.pdf).



Installing *In Bed* by Ron Mueck at KickArts Contemporary Arts, Cairns. Photo: KickArts Contemporary Arts

The Queensland Art Gallery|Gallery of Modern Art also delivers artist talks, workshops and lecture tours in regional communities to further engage people with visual arts. For example, artists Isabel and Alfredo Aquilizan and Raafat Ishaak held talks and workshops in four communities in 2010, as part of the *APT 6 Artists on Tour* program to accompany the *The 6th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art (APT 6)* major exhibition. In 2011, the Xstrata Coal Queensland Regional Touring Photography Workshop was delivered in 10 Queensland communities. Between 2010 and 2012, 704 people in regional communities have attended these and other similar workshops and talks.

Touring exhibitions remain a core component of the Queensland Art Gallery|Gallery of Modern Art's forward planning, with *Lloyd Rees: Life and Light* touring to 12 regional communities from June 2012 to May 2014 *AhXian: Metaphysica* touring to 14 regional communities from April 2013 to August 2015.

Children's programs

Since January 2010, four children's 'On Tour' programs involving hands-on workshops and activities have been delivered in regional communities to facilitate broad participation in the Queensland Art Gallery|Gallery of Modern Art's major exhibitions. These have included *Kids' APT on Tour* in 36 regional communities as part of *The 6th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art (APT 6)* exhibition in January 2010; *21st Century Kids Festival*



Artist Isabel Aquilizan with participants at the *In-flight workshop*, APT6 Artists on Tour, Hopevale, 2010

on Tour in 45 regional communities as part of the *21st Century: Art in the First Decade* exhibition in January 2011; *Surrealism for Kids on Tour* in 51 regional communities as part of the *Surrealism: The Poetry of Dreams* exhibition in September 2011; and *Drawing Life for Kids on Tour: Celebrating Artists* in 56 regional communities as part of the *Matisse: Drawing Life* exhibition in January 2012. A total of 23 567 people across Queensland have participated in these four programs.

The value of these programs for regional communities is reflected in the following comments from staff of regional venues hosting children's On Tour programs:

The team at QAG and GoMA, and the artists involved, created a wonderfully organised event with engaging activities that offered something for every age, skill level, gender and interest. (Gladstone Regional Art Gallery and Museum, referring to Kids' APT on Tour)

The program provided children and families the opportunity to access the same cultural activities that children in the cities have. (John Flynn Place Museum and Art Gallery, Cloncurry, referring to Surrealism for Kids on Tour)

The workshop was successful and everyone really enjoyed themselves, connecting well with activities and creating some amazing art works. (Gab Titui Cultural Centre, Thursday Island, referring to Surrealism for Kids on Tour)

Children absolutely loved the program ... Parents and carers were enthusiastic for the opportunity to have their children interact with art and learn new skills. Many said it was a great place to meet other mothers and fathers, and have their children make new friends. A lot of grandparents said that the program provided a chance for them and their grandchildren to undertake a new activity together in the gallery for special, quiet time. (Gold Coast City Art Gallery, referring to Drawing Life for Kids on Tour: Celebrating Artists)

It is so very important for children in regional areas to have access to activities of this kind and to be able to express their creativity in a safe environment. (Kingaroy Art Gallery, referring to Drawing Life for Kids on Tour: Celebrating Artists)

The Queensland Art Gallery|Gallery of Modern Art will build on the success of this engagement strategy with a Kids On Tour program for the *Asia Pacific Triennial 7 (APT 7)* exhibition in January-April 2013.

Virtual visitation

Communities across Queensland also enjoy online access to information about the Queensland Art Gallery|Gallery of Modern Art and its collections. The gallery recorded 2 093 884 website user sessions in 2010-11 and 2 375 966 in 2011-12. While these numbers do not only reflect online visitation by regional Queenslanders, this is an important way the gallery maintains a connection with its regional audiences.

Professional development

Under the Backstage Pass program, the Queensland Art Gallery|Gallery of Modern Art offers internships that build on the skills and expertise of arts workers in regional galleries. Between 2010 and 2012, five regional gallery staff from Miles, Townsville, Mackay, Thuringowa and Bundaberg completed internships with the Queensland Art Gallery|Gallery of Modern Art, developing skills in important areas of gallery operations such as access and education, public programs, installation, conservation, registration, photography and sponsorship.

Queensland Museum

The Queensland Museum maintains a strong presence in regional communities through its regional campuses and infrastructure, museum loans service, research programs and co-created exhibitions.



Day Out with Thomas is a popular event at the museum’s Ipswich site, The Workshops Rail Museum

Regional campuses, infrastructure and services

The Queensland Museum has three regional campuses – The Workshops Rail Museum in Ipswich, Cobb+Co Museum in Toowoomba and Museum of Tropical Queensland in Townsville. These campuses attracted 252 000 visitors in 2010-11 and 257 191 visitors in 2011–12 through exhibitions, public programs, talks and lectures, workshops, curriculum-based school programs and children’s and family activities. School holiday programs consistently prove popular, including *Day Out with Thomas* at The Workshops Rail Museum, *Creepy Crawlies Alive* at the Museum of Tropical Queensland and *Unearthed* at Cobb+Co Museum.

New infrastructure opening at Cobb+Co Museum in 2010 has increased community access to programs and collections, in particular the Heritage Trade Training Complex supporting the teaching of heritage trades and crafts such as blacksmithing and millinery to new generations.

The museum’s regional campuses are also recognised for their role in stimulating local tourism, with The Workshops Rail Museum winning the Heritage and Cultural Tourism and Tourist Attractions categories at the Queensland Tourism Awards and silver in the Heritage and Cultural Tourism category at the Australian Tourism Awards in 2011. In 2012, the Museum of Tropical Queensland was inducted into the North Queensland Tourism Awards Hall of Fame.

Museum Development Officers based in Cairns, Townsville, Rockhampton, Ipswich and Toowoomba work in partnership with local councils and hundreds of collecting organisations across Queensland to support significance assessment of collections in regional communities, strategic planning, volunteer management, skills development, community engagement, disaster preparedness, marketing and tourism promotion. The Arts Queensland website includes two case studies on projects facilitated by



After: The Mt Morgan Murri exhibition at the Mt Morgan Museum.

Museum Development Officers in collaboration with local councils and communities – the Collective Insites project in Maryborough (<http://www.arts.qld.gov.au/docs/collective%20insites%20case%20study.pdf>) and the Mount Morgan Murri project (http://www.arts.qld.gov.au/docs/mt_morgan_murri_designed.pdf).

The Queensland Museum Loans service provides community access to learning resources through 28 distribution centres across Queensland, as well as collections housed at Cobb+Co and Museum of Tropical Queensland. In 2010–11, 689 000 people (mostly children) accessed 73 000 Queensland Museum artefacts and specimens accompanied by curriculum-based learning resources. In 2011–12, 785 656 people accessed 73 073 artefacts and specimens.

Virtual visitation

The Queensland Museum website is an important way for people across Queensland to access information about the museum’s collections, research and programs. In 2010-11, the museum recorded 542 000 online visits. In 2011-12, there were 838 539 online visits. While recognising not all these visits are from regional Queenslanders, virtual technology is growing access across the state to museum collections.

Research programs

The Queensland Museum’s research programs in the fields of geosciences, biodiversity, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, archaeology and social history assist in identifying and preserving the natural and cultural heritage of regional communities. For example, the Census of Marine Life Coral Reefs project, completed in 2010-11, resulted in the discovery of more than 300 previously unrecorded species along Queensland and Western Australian coral reefs. In 2011-12, Queensland Museum researchers described more than 100 new species as part of their ongoing scientific research program across the state.

The museum is increasingly engaging regional communities as part of the research process. More than 670 people in regional areas were trained to collect, identify and record local invertebrate wildlife as ‘Citizen Scientists’ under the Backyard Explorer initiative in 2010-11 and more than 1300 in 2011-12.

Exhibition co-creation

The *What Do You Collect?* project started in 2012 to celebrate the Museum’s 150th birthday. Co-created with regional communities, it encourages community members to share stories, objects, video and images about collecting through workshops, pop-up museums, local festivals and events, social media and a micro-website. Delivered in partnership with ABC Open, the Men’s Shed movement and communities across the

state, the project will culminate in the Collectomania exhibition at the Queensland Museum.

Queensland Performing Arts Centre

The Queensland Performing Arts Centre has expanded its reach into regional communities through the Yonder Project and regional simulcasts of live performances.

Regional simulcasts

In 2011, the Queensland Performing Arts Centre delivered a live simulcast of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra from the Concert Hall in Brisbane to six regional venues in Cairns, Mount Isa, Townsville, Gladstone, Rockhampton and Mackay. This was the first live simulcast presented by the Queensland Performing Arts Centre and it effectively doubled the number of Queenslanders able to experience the performance. A total of 3489 people across the six regional venues watched the performance, along with an at-capacity audience at the Concert Hall in Brisbane. The Cairns and Rockhampton venues reached maximum capacity. Eighty per cent of audience members at simulcast venues gave a rating of four or five out of five to questions relating to their emotional response, sense of being absorbed in the performance and feeling of being uplifted – results that were on par with Concert Hall audiences. Further information on simulcast outcomes is available in a case study on the Arts Queensland website (http://www.arts.qld.gov.au/docs/qpac_case_study.pdf).

Following on from this success, in 2012 the Queensland Performing Arts Centre simulcast the Hamburg Philharmonic Orchestra's performance of Mahler's *Symphony No. 2* from the Concert Hall in Brisbane to six regional venues in Bundaberg, Cairns, Mackay, Mount Isa, Toowoomba and Townsville. A total of 3157 people across these venues watched the performance. In addition, 18 per cent of audience members who attended the season of



Audience members at Townsville Civic Centre watch a live simulcast of the Hamburg Philharmonic Orchestra and Hamburg State Opera, August 2012. Photo: Michael Chambers



Students participate in a performance called *Plunge* as part of Yonder Bundaberg 2012.
Photo: Media One

Hamburg performances at the Concert Hall itself, featuring the Hamburg Ballet, Hamburg Philharmonic Orchestra and Hamburg State Opera, had travelled to Brisbane from other parts of Queensland.

These simulcasts have not only increased regional access to high quality arts performances, but have also strengthened relationships between the Queensland Performing Arts Centre and regional performing arts venues through capacity building and knowledge exchange outcomes for all involved.

Based on these experiences, the Queensland Performing Arts Centre will continue to expand the network of satellite infrastructure to enable more regional venues to participate in future simulcasts.

The Yonder Project

The Yonder Project was a three-year participative arts project implemented from July 2009 to June 2012 by the KITE Arts Education Program @ QPAC and supported by the Australia Council for the Arts. The project worked in and through the arts, linking schools, students and their families to the cultural infrastructure of their communities. The regions of Logan-Albert-Beaudesert and Wide Bay North were selected for the project by the Department of Education and Training given the high risk of social exclusion in these communities. Yonder provided arts experiences for 9837 students, families, teachers and principals through artist-in-residence initiatives, holiday and touring workshop programs and theatre performances. In addition, 67 artists and arts workers were employed over the life of the project.

Formal evaluation findings suggest that Yonder has improved learning outcomes for students, particularly in areas such as oral skills, literacy and social competence. There was also a marked increase in regular attendance at local arts and cultural institutions

by participating families, attesting to the long-term sustainability of project outcomes. Additional discussion of outcomes is contained in a case study about the Yonder Project on the Arts Queensland website (<http://www.arts.qld.gov.au/docs/yonder-kite-program.pdf>).

State Library of Queensland

The State Library of Queensland has a strong track-record of delivery in regional communities through the network of Indigenous Knowledge Centres and public libraries, travelling exhibitions and digital engagement strategies.

Indigenous Knowledge Centres

The State Library works in partnership with local councils in a participatory community development framework to support 21 Indigenous Knowledge Centres which provide traditional library services and a place for preserving the local history and traditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The State Library delivers a range of literacy and cultural initiatives through the Indigenous Knowledge Centre network such as computer literacy training for community members, digital storytelling, arts-based programs, distribution of culturally appropriate learning materials and professional development for Indigenous Knowledge Centre Coordinators. A notable success has been the *Culture Love* holiday arts program for



Elder Anima Pearson instructs children in traditional palm weaving during *Culture Love* at Hammond Island, a literacy through the arts program hosted at the Indigenous Knowledge Centre, July 2012. Photo: Christine Garnier

children and young people held in eight remote communities in 2010 and 2011, also providing employment and development opportunities for local arts workers. A case study about *Culture Love* is available on the Arts Queensland website (<http://www.arts.qld.gov.au/docs/culture-love-case-study.pdf>).

The following comments from participating councils demonstrate the important role of Indigenous Knowledge Centres in remote communities:

State Library of Queensland has developed a very effective model for working with remote communities, and at the heart of the model is a strong focus on mentoring, which is very much a part of Indigenous culture ... The programs are powerful, and expand our thinking on what can be achieved. (Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council)

The IKCs definitely affect change and is one of only a handful of initiatives that I believe works and will assist us and the government in closing the gap. (Torres Strait Regional Council)

The IKC's ongoing role is as a community hub, as there are no other places filling this role of a place for socialising, afterschool activities and particularly for collecting, recording and sharing local culture collaboratively. There are limited opportunities outside the IKC for families to gather, to engage with each other, with books and learning. (Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council)

Recognising the role of Indigenous Knowledge Centres as community hubs, this infrastructure is increasingly being utilised by other agencies such as the Queensland Art Gallery|Gallery of Modern Art and Queensland Museum to deliver regional outreach programs in remote communities.

Public libraries programming

The State Library reaches regional communities across the state by delivering programs and initiatives through the public libraries network. For example, in 2010-11, 3500 New Arrivals Family Reading Packs were distributed to migrant and refugee families through public libraries and eight public libraries received grant funding from the State Library



Exhibition visitor using the Floodlines App to augment reality in *Floodlines: a living memory* exhibition at the State Library, which is now touring throughout Queensland. Photo: KILN

to deliver innovative Family Literacy initiatives. A case study is available on the Arts Queensland website exploring the outcomes of one of the Family Literacy projects, Reading With My Father delivered by Tablelands Regional Council Library (<http://www.arts.qld.gov.au/docs/culture-love-case-study.pdf>).

In 2011-12, 234 Queensland public libraries, including all Indigenous Knowledge Centres, participated in the annual Summer Reading Club facilitated by the State Library and 4036 children across Queensland registered to take part. With support of the federal government's Increasing Accessibility Library Initiative, the State Library also helped improve access to print materials for people with a disability through the delivery of 163 Vision Australia playback devices to over 65 public libraries in regional Queensland in 2011-12.

The State Library also plays an important role in professional development for public library staff and other stakeholders across Queensland, delivering a range of online forums, face-to-face workshops and regional training. More than 580 public library staff participated in these professional development opportunities in 2011-12.

Travelling exhibitions

The State Library toured five exhibitions to regional communities in 2011-12, reaching more than 90 584 people across 38 Queensland venues. Exhibitions that toured included *From Ship to Shore*, *Laura: Festival in Focus*, *Panoramic Queensland*, *Broken Links: the Stolen Generations in Queensland* and *Queensland Wartime Romances*. Travelling exhibitions are further enhanced through learning notes, digital content and associated events. The State Library invites venues participating in these exhibitions to rate their overall satisfaction, with consistently positive results. For example, 95 per cent of venues participating in *Broken Links* and all venues participating in *From Ship to Shore* rated the exhibition and support provided by the State Library as 'excellent'.

In addition to these exhibitions, the *Dr Barbara Piscitelli Children's Art Archive* exhibition which on display at Hope Vale and Kubin Indigenous Knowledge Centres in 2012.

The State Library is committed to continue touring these and other exhibitions. For example, the tour of *Floodlines: a living memory*, which commenced in August 2012 (highlighting Queenslanders' experiences of the 2011 natural disasters) will visit 17 regional locations in 2013.

Virtual visitation and digital engagement

Increasingly, the State Library's collections are being made available online which in turn increases access for people in regional areas. The library recorded 2 026 400 online visits in 2011-12. These numbers are not only reflective of regional visitation, but they do point to a key way that the library is strengthening connections with regional communities. Moreover, access to the library's digitised collections and online subscription content is being taken up by people in regional areas. For example, 25 per cent of the State Library's registered members are from outside Brisbane, downloading over three million articles and books in 2011-12. Similarly, 30 per cent of downloads from the library's ebook service (introduced in 2011) have been by people from outside Brisbane.

The State Library also uses digital technology in a range of innovative ways to actively engage regional communities. For example, in 2011 the national Libraryhack competition

was launched to get people using data from Australian libraries to produce mashups. The State Library engaged young people in regional communities in this process by partnering with arts enterprise, Human, to deliver Hop Hack workshops combining writing, spoken word, performance and sound-recording using out-of-copyright scores.

The Food Tales project, delivered in partnership with the Queensland Writers Centre, is another example of how the State Library is combining the 'real' and the 'virtual'. In 2011, 300 aspiring writers participated in 'narrative feasts' held in 11 public libraries across South West Queensland, involving author talks, creative writing workshops and support to translate recipes and food experiences into digital food tales. In 2012, Food Tales rolled out to another 10 communities in the Lockyer Valley and North and Far North Queensland.

Digital technology is also being used by the library to showcase content about regional Queensland. In 2012, the State Library joined the online Historypin service to share digitised images and films by 'pinning' content to a Queensland map. Over 50 per cent of this content to date pertains to regional Queensland. In addition the John Oxley Library Blog, attracting 10 000 readers per month, profiles a range of regional content – most recently posts about Mackay, Mount Morgan and the Australian National South Sea Islander Recognition Day.

The State Library also helps develop digital literacy in regional communities by training people in digital storytelling techniques, supporting people to digitise their historical and contemporary images for sharing on the *Picture Queensland* website and providing online Web 2.0 training. In 2011-12, the State Library and Wikipedia delivered workshops in nine regional communities aimed at increasing regional Queensland content on Wikipedia and making Queensland memory available to the world.