

Guidelines 2026-27

State Library of Queensland (State Library) in partnership with Queensland Public Library Association (QPLA) is investing in the partnership with local governments by developing public library and IKC staff leadership and advancing library services locally and across the state.

The Library Leaders Program is open to applications from existing, emerging, and aspiring leaders, who are committed to the network of Queensland public libraries and IKCs and want to build their leadership skills, knowledge, confidence, and networks needed to lead vibrant public libraries, now and into the future.

Program Overview

Over 8 months, the participants will take part in a supported program which will introduce a breadth of ideas and knowledge, innovative strategies, and opportunities for growth.

The program has 4 key areas of focus: professional development and attendance at key industry events, project development, mentorship, and network building.

Professional Development and Industry Events

The program launch will be mid-October in Brisbane with attendance at the [QPLA LEaD Conference 2026](#), and additional special activities that will further enhance engagement and connection with other program participants, State Library, and QPLA representatives.

In May 2027, participants will come together to attend and present at a Leadership Forum to be held at State Library which will include other special activities and library tours.

Project Development

Participants will nominate a project to work on, that addresses a policy, change management process, or service improvement that strengthens their public library services and responds to opportunities and challenges within the library sector. The project will be the focus of the mentorship.

Applicants are encouraged to consider supporting foundational library services such as reading, literacy, life-long learning, and collection management. It's important to think outside the box, be future focused, and thoughtfully consider both the needs of local communities and that of the broader Queensland library network. For inspiration review previous Library Leaders and their projects from [recent years](#).

To support the project development and implementation all Library Leaders will be offered formal [project management](#) training from the Australian Institute of Management through self-paced online modules. All participants will have 6 months to complete and will receive a certificate. No assessment required.

The project should be aligned to one of the State Library's [Strategic Plan 2026-30](#) objectives:

State Library of Queensland Strategic Plan 2026-30		
Objectives	Intent	Examples of possible Library Leader Projects
1. Preserve and provide access to Queensland's documentary heritage	Build, preserve and provide free and equitable access to resources in Queensland, with a strong focus on documenting, protecting and sharing the state's history, heritage and culture in all formats, physical and digital.	• Local studies focused projects • Digitisation of local collections projects
2. Enable knowledge, learning and public discourse	Provide inclusive, welcoming and inspiring spaces—both physical and digital—that support study, scholarship, research, creativity and informed public discussion.	• LOTE collection focused service improvements • Development of more welcoming library spaces for targeted community groups • Digital resource usage and promotion projects • Projects focused on partnerships with universities or Country University Centres
3. Champion reading, literacy and lifelong learning	Embed a strong culture of reading and lifelong learning by activating library collections and services, delivering high quality public programs, and partnering with schools, families and libraries to develop sustained reading habits from the early years.	• Early years or First 5 Forever focused projects • Library of Things collection projects e.g. Develop a 'Book week costume' library • Projects focused on partnerships with local childcare, schools, or high schools
4. Advance libraries and cultural partnerships for Brisbane 2032 legacy	Lead and partner with other libraries and cultural, educational and research institutions locally, nationally and internationally.	• Partner with a local museum / gallery to plan a local collection or Brisbane 2032 exhibition • Collaborate with other LGAs to develop a Queensland Road Trip Podcast • Project focused on increasing membership e.g. working with local artists to design new membership cards • Research ways to promote library services to visitors especially during the 2032 games
5. Deliver user centred and inclusive services	Drive the collective impact of public libraries and Indigenous Knowledge Centres by ensuring the needs, preferences and experiences of users are at the centre of decision making, to deliver services that are accessible, inclusive, responsive and respectful of Queensland's diverse communities.	• Feasibility study for innovative ways to meet local community needs including mobile libraries, library pods, non-traditional opening hours • Project focused on library website access and improvements • Co-design programs, services and collections which respect and empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
6. Uphold excellence in professional practice and governance	Maintain the highest standards of librarianship, leadership and governance, ensuring ethical stewardship, accountability, innovation and continuous improvement.	• A workforce succession planning focused project • Research project into librarianship in Queensland • Projects which focus on new technologies and strengthen digital capability of staff / patrons
7. Attract partnerships	Strengthen and expand community partnerships by deepening engagement, building long term relationships, and fostering shared advocacy of public libraries.	• Youth engagement project focusing on community organisation partnerships • Develop a partnership with local aged care to deliver multi-generational programming • Explore impact storytelling to demonstrate the social, cultural and educational return on investment

Mentorship

Mentoring is a two-way exchange of information and skills, with mentors also gaining opportunities for new insights, a wider network, and a reinvigorated passion for the work that libraries do. Where possible, the mentors are encouraged, but not required, to join the Library Leaders in attending the in-person PD events to build on the relationships across the whole program.

Each Library Leader will be matched with an experienced industry mentor with knowledge / skills in the area of their nominated project. Participants will be able to consult with their mentor on a broad range of topics including, but not limited to, honing the project concept, project development, and implementation.

- The mentor's role is to provide advice to the mentee, any and all work related to the project will be the responsibility of each individual Library Leader.
- Participants and mentors will meet regularly (ideally monthly) online one-on-one to develop their identified project or area of practice and / or identify other training and PD that could be completed to support their further development.
- Mentors will be drawn from within the State Library, the Queensland public library network or state / nation-wide partners and stakeholders, based on the participants selected project focus.
- Participants are welcome to nominate a mentor for consideration.
- Mentors that are FTE within the library sector will not be remunerated.
- Mentors are welcome to attend the PD events and other activities at their own expense.

Network development

A key benefit from this program is the opportunity to build strong connections between the Library Leader cohort. Meeting regularly, travelling together, and having shared experiences can lead to lasting professional relationships and friendships.

- Participants will meet monthly online with other program participants and State Library staff.
- The 2026-27 group of Library Leaders will have opportunities to meet, online and in-person, with the Library Leader Alumni.

Investment

Travel, accommodation,* and registration at industry events will be paid for and organised by State Library on behalf of participants as part the program

- **Councils are responsible for payment of all staff wages, per diems and any other travel allowances, and costs of any backfill arrangements that may be required.**
- Participating councils will be expected to endorse and support their employee to actively participate in the Library Leaders Program **including time for travel to attend all in-person program activities, monthly mentor meetings (online), and monthly Library Leader meet ups with State Library (online), as well as time to work on their nominated project and complete self-paced online training modules.**
- While State Library will pay for and organise accommodation to attend industry events, **individuals are responsible for providing a credit or debit card to hotels to hold a bond** against any damages or service costs.

*Note – participants from the Greater Brisbane area will not be eligible for travel and accommodation costs for Brisbane based event.

Program commitments

Participants must commit to actively participate in:

- all offered industry events and conferences plus any additional program activities
- regular online mentoring meetings (monthly is recommended)
- monthly online Library Leaders meeting with State Library
- presenting the findings / results / outcomes achieved through their projects
- take part in the program evaluation (pre and post program survey).

While the majority of the 8-month program is delivered online, there are two major industry events that **require participants to be available in-person**:

- a minimum of 4 days (plus travel depending on location) in Brisbane from Tuesday 13 October – Friday 16 October 2026
- a minimum of 3 days (plus travel) in Brisbane from Tuesday 11 May – Thursday 13 May 2027.

Sharing of Knowledge

A key benefit of the Library Leaders Program is the generation of significant learnings and information exchange across a wide range of topics. It is expected that all participants will strengthen the library network through the presentation of their project work.

This may include, but not limited to:

- PL Connect Blog post / case study
- research paper
- ALIA Incite article
- online workshop
- conference presentation
- other options will be considered on a case-by case basis

Key dates

29 July 2026, 12 – 12:45pm	Lunch Box Conversation Library Leaders information recording
29 July 2026	SmartyGrants EOI open
31 August 2026	EOI closes at 4pm
9 September 2026	All applicants notified of result
12 – 16 October 2026 Brisbane	12 Oct - Travel day (or before depending on location)
	13 Oct - Induction, Pre-conference activities, Welcome dinner
	14 – 16 Oct - QPLA Conference
	17 Oct - Travel day (location dependent)
Mid-October 2026	Mentors announced and introduced
October 2026 – April 2027	Monthly mentoring meetings (online)
	Monthly Library Leaders meet ups (online)
11 – 13 May 2027 Brisbane	11 - 13 May - Leadership Forum, State Library of Queensland Other activities including library tours
May 2027	Program evaluation and presentation of projects
May – December 2027	Sharing of projects

Application and assessment

Program Eligibility

- The program is open to all Queensland public library and IKC staff and managers who are wanting to develop their careers in libraries and local government.
- Existing, emerging, and aspiring future leaders are encouraged to apply.
- Participants must be available to participate in all elements of the program including, mentorship, monthly online meetings, and industry events.
- Participants will need to provide written confirmation of their Council's support of their involvement in the program as part of their Expression of Interest.
- This year's applicants are encouraged (but not required) to submit a short (2-4 mins) introduction video. The video should showcase the applicant, their project, library and / or community. High level video production or editing not required.
- Applicants who have taken part in other previous library leadership programs, excluding the 2024-25 and 2025-26 Library Leaders, are welcome to apply, applicants that have not yet been supported will be a priority.
- Applicants that have previously applied for and not attended State Library subsidised professional development may be considered ineligible.
- Councils that are non-compliant with conditions of their Service Level Agreement or other grant agreements may be considered ineligible.
- Participants will be required to take part in an evaluation process at the completion of the program.

Selection of Participants

- Applicants need to complete and submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) via [SmartyGrants](#) by **4pm, 31 August 2026** (no late applications will be accepted).
- EOIs will be assessed by a selection committee that includes representatives from State Library, QPLA, and ALIA.
- In addition to meeting eligibility requirements, priority will be given to applicants that:
 - represent a diversity of experience levels, roles and functions within libraries, qualifications, and demographic backgrounds,
 - have clearly articulated within their EOI how participation in the program will support their career development, and impact their library / community,
 - demonstrate how the focus of their project aligns with the State Library strategic objectives,
 - represent a diversity of locations and library types (Independent, Rural and IKC).

Further assistance

If you have questions or need additional support with your application, please contact the Public Libraries team at State Library by email: pl@slq.qld.gov.au or phone Kaley on 3842 9947.