

Guidelines 2025-26

To support the development of library leaders, State Library of Queensland (State Library) in partnership with Queensland Public Library Association (QPLA) is investing in the development and support of local government including public library staff interested in 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 public libraries and IKCs and want to build their leadership skills, knowledge, confidence, and networks needed to lead vibrant public libraries.

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](#) Professional Development event, and additional special activities that will further enhance engagement and connection with other program participants, State Library, and QPLA reps.

In May 2026, participants will come together to attend the [ALIA National Conference](#), and additional program events in Sydney, NSW.

Project Development

Participants will nominate a project to work on during the program, 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.

The project should be aligned to one of the [Public Libraries and IKCs Roadmap](#) objectives:

- Places and programs
- Collections and resources
- People and partners

Applicants are encouraged to think outside the box, be future focused, and thoughtfully consider both the needs of communities and that of the broader Queensland library network. For inspiration review the successful applicants and their projects from [last year](#).

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 selected 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 QPLA and ALIA conferences 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 2025-26 group of Library Leaders will have the opportunity to meet with the Library Leader Alumni (2024-25 cohort) during the monthly online meet ups.

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 participate in the Library Leaders Program including time for travel to attend all program activities, monthly mentoring and network meetings, as well as self-paced learning and development.
- 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 face to face:

- a minimum of 4 days (plus travel depending on location) in Brisbane from Monday 13 October – Friday 17 October 2025; and
- a minimum of 5 days (plus travel) in Sydney from Monday 11 May – Friday 15 May 2026.

Sharing of Knowledge

A key benefit of the Library Leaders Program is the generation of significant learnings and information 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:

- 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

8 August 2025	EOI open
5 September 2025	EOI closes at 4pm
12 September 2025	All applicants notified of result
13 – 17 October 2025 Brisbane	13 Oct travel day (or before depending on location)
	13 Oct Welcome dinner
	14 – 15 Oct QPLA Professional Development Event
	16 October Library Leaders post-event roundtable, program introduction and professional development
	17 October travel day (location dependent)
Mid-October	Mentors announced and introduced
October 2025 – March 2026	Monthly mentoring meetings online
	Monthly Library Leaders meet up online
11 – 15 May 2026 Sydney	11 - 14 ALIA National Conference Library Leaders post-event roundtable, program update and local library tours
May 2026	Program evaluation and presentation 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.
- Emerging, existing and aspiring future leaders are encouraged to apply.
- Participants must be available to participate in all elements of the program including, mentorship, network 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.
- Applicants who have taken part in other previous library leadership programs, not including the 2024-25 Library Leaders, are welcome to apply, however applicants that have not yet been supported will be a priority.
- Applicants that have previously applied for and not attended nor completed other State Library provided 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 an Expression of Interest (EOI) on [SmartyGrants](#) and submit this to State Library by **5 September** (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,
 - demonstrate how the focus of their project aligns with the Roadmap objectives, and contributes to innovation, collaboration and sharing of best practice within the network.

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: 3842 9947