

# TAKING PICTURE QUEENSLAND TO THE WORLD

NOTES TO ACCOMPANY A PRESENTATION GIVEN BY CHERYL RODGERS,  
STATE LIBRARY OF QUEENSLAND, AT THE  
ALIA LIBRARY TECHNICIAN'S CONFERENCE, MELBOURNE, VICTORIA  
11 OCTOBER 2007

## INTRODUCTION

The State Library of Queensland's Picture Queensland service is an online digital collection of images about Queensland, its people and places, past and present. It is a statewide portal – a central gathering place that gives users a convenient one-stop-shop for Queensland-related images. Picture Queensland was launched in 2003 with 6000 images. At the end of August 2007 there were over 38,000 images available and these images are added to daily. Library technicians are responsible for the indexing of all records added to the Picture Queensland website.

Picture Queensland also provides other Queensland cultural organisations with the opportunity to store and display their digital images. Currently fourteen organisations display their images on Picture Queensland, with new contributors being added regularly. Picture Queensland is funded by the Queensland Government's Online Public Access in Libraries (OPAL) initiative that supports innovative projects designed to improve Queenslanders' access to information.

The 'Taking Picture Queensland to the World' presentation will outline the following topics and, time permitting, include a tour of the website:

- Picture Queensland for everyone via the World Wide Web
- The leading role of Heritage Collections library technicians in coordinating new additions to the Picture Queensland site and indexing its content
- How we achieve it : Indexing standards and procedures for images created for Picture Queensland, including Metadata and subject headings
- Contributors and how we work together
- Highlights from the website

Access to the Picture Queensland website can be found at:

<http://www.pictureqld.slq.qld.gov.au>

## **Picture Queensland**

### Beginnings

The State Library of Queensland's strategic policy *Smart libraries build smart communities : Future directions of the State Library of Queensland*, was formulated following consultation with community and public libraries. This policy defined the *Smart Library Network*, an “integrated network of both physical and virtual community spaces creatively linking diverse groups of Queenslanders to information, knowledge and each other.” Picture Queensland was one aspect of this strategic vision.

At its inception, the primary goal of Picture Queensland (as defined in the Smart Library Network) was to provide online access to State Library's photographic collection. At the same time there was a recognition that other library services, museums, art galleries and the like, also needed to be able to digitise their own local photographic collections and for clients to have access to them.

In order to provide such a service, decisions had to be made regarding standards, technology and staffing.

### Technology

- The State Library had already signed to purchase a library management system called Voyager from Endeavour Information Systems (subsequently purchased by the Ex Libris Group). Endeavour had a suite of products including a digital repository system called ENCompass and the State Library decided to purchase ENCompass to manage our digital collections.
- The State Library purchased a Storage Area Network (SAN) to store the large number of digital files generated by the State Library's increasing focus on digital content. More storage can be added to the SAN as necessary.

### Standards & Guidelines

State Library looked at established descriptive metadata standards when considering how to index the images, and accepted best practice in long term digital storage and preservation.

- Dublin Core Metadata was the preferred metadata scheme for indexing records. It provides a simple way to index the images and is also consistent with how the National Library of Australia (NLA) recommends partners index their PictureAustralia records. This was an important consideration as State Library planned to contribute to PictureAustralia. MARC was also considered for the description of the images, but was judged more complicated and time consuming, and did not provide any greater advantage over Dublin Core for the extra effort entailed.
- State Library cataloguers worked together to develop the format for applying Dublin Core Metadata Standards to records, and as Picture Queensland adds more complex material to the database, new standards and guidelines are added. For example, recently an appendix to the guidelines was written to enable works of art to be indexed.
- It was decided to use a scanning resolution of 600 pixels per inch, using a TIFF format to ensure a high quality archival image. This high resolution scanning also supported a 'scan once, use many times' policy, ensuring continual high quality copies from the one scan. JPEGs are created from these high quality TIFF images to provide speedy web access for clients.

There are three different sized images for each image record; a thumbnail, preview and research image. The thumbnail, a 72 ppi JPEG

image, appears in the search results list. The preview image appears on the metadata record. The research image, the largest image available, can be viewed from a link on the metadata record. Both the research and preview images are 100 ppi JPEGs.

All Picture Queensland digital standards and guidelines can be found on the State Library of Queensland website, on a page dedicated to policies, standards and protocols.

<http://www.pictureqld.slq.qld.gov.au/home/resources#standards>

### Images for indexing

- Picture Queensland initially dealt entirely with images sourced from the John Oxley Library because there was already a pool of 6000 images which had been scanned as part of order requests from the public. As the project has grown, images are indexed from all over Queensland.
- An outreach component was developed to encourage Queensland regional libraries to add their own images to the database. The State Library's Outreach Librarian and library staff train staff from other libraries and collecting organisations in State Library's digital standards to enable them to contribute to Picture Queensland. (See the Contributors page of Picture Queensland for current participants).  
<http://www.pictureqld.slq.qld.gov.au/home/contributors>
- There were initially six libraries chosen to contribute in the trial. State Library engaged consultants to write a training manual and train our staff. Today the Outreach Librarian travels to all areas of Queensland to train new contributors and promote Picture Queensland.
- During the trial librarians set up the standards and undertook indexing but it was always intended that library technicians would be employed to do the indexing on an ongoing basis. During the initial trial by the six libraries, each library contributed 100 images. The State Library matched this by contributing 100 images from the John Oxley Library's collection on that town or region. A library technician indexed the State Library's 600 images and also gave feedback to the participating libraries on their indexing procedures. When the project was given the green light, three technicians were initially employed to index, supervised by a librarian.

### **Picture Queensland Today**

Picture Queensland continues to be an important part of State Library's commitment to deliver online content to the people of Queensland. The new strategic plan, *Enriching the lives of Queenslanders*, identifies the role of State Library in leading the development of services and programs to improve access to Queensland Memory, and the development of a digital content strategy. Picture Queensland is just one way State Library is fulfilling this vision.

The database now contains not only historical images, but also contemporary images, depicting Queensland's recent past and present. There are images covering fashion, industry, agriculture, architecture, people and places.

### ***The Role of the Library Technician within Picture Queensland***

There are two library technicians employed to index full time. Their duties include:

- Indexing images includes using established tools such as:
  - Australian Pictorial Thesaurus – for subject headings
  - Library of Congress Subject Headings
  - Picture Queensland Guidelines and Standards
  - Dublin Core Metadata
- Researching information regarding images from various authorities including:
  - Online library catalogues
  - Research tools available
  - Online resources such as Australian Dictionary of Biography, Queensland state and local government websites, National Library of Australia, Geoscience Australia and the Australian War Memorial
  - **Note:** Often information is supplied with the photograph and no further research is required.
- Assisting the Outreach Librarian, who co-ordinates and trains all contributors and prospective clients who may be interested in contributing to Picture Queensland. The library technicians travel with the Outreach Librarian, on occasion, to support him with the workshops and training he delivers. The library technicians often work with their peers and demonstrate indexing using the metadata guidelines in a one-on-one forum. The Outreach Librarian is also supported by staff from the Resource Discovery Unit, who negotiate the service level agreements with the partners.
- Supporting the Original Materials librarians in selecting images to be indexed to the Picture Queensland website. The Picture Queensland library technicians contribute ideas for selection of photographs for areas of the collection which are less well represented.
- Following current exhibition trends in the State Library by adding features e.g. the traveling Sport and War exhibition from the Australian War Museum.
- Liaising between Picture Queensland Unit and Image Production Unit for selection and work flow between the two units.
- Conducting informal in-house demonstrations for visitors, e.g. visiting public library librarians.

- Demonstrating Picture Queensland to library students on work experience, such as Queensland University of Technology and University of Queensland students.
- Ensuring we meet all targets set for the Picture Queensland unit. A monthly target of 600 images is required and the indexers regularly achieve this result. An annual target of 7,200 images was set and exceeded in the past twelve months.
- Editing and maintaining pages on the Picture Queensland website by updating the homepage every week, selecting the picture of the week, adding feature pages and editing as instructed by supervisors.
- Responding to feedback received from patrons using the Picture Queensland website. All feedback needs to be documented and, where necessary, records amended. Library technicians respond to most feedback, either by email or telephone. Compliments and criticisms are noted and often relayed to supervisors to improve our service. Statistics are kept of received feedback.
- Contributing to new subject headings being added to Australian Pictorial Thesaurus. Suggestions are sometimes needed to reflect Queensland cultural elements in the photographs, e.g. Cane trains and Queenslander architecture.
- Assisting in training other technicians in indexing for Picture Queensland. Several library technicians working in other units within Heritage Collections have been trained by the Picture Queensland technicians to contribute to the indexing of images for Picture Queensland. The Picture Queensland library technicians provide ongoing mentoring to these technicians and monitor their workflow.
- Contributing to revision of Picture Queensland guidelines.

### **Future of Picture Queensland**

As at the end of August 2007 the Picture Queensland website has more than 38,000 images indexed, and there are 14 contributors. By the end of 2007, a further ten new contributors will be added, including Mount Isa City Library, which has access to a large collection of Mt. Isa Mines Limited photographs, documenting the history of the mines.

Our profile is growing each month, with figures from the National Library showing we are now amongst the top six libraries being accessed for photographs through the Picture Australia website. Picture Australia harvests all new additions from our site at the end of each day.

Picture Queensland is not static, with an average of 600 new images per month being added, which holds the interest of our patrons. Students, family historians, costume designers and professionals such as architects are using the site for research.

Taking Picture Queensland to the world is exciting for the staff working on the project and is a very satisfying outcome for all involved.