



## ***QAR PROJECT UPDATE 2, July 2020***

**Welcome to the second Queensland Atlas of Religion (QAR) Project Update. Both Queensland and the world look very different to just a few months ago, and adjusting to the COVID-19 pandemic has of course been a great challenge to everyone, our families and communities.**

The mobility restrictions and social distancing between March and July slowed some aspects of our work on the QAR. But others continued, albeit a little slower than we planned. The appointment of the four PhD researchers, for example, became more complex with travel restrictions, but three of the four are now expected to be commencing their research projects between July 2020 and April 2021. In addition we are welcoming Jess White back to the project as a part-time administrator (one day per week).

This second 'Project Update' captures our progress so far, and gives a sense of the exciting work waiting for us a little further down the track.



*Chinese Temple, Breakfast Creek, c. 1886 (John Oxley Library)*

### ***Background to the QAR project***

During 2019 researchers in the UQ School of Historical & Philosophical Inquiry were awarded an Australian Research Council Linkage Grant to develop a Queensland Atlas of Religion (QAR) in partnership with the State Library of Queensland.

The new project will investigate, document and interpret the diversity of religion and religious practices in Queensland's past and present. It will generate the first major scholarly treatment of religions in Queensland via a large public reference website, to be published in late 2022.

The QAR funding is supporting four PhD projects, a state-wide project reference group for community input, and a range of regional research initiatives.

This is the second QAR Project Update, which will be issued three times a year in February, July and November over the life of the project. For further information, or for a copy of the first Project Update (February 2020), please email Geoff Ginn at the University of Queensland: [g.ginn@uq.edu.au](mailto:g.ginn@uq.edu.au).

### ***What is an Atlas of Religion?***

The QAR is the first time that a place-based approach has been used to study Queensland's religious pluralism.

The Atlas will present stories of people and communities across Queensland, representing a broad diversity of faith traditions, with an emphasis on oral history and significant places. Case studies and interviews will aim to explore the complex patterns of historical accommodation and inclusion needed to inform religious toleration and cross-community understanding today. In

generating new knowledge, the Atlas will present its findings in a free public website.

It builds on UQ's earlier success in developing major public reference websites such as the *Queensland Historical Atlas*, *Queensland Places* and *Queensland Speaks*, all developed by researchers at UQ since 2007. These are free resources for all users.

See: <https://hpi.uq.edu.au/research/digital-resources-and-research>



### ***Mapping patterns of faith and worship***

Queensland has an extraordinary rich heritage of religious practices that stretches into the past and is a vibrant contemporary feature of community life. Yet no resource exists to capture the complexity and diversity of that social and cultural fabric, either in the present day or historically.

For this reason, the QAR will be mapping sites and places of religious significance and practice to Queensland life, from before colonial settlement to today. The latest data from the 2021 census will be incorporated, but so too will the ancient and enduring connections of Queensland's First Nations peoples to their land, stories and ancestors. In telling these stories the QAR will highlight connections and relationships in the landscape, between communities and places.

A database of religious sites of significance has been commenced, and will expand in the coming years as an important illustration of the breadth and diversity of religious experience in Queensland life. We are particularly interested in places that are not regular 'churches' or places of worship, and that do not feature in existing databases such as the Queensland Heritage Register or websites like [churchesaustralia.org](http://churchesaustralia.org). Some of the places in the QAR database will feature in commissioned essays and oral history interviews to be

published in the online *Queensland Atlas of Religion* in late 2022.

### ***Would you like to nominate a site, building or place for the QAR database?***

Please email Geoff Ginn ([g.ginn@uq.edu.au](mailto:g.ginn@uq.edu.au)) with your suggestions; to begin with only a name and address/location is required.

### ***Introducing the QAR project team***

Assoc. Prof. Geoff Ginn and Dr Adam Bowles



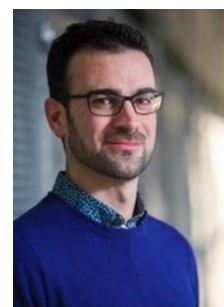
(left, and below right) are the QAR project leaders. Geoff is a Queensland public historian, and has published on the history of religion in Britain and Australia. Adam

researches Ancient Indian Sanskrit texts, Buddhism and Hinduism, and is the Convenor for the Studies in Religion program at UQ.

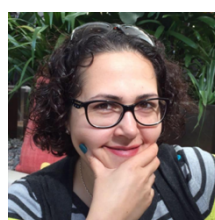


Dr Tom Aechtner and Dr Ryan Williams (left, and below right) are both UQ lecturers in Studies in Religion. Tom works on the sociology of religion, science/religion debates

and religious diasporas. Ryan has published research on Islam in a variety of social and cultural contexts.

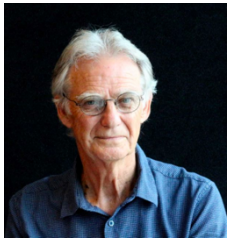


Dr Shirin Jamarani (below left) is a specialist on the social experiences of Queensland Muslim women, and Dr Richard Martin (below right) is an anthropologist with expertise in the Aboriginal communities of the Gulf, Native Title and Indigenous cultural heritage.





Prof. Phil Almond (*below*) is one of the leading scholars of religion in Australia, with many books on subjects such as Christianity, theology and related subjects. Prof. Peter Spearritt (*below right*) is a historian with long-term interests in social history, historic places and heritage.



Dr Val Cooms (*below*) is a historian of Australian Indigenous policy and activism, and is a former member of the National Native Title Tribunal.



Gavin Bannerman (*right*) represents the project at the State Library of Queensland



### ***Research students at the starting line***

Several graduate researchers will be commencing work in developing the QAR in 2020, with more to join the team in early 2021

To date, three students have been offered scholarships to undertake doctoral theses within the QAR's research framework, supervised by members of the QAR team. A fourth scholarship, to work on a project on 'Aboriginal Christianity in Queensland: a comparative perspective', has yet to be filled and will shortly be re-advertised.

Two students began working in July 2020, on projects relating to aspects of the South Asian diaspora in Queensland. **Prabuddha Mukherjee** will investigate 'South Asian Immigration and Religious Diversity in Queensland, 1975-2018', supervised by Dr Adam Bowles and Dr Ryan Williams. **Jess White**, who is also working as the QAR's part-time project administrator, is also commencing work with Adam Bowles and Shirin Jamarani, on a complementary MPhil research project.



*Prabuddha Mukherjee (left) and Jess White (right), the first research students to commence work on the QAR, July 2020.*

The two projects will assess the factors that have influenced how South Asian communities within Queensland have established and maintained religious practices in various community settings, including assessments of transnational identities, social hubs and networks, and civic participation.

Two other PhD students, both international enrolments originally intended to start in 2020, have unfortunately been delayed due to travel restrictions and the complications of the covid-19 global pandemic. We are looking ahead to welcoming them to the project in April next year.

One of these students, **Jerrold Cuperus** from The Netherlands, will be researching 'Charismatic Christianity: explanations and implications', supervised by Dr Tom Aechtner and Prof. Philip Almond. Unlike many Christian denominations in the Queensland setting, the numbers and influence of charismatic Christian churches is growing. The best-known example is the Pentecostal (Australian Christian Churches, or ACC); of the

eight 'Mega-churches' associated with the ACC in Australia, which attract 2,000 individuals to services per week, four of them are in Queensland. Jerrold's study aims to capture the key factors that explain this booming contemporary religious phenomenon.

The other, **Zerrin Afza** from Bangladesh, will analyse the deep history of the Muslim community in Queensland, setting Islam's largely marginalised history against the dynamics of recent diasporic arrivals from various parts of the globe (Africa, the Middle East and Southeast Asia). In keeping with other analyses of diasporic religious communities, Zerrin's research will explore factors of community cohesion, civic participation and identity amid the dislocations and challenges of migrant experience.

*Rev. Klundenst,  
Beaudesert  
Methodist  
Church, 1915  
(John Oxley  
Library)*



## Community Reference Group

As a result of the five Community Forums held in 2018 and other discussions, the QAR team has now established initial links with a number of partners in developing the project.

As well as individual historians, scholars and community bodies, the project has connected with research groups such as the Queensland Professional Historians Association, the Queensland Muslim Historical Association and the Brisbane chapter of the Salvation Army

Historical Society. Peak bodies and centres have also indicated an interest, such as the Queensland Faith Communities Council, the Griffith University Centre for Interfaith Dialogue, the Ethnic Communities Council of Logan, the Gladstone Regional Interfaith Network, the Jewish Board of Guardians and others. This is not a complete list, and the project team are looking forward to working with these and other partners as the Atlas develops.

New contributors and interested parties are very welcome to become involved, either through writing content, contributing to data or source collection, or by joining the Community Reference Group. Please email either Geoff Ginn ([g.ginn@uq.edu.au](mailto:g.ginn@uq.edu.au)) or Adam Bowles ([a.bowles1@uq.edu.au](mailto:a.bowles1@uq.edu.au)).

## Find us on Instagram

Our social media presence is a work in progress, as we source images and places of religious significance, stories and associations throughout Queensland. Search for `qarel_uq`, or 'Queensland Atlas of Religion'.



## Pilot study: Mithaka Country

As the Atlas takes shape, researchers and contributors will be developing partnerships with Indigenous representatives and organisations from around Queensland. The project aims to communicate important knowledge about Indigenous religious beliefs and practices in culturally appropriate ways.

Cultural mapping offers new opportunities to present users of the Atlas with insights into ongoing Indigenous connections to traditional country, including through places and stories that evoke the living spiritual presence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture in the landscape.

So far in 2020, a pilot project with the Mithaka Aboriginal Corporation (funded by a Queensland Government 'Looking After Country' grant) has been completed, that shows how this kind of partnership can work.

Sites and features in Mithaka Country, in the Channel Country of south-west Queensland, have been mapped through local knowledge and the testimony collected by the remarkable Alice Duncan-Kemp in the early part of the twentieth century. The cultural map has now been published online (search 'Mithaka Cultural Mapping' on your internet browser).



*Sunset from Nurrenderri, Mithaka Country (courtesy Doug Williams)*

In coming months QAR researchers will build on this pilot study, in partnership with the Mithaka Aboriginal Corporation, to develop a model for integrating Indigenous cultural mapping into the QAR project. Our aim is to develop through these partnerships a collection of regional case studies, highlighting the rich spiritual heritage of Indigenous Queenslanders for readers of the Atlas.

## Interested? Finding out more

For further information about the QAR project, to get involved or to make suggestions, please email: Geoff Ginn ([g.ginn@uq.edu.au](mailto:g.ginn@uq.edu.au)) or Adam Bowles ([a.bowles@uq.edu.au](mailto:a.bowles@uq.edu.au)).

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