



QAR PROJECT UPDATE 4: May 2021

Welcome to the fourth 'Update' from UQ's Queensland Atlas of Religion project, being developed in partnership with the State Library of Queensland, 2019-22. We hope you enjoy hearing about the QAR project, its development so far, and future prospects.

You will probably have received this through our mailing list. If you are not on our mailing list, please contact us via the details below and we look forward to welcoming your input.

Community Reference Group

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) or Adam Bowles (a.bowles1@uq.edu.au).

Public talks and promotion

Earlier this year, one of the QAR CI's (Chief Investigators) Geoff Ginn gave two talks outlining our exciting project. The first was to the new UQ Australian Studies Research Node, in a series of 'Lightning Talks' and work in progress presentations on 12 February. This was followed by a Zoom presentation to the State Library of Queensland's 'Local Studies Librarians' meeting (an annual get-together of local studies librarians from across the State), on February 18.

Looking ahead, a showcase event is being planned for mid-year, tentatively planned for Thursday 19 August, to present initial findings on a number of major religious sites to be featured in the online Queensland Atlas of Religion. This will be a catered event, open to

the public, to be held at the State Library of Queensland (further information TBC).

PhD project developments

The Queensland Atlas of Religion funding supports four PhD scholarships, for research to be undertaken at the University of Queensland in 2020-2023. As would be expected in these turbulent times, these haven't gone entirely smoothly! But there is some good news to report.

Last year the international travel situation with COVID-19 significantly disrupted the planned schedule for the two international students (**Zerrin Afza** and **Jerrold Cuperus**) who were successful in their PhD scholarship applications in early 2020. The UQ Graduate School established requirements for remote commencement in April 2021 for these and other approved students. Jerrold and Zerrin began working with the assistance of a local supervisor in their own country (the Netherlands and Bangladesh, respectively).



Global Zoom meeting, 16 April 2021: remote commencement underway! At top, left to right: Geoff, Jerrold, Tom, Prabuddha, Ryan, Zerrin.

Fingers crossed the international situation improves and they will be here in person to continue their projects later in 2021!

Jerrold's project will explore the topic 'Charismatic Christianity: explanations and implications', supervised by Tom Aechtner and Philip Almond. Given that the numbers and influence of charismatic Christian churches in Queensland and Australia appears to be increasing, Jerrold's research will seek to explain key factors that account for this contemporary religious phenomenon.

Zerrin's research will consider generational aspects of Islam in Queensland, shaped by 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, this study will explore factors of community cohesion, civic participation and identity amid the dislocations and challenges of the migrant experience.

The final QAR scholarship project examining aspects of Aboriginal Christianity in Queensland is also now close to being filled. The project team is delighted to welcome **Elverina Johnson** to work on a Masters project supervised by Dr Richard Martin, with a particular focus on the Yarrabah community. Elverina is a writer, performer, and community worker and brings a wealth of experience and insight to this topic, which will be showcased in a future issue of this newsletter.

Prabuddha Mukherjee, meanwhile, is also underway in her study of South Asian diaspora communities in Queensland, supervised by Adam Bowles and Ryan Williams. She is busy with her initial field work, literature review and ethics application.

With this exceptionally capable group of postgraduate researchers in place, the fieldwork, research and interviews to generate the essential data for many QAR entries will be well underway in the course of 2021.



QAR PhD candidate Prabuddha and Project Administrator Jess attend the annual Shivaratri festival at the Sri Selva Vinayakar Koyil in South Maclean, 11 March 2021.

Affiliated researchers

In recent months the QAR project has also expanded with the addition of contributing researchers. Among others to be featured in future Updates, we are excited to have met and now be working with:

Lisa Daunt, a Brisbane-based architect recently awarded her PhD for a thesis, 'Communities of Faith: Modern church architecture in Queensland 1945-1977', which investigates a range of sites across Queensland. Lisa's account highlights how the development of church architecture in Queensland was very specific to its time and place – a 'young' and developing state covering a vast area of land, sparsely populated and highly multi-denominational. As she prepares her thesis for publication, Lisa will be drafting entries on key sites and places that evoke the modernist aesthetic of the post-war era.

John Harrison is a Senior Lecturer in Journalism and Professional Communication at UQ, and a long-standing researcher on aspects of the Uniting Church in Queensland. He has a particular interest in the influence of religious pietism in Queensland politics, a theme explored in his recent study of Johannes Bjelke-Petersen based on his doctoral thesis.

John Grimes has had teaching appointments in Australia, Malaysia and Singapore, and holds a first-class Honours degree in History from UQ. His doctorate has recently been conferred by Charles Sturt University, for a thesis 'Anzac and the Sacred' dealing with religious and transcendent language in representations of Australian experiences of the Great War. John is in discussion with the QAR editorial group regarding an entry dealing with sacred space and religious language in the formation of Australia's Anzac myth.

Pilot studies: colonial missions to the Aboriginal people of South-East Queensland

A historian of contemporary and recent Aboriginal activism, QAR Chief Investigator **Val Cooms** (below) is casting a wider research net for the QAR in examining the history of colonial missionary activity in early colonial Southeast Queensland.

Centring on the early mission stations at Zion Hill, Stradbroke Island and Durundur (near Woodford), Val's work will form the basis of an Atlas entry analysing early missionary endeavours in this region.



Rather than just re-stating the broad history of the mission stations, Val's research will explore the underling motives and other factors influencing their development.

As a summary of her findings so far, Val is highlighting the missionaries' role in securing the areas reserved and the attempts at meeting colonial and government officials' expectations of 'civilising' and 'Christianising' Aboriginal populations. It will also highlight missionaries' frustrations and objections to Aboriginal culture. Colonial and later State government authorities provided missionaries with lands and assistance, with the expectation that the missionaries' presence and conversions to Christianity would 'quieten' Aboriginal resistance.

The rapid colonial expansion throughout Queensland dispossessed many Aboriginal people who suffered from loss of lands and its resources. Research is investigating how this suffering attracted international scrutiny and criticism in relation to the treatment and condition of Aboriginal people in British colonies.

Website design underway

Jonathan Hadwen and Alvin Sebastian, two experienced programmers from the UQ Research Computing Centre, have been assisting the QAR project team in developing a scoping document and procurement brief for digital design services. It is planned to develop the final QAR site (which will be hosted at www.qarel.com.au) in WordPress, using external expertise in thematic design and website architecture. Once the UQ procurement process has been finalised, this is scheduled to go to market in July, with a delivery of the initial concept artwork and proposed architecture of the website to be developed by November.

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'.



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) or Adam Bowles (a.bowles@uq.edu.au).

Jess White, the QAR project administrator, can be contacted at: uqqarel@uq.edu.au.

All images taken by members of the QAR project team, and are free of copyright restrictions. QAR logo designed by Jess White.