Welcome to the seventh Update from UQ's Queensland Atlas of Religion project, being developed in partnership with the State Library of Queensland.

The project was originally planned to run from 2019-22, but with pandemic-related interruptions we have been approved to extend our funding and activities through to the end of 2023.

By providing the first systematic scholarly account of the presence and diversity of religion in Queensland's social life, the **Queensland Atlas of Religion** (QAR) aims to become the go-to reference platform for educators, politicians, policy makers, journalists, researchers and others seeking to empirically ground the place of religion (and religions) in Queensland. The QAR and its ancillary projects will thereby substantially contribute to a much-needed improvement in Queensland's and Australia's religious literacy.

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.

QAR Website development

In the first part of 2023 we received the exciting delivery of the completed web design from our industry supplier, ICEMEDIA. Since that time our in-house IT professional, Jonathan Hadwen from the UQ Research Computing Centre, has been completing the transfer and installation of the site infrastructure to UQ servers, developing content management procedures, editorial guidelines and draft entries. For the first time we have been able to see how a completed

entry looks in the online environment, and with some eight written entries at the advanced editorial stage the first raft of pilot entries are now being loaded into the system.

Built in WordPress with various plug-ins for specific features and content management the draft website is coming together well for the range of topic entries to be explored in the completed Queensland Atlas of Religion.

At this stage we expect the first iteration of the Atlas itself will be launched as an online public reference website in early 2024. The first round of entries that will be accessible then will be followed by further additions and expansion of the Atlas contents in the years ahead.

Summer Scholar

Hannah Taylor, a commencing UQ History Honours student this year, was the second Summer Scholar (after Tahlia Watts in 2021-22) attached to the QAR project. Here are Hannah's thoughts on a busy few months in December 2022 – February 2023.

"My main responsibilities during this time included collecting images for existing articles, transcribing oral history interviews, and conducting some research into an entry of my own on Christian Youth Camps post-World War II.

Doing transcription work was my favourite part of the scholarship. It came with its own unique challenges — namely developing a system that allowed me to transcribe a large volume of interviews while still maintaining accuracy — but I felt privileged to hear the diverse stories of the interviewees. My method of generating an automatic transcript using

Otter.ai software, then manually editing for clarity and accuracy, proved to be a reliable way of transcribing long interviews quickly and accurately.

As a result, this method will now be the standard for any other oral history interviews conducted during the project, something which I'm incredibly proud of.

My own research towards Christian Youth Camps has also sparked an interest in the inner workings of Christian youth ministry in the mid-twentieth century. I have decided to further explore this topic in my Honours thesis this year. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time working with the QAR team and will continue to keep in touch."

Hannah Taylor

Student research progress

Zerrin Afza, an international student from Bangladesh, is working with the QAR project at UQ on a thesis examining inter-generational patterns of religiosity in Queensland's Muslim communities. Zerrin has been proactive in organising an industry internship to complement her UQ scholarship. In recent (and very welcome) news, she has received an offer letter from IBFF to work with them as a Project Assistant for some ongoing and upcoming programs.

Inspiring Brighter Futures Foundation (IBFF) (previously known as Fair Go Australia Foundation) is a non-profit organization offering well-being mentoring programs to disadvantaged people. They aim to work co-operatively and closely within Australian communities to provide much-needed support and practical assistance through hard-working, founding volunteers. IBFF's focus is on arming people with practical skills to enable them to create better lives for themselves, their families, and their communities.

As a 'Project Assistant,' Zerrin will assist IBFF with two of their community-level engagement programs. One program is called the 'Onwards & Upwards program' for the Mable Park State High School students (Muslim female students) and the second program is an unemployment program running in the Logan area. She will observe each of the programs and prepare a report based on her observations and recommend new engagement activities with the program participants. There will also be some assistance in designing a workshop for their diverse group of mentors to build their capacity.

Zerrin is looking forward to start this positive opportunity as soon as the UQ Graduate School approves her placement request.

Editorial developments

With around two dozen entries now commissioned for the QAR, the editorial group of Adam Bowles, Geoff Ginn and Jess White have been busily editing and compiling drafts as they are received from the authors. Here's how the process works…

1. *The Spreadsheet*

All ideas for topics, sites, entries and authors are added to our in-house Excel spreadsheet. We have around 160 different potential entries to date, based on suggestions made at community forums, from our various community-based contacts and researchers, and from the specialised interests of contributors. New ideas for the spreadsheet are always welcome.

2. **Contact with authors**

With an initial rough idea in mind, the editors make contact with potential authors – or seek advice from community partners about where

potential authors might be found. An email or a meeting starts the conversation on how the entry might take shape, what research is needed and what the basic elements might be.

3. Commissioning letters

A formal exchange of documentation with authors, outlining the submission and revision process, house style for publication, etc. Unfortunately, we are not able to pay contributors for content, as this aspect was not funded in our ARC Linkage grant (not all the requested funding was approved).

4. Author submits draft

This usually appears as an email in the QAR inbox, with images attached. This version of the entry is known as "V1", i.e. as supplied by the author. Authors also provide glossary entries for specialised or unfamiliar terms, which will appear as "pop-ups" on the website.

5. Editorial revisions, and re-writes as needed

The review process is conducted initially by the QAR editors, and by content experts as required. Each successive version of the entry is labelled "2a, 2b, 2c", in order to keep track of revisions in discussions with the editors and author.

6. Completion of draft for upload

When a draft reaches "V3", it is ready for upload – this final version is endorsed by the author or other relevant parties (as in an oral history interview, or community-written entry).

7. Digital formatting

The final text and media elements are formatted through the WordPress CMS (content management system) and prepared for online publication. Completed entries are presently being held in reserve for public access until the QAR's soft launch (late 2023) and formal launch (early 2024).

Fieldwork in Rockhampton

With the final year of the QAR pre-publication development now upon us, the level of fieldwork and community consultation has increased substantially. In 2023 we have trips planned to Cairns, Innisfail, Atherton and Yarrabah in March, and likely a return visit to North Queensland in May, together with a likely research visit to the Torres Strait in mid-year.

In November 2022, members of the team travelled to Rockhampton and Gladstone, to meet possible contributors and participants and to conduct oral history interviews. It was a busy week!

Rockhampton

Geoff Ginn and Adam Bowles met with Alan and Dorothy Demack (*see below*), both long-term lay preachers with the Uniting Church (and before 1977, with the Methodist Church). Alan and Dorothy generously shared their memories of their early lives, community work in Brisbane, Rockhampton and Mount Morgan, and their thoughts about a range of issues in the history of Methodism and the formation of the Uniting Church.

ALAN AND DOROTHY DEMACK, ROCKHAMPTON
METHODISM, LAY PREACHING AND THE UNITING CHURCH

The interview has now been edited into a story to appear on the QAR website.

During the two days in Rockhampton the team were also able to visit sites and make introductions. Joined by Richard Martin, they met with community members at the Central Queensland Islamic Society at their impressive mosque, and worshippers at the Hindu Temple of Central Queensland. Returning on the weekend, Adam and Geoff also enjoyed a special meeting of the Central Queensland interfaith group, a very well-attended gathering thanks to the wonderful hospitality of Shirley Perkins.

Mount Morgan

A fascinating interview with artist Nicholai von Tonslamann (*see below*) was also conducted at Mount Morgan during this trip, in Nicholai's extraordinarily vibrant home filled with artworks. Nicholai has a remarkable life story, including sculpting a series of shrines on his own property that are used in ritual activity by the Hindu community of Central Queensland.

Woorabinda

Travelling to the Woorabinda Aboriginal Community, the team met firstly with Ghangalu elder Steve Kemp (*see below*), in order to record a welcome to country video. Steve very generously shared his knowledge and stories, and many insights of the traditional and current circumstances on Ghangalu country. Another meeting followed with Pastor Carol Major of the One Mob Fellowship at Woorabinda and was another highlight – Carol's incredible energy and dedication to her community was palpable.

Gladstone

In Gladstone the researchers met with Paul Koen (*see below*), a pastor and Standby Response worker and the driving force behind the city's ChaplainWatch initiative to help young people at risk in the nightclub precinct. Paul has had many years providing chaplaincy and counselling services into the mineral, refining and energy industries of the Gladstone coast, as well as to ships in Port Curtis.

Linking with UQ Digital Cultures and Societies

Looking ahead, the launch of the QAR in early 2024 will also be accompanied by a concerted social media and promotion strategy. This is being developed in collaboration with the UQ "Digital Cultures and Societies" (DCS) initiative.

The DCS is a major undertaking by the university through the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences to pioneer transformative work on aspects of digital technology and its role in our contemporary world. It aims to create a hub for researchers and students to "envision digital cultures that enrich our relationships with one another, facilitate social cohesion, foster cultural understanding and belonging, and create societies that are fair and just."

See more details at:
https://hass.uq.edu.au/Digital-Cultures-and-Societies/About

As well as nurturing a critical and supportive environment for digitally-engaged research, the DCS hub is committed to research training and developing funding opportunities for UQ initiatives. The Queensland Atlas of Religion team successfully applied for a grant in the initial scheme administered by the DCS, to develop a critically-informed strategy for digital storytelling.

This one-year grant is now employing the QAR's project administrator, Jess White, to develop an innovative, contemporary approach to digital outreach in partnership with State Library of Queensland. The aim is to ensure that QAR's content circulates meaningfully and effectively through community and informal digital networks.

Through Jess's work and the outcomes that will be generated, the QAR will be a sector leader in research communication for public benefit via various channels and mechanisms in the social media landscape. Through this very welcome additional funding, we are hoping to pioneer a best-practice and critically-informed communication strategies to ensure broad reach and impact for the content being developed through QAR entries.

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).

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).

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