

Where the research begins: cultural learning in our national, state and territory libraries

AIATSIS Indigenous Research Conference, 1 July 2019



National and State Libraries Australia (NSLA)



Environmental scan

- acknowledgement on website
- specific Indigenous services team
- previous projects and initiatives in collaboration with local Indigenous communities
- Indigenous collection protocols, including reference to the ATSLIRN protocols
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment strategies
- reconciliation action plans
- availability of cultural awareness training.

NSLA workforce

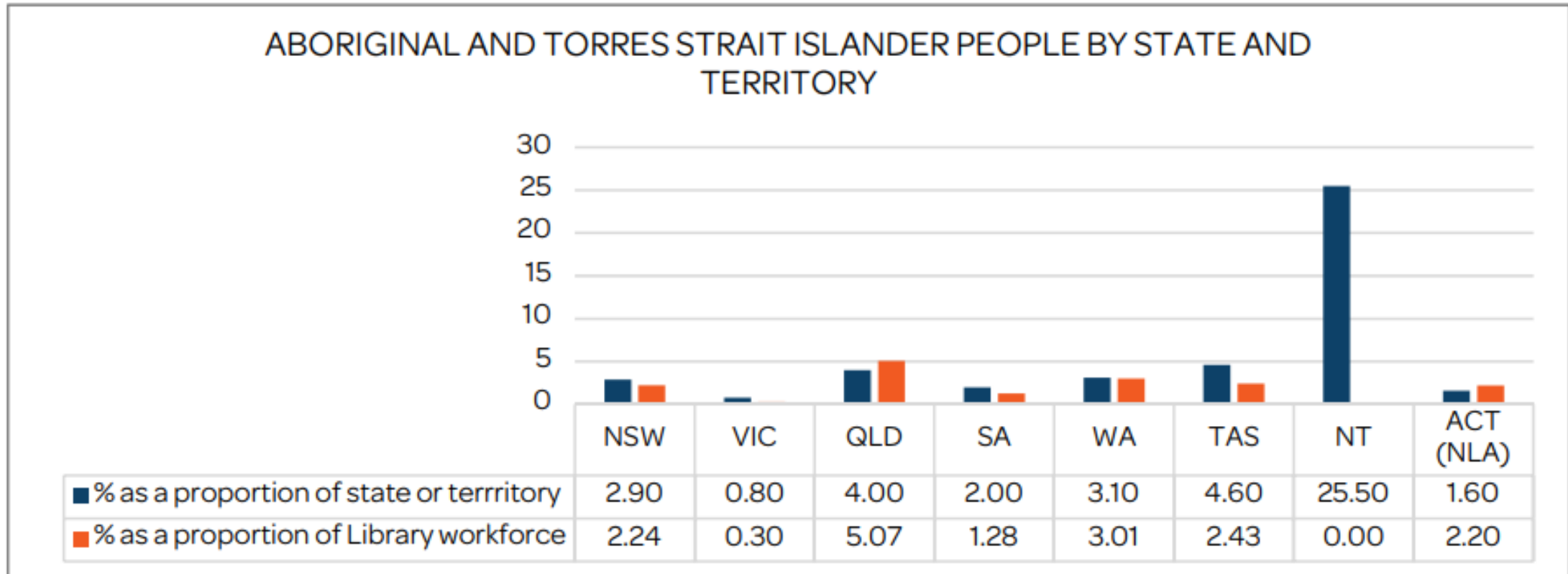


Chart 1: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by proportion of state and territory population and library workforce.

Projects in our libraries



The following content contains images and references to people who have passed away which may cause sadness or distress, particularly to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



Snapshot: Cultural competency in NSLA libraries

NSLA Indigenous group established around 2009, with representation from all nine member libraries. Its work included:

- 2013 - development of *Working with Community* guidelines
- 2014 - *National Position Statement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Library Services and Collections*
- 2014 - *Position statement: Indigenous intellectual property and ownership*
- 2014 - *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language services and collections*
- 2015 - case studies on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander library services and collections
- 2017 – *Right Wrongs* website (<https://www.abc.net.au/rightwrongs/>)

What is the Cultural Learning Program?

1. AIATSIS Core Cultural Learning foundation course
2. Role-specific training for staff working with Indigenous collections
3. Library-specific strategies
4. National Indigenous cultural competency principles

AIATSIS Core Cultural Learning



Learning outcomes

This module gives you an opportunity to:

- appreciate that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and relationships to land and waters are ancient, complex, vibrant and diverse
- understand the significance of Country for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and how the economic, social, spiritual and political are interrelated
- know how family, kinship, Language and Country underpin many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identities whether in urban, rural or remote locations
- see how attachments to Country are shared by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders with others.



Paperbark swamp, Yellow Water, Kakadu National Park, Northern Territory.
Photo: Wayne Quilliam, 2007

AIATSIS Core Cultural Learning



Representation and advocacy

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, representation and advocacy is a highly challenging process made difficult by their small numbers (3% of the Australian population), relative lack of power and significant cultural diversity.

Representation and advocacy are vital parts of democracy. They are central to improving the effectiveness of decision makers, to righting wrongs, breaking down oppressive laws, and tackling the marginalisation, mistreatment and inequality experienced by certain sections of society, often its most vulnerable members.

'Our citizenship rights and our Indigenous rights cannot be separated. We cannot have one without the other.'

Lowitja O'Donoghue in Australian Human Rights Commission 2003



Dr Lowitja O'Donoghue, Aboriginal leader and former ATSIC chair.
Photo: Wayne Quilliam, 2008

What happens now?

CORE cultural learning (online) August 2019-December 2021

Role-specific training (in person and online) March-September 2020

Find out more about us and subscribe to our newsletter at nsla.org.au

