

# Housing a custom of the past

This year, Queenslanders celebrate our state's 150th birthday, and it is opportune to look back at historically significant buildings in our city. Here our Heritage Services librarians look at the development of Customs House...

In the late 1890s the Queensland Government started a program to build new or upgrade existing customs houses, prior to Federation in 1901. The program saw new customs houses built at Rockhampton, Townsville, Bundaberg and Mackay.

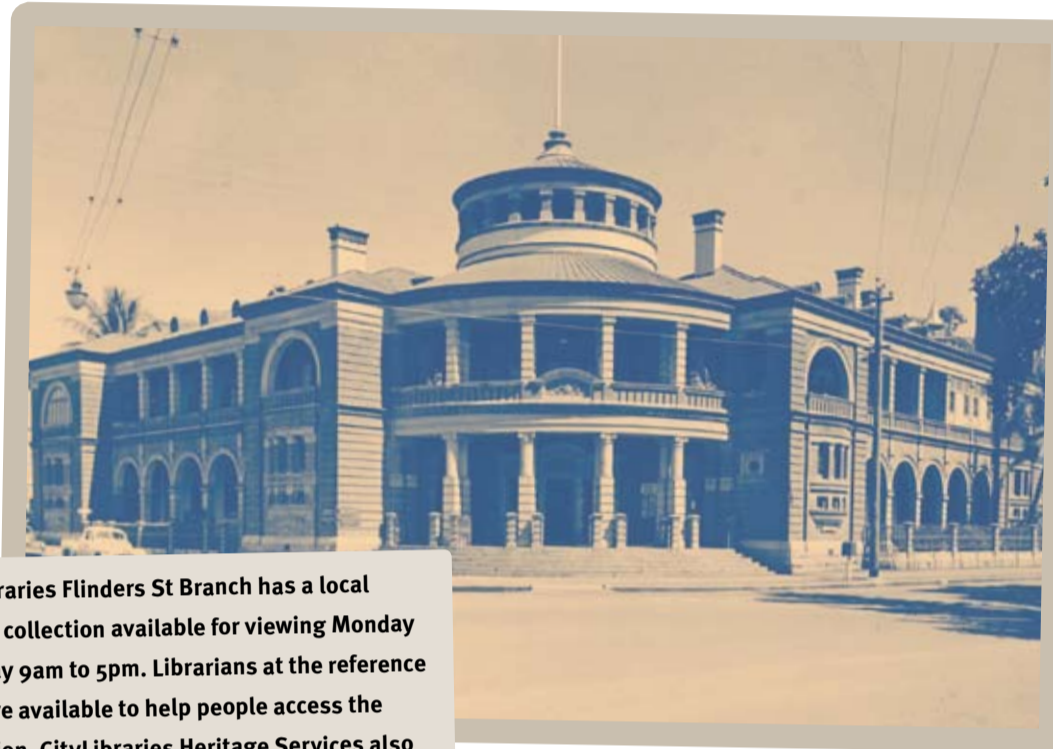
Located on the corner of Wickham Street and The Strand is the former Townsville Customs House. Completed in 1902, the building was designed by George David Payne of the Government Architect's Office in the Queensland Department of Public Works.

Payne designed an impressive colonnaded Romanesque style building with a semi-circular corner entrance and low tower for shipping observation. The two-storeyed, L-shaped building was designed to suit the tropical climate with high ceilings and fanlights to maximise airflow and broad, colonnaded verandahs to

provide shade for the interior rooms.

Tenders for construction were called in early 1900 and the tender of £26,642 submitted by Brisbane contractors Messrs Crawford and Cameron was accepted in March 1900. The building was constructed of brick faced with granite quarried at Cockle Bay, Magnetic Island. The roof tiles were flat and manufactured locally. Timbers sourced from North Queensland, such as cedar and silky oak were used internally.

In 1903 Customs House was severely damaged by Cyclone Leonta. Two chimneys crashed through the roof into an office below and many roof tiles were lifted. The roof underwent a number of repair efforts but in 1938 the whole roof was replaced with galvanised steel. After Cyclone Althea in 1971 the roof was damaged again and more repairs were needed.



**CityLibraries Flinders St Branch has a local history collection available for viewing Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm. Librarians at the reference desk are available to help people access the collection. CityLibraries Heritage Services also has a significant collection related to the former City of Thuringowa. For more information, visit the website [www.townsville.qld.gov.au](http://www.townsville.qld.gov.au).**

Customs House during construction.  
CityLibraries image

## Great information source for Townsville newcomers

Moving is a stressful time, but if you're new to Townsville, there's a handy little tool designed to make the transition a little easier for you.

Townsville City Council and the Community Information Centre have joined forces to produce the Guide for New Residents, to keep pace with the growing number of newcomers to the city.

The compact 44-page colour booklet aims to help familiarise new residents (and existing ones) with the city and what the council has to offer.

The booklet will be distributed to new residents via the council's Customer Service Centres, the Community Information Centre, real estate agents and relocation agencies, including the Australian Defence Forces, and is also available online at [www.townsville.qld.gov.au](http://www.townsville.qld.gov.au) (follow the links to the Community Information Centre).

**Community Information Centre volunteer, Jean Dartnall, with the new one-stop-shop for new resident information: The Guide for New Residents**



## Teaching indigenous children to value the future

Local artist and teacher Linda Hansen Jordan is joining forces with CityLibraries Thuringowa branch to present a new after-school and indigenous art-based program based on the 2009 NAIDOC theme, 'Honouring Our Elders, Nurturing Our Youth'.

Linda said she aimed her teaching to be based on fun and creative educational activities where children and young people learn more about indigenous culture and each other in a positive environment.

Linda said that during a six-week period the group would experience the use of different art materials, and produce a series of artworks with creative and artistic focus on the theme of NAIDOC, Honouring Our Elders and Nurturing Our Youth.

An exhibition of these works will be held in CityLibraries during NAIDOC week.

## Learning for life a focus

CityLibraries is partnering with Learning NQ Inc to develop a culture of learning from the cradle to the grave here in Townsville.

The 31 Days of Discovery in May was one of their initiatives which highlighted the number of learning opportunities available to the public. This year's activities provided a taster for next year's Festival of Learning which offer our community a chance to trial even more learning opportunities.

CityLibraries and Learning NQ Inc. recognise that in combining the strengths of individual organisations that have learning as a common purpose and interest, the desired culture can be achieved.

Partnerships with local organisations such as James Cook University, Communities for Children and local schools have been established to deliver workshops and activities.

The development of a learning community will encourage social cohesion through eliminating social exclusion, increasing individual health and wellbeing and providing a means of combating poverty.

To find out more about this project or to become a partner of Learning NQ Inc, please contact the Coordinator of Lifelong Learning at CityLibraries on 4727 9666.