



# Sikh Community of Far North Queensland Heritage Interpretation Plan

Prepared for the Sikhs in FNQ Project

July 2022—FINAL



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- The Sikh community of Cairns, Queensland, particularly those who shared their stories and participated in the community consultation workshop held at the Gordonvale *gurdwara*.
- The Australian Sikh Heritage Association.
- The Sikhs in FNQ Project, in particular for their funding contributions and the dedicated involvement of the project volunteer committee.
- City of Cairns.
- The Mulgrave Settlers Museum and Mulgrave Historical Society.
- The Cairns Museum and Cairns Historical Society, in particular the CHS Research Centre.
- The National Trust of Queensland.
- The National Trust of Western Australia.
- Gordon Grimwade & Associates.



Figure 1. The co-contributors of the Sikhs in FNQ and Extent Heritage project teams. Left to right: Jassi Singh, Jessica Heidrich, Manmeet Sandhar, Luckbir Singh, Arun Singh Mann, Eleanor Banaag, Manjoot Singh, and Narinder Singh. Absent Gabrielle Harrington, Extent Heritage.

## Interpretation vision

The Sikh community of Far North Queensland, through their shared experiences and stories, envisage a greater understanding and awareness of their long-standing and significant contribution to the wider Far North Queensland community through an exemplary approach to heritage interpretation that creates a positive and vibrant understanding of the traditional and contemporary values of Sikhism.

As Sikhism recognises oneness in all, the Sikh community of Far North Queensland would like to acknowledge Indigenous Australians, who existed in Australia for tens of thousands of years prior to the colonisation.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Project brief

Extent Heritage Pty Ltd was engaged by a volunteer project committee representing the Sikh community in Far North Queensland (hereafter referred to as the Sikhs in FNQ) in partnership with the Australian Sikh Heritage Association (ASHA) to prepare an Interpretation Plan for the shared heritage of the Sikh community in Far North Queensland.

In addition to the CBD of Cairns, the wider Cairns region includes towns and localities north of Palm Cove via Smithfield, Redlynch, Freshwater, Stratford and Aeroglen to Cairns, and then south from Edmonton via Gordonvale, Alooomba, Fishery Falls, Babinda and Mirriwinni. More broadly, Far North Queensland is a tropical region in the northern-most part of the state, stretching from Cairns to the Torres Strait.

Over the last few years, ASHA has developed a valuable network encompassing government entities, academics, associations, libraries, archivists, and community groups to establish a platform of resources upon which the Sikhs in FNQ can build. Whilst this project has drawn on the information and network already established by ASHA, Extent Heritage also worked directly with the Sikhs in FNQ community, and specifically the volunteer project committee, as key stakeholders over a two-year period to develop and implement this project.

This Interpretation Plan (hereafter referred to as 'the Plan') provides strategic direction on the interpretation of the heritage values, history and stories of the Sikhs in FNQ community. The Plan contextualises the history of the Sikh community, establishes key themes that provide a framework within which interpretation can be planned and designed, and provides high-level, strategic recommendations in terms of potential interpretation measures that could be used to tell the story of the Sikh community in FNQ, inclusive of indicative stakeholders, timeframes, and budgets for the implementation of the Plan.

## 1.2 Use of the Plan

### Purpose

The purpose of the Plan is to ensure that the traditional, historical and contemporary values and meanings associated with the Sikh community in FNQ are identified and engaged within a meaningful, culturally appropriate and practical way.

The intention of this Plan is not to provide a chronological account of the Sikh community in FNQ, nor a comprehensive record all the individuals, events, stories and associations that may be of importance to the community. Rather, this Plan is designed to provide high-level strategic guidance and to establish a clear direction for the the future interpretation of, and public engagement with, the history and heritage of the Sikh community in FNQ. Recognising that interpretation measures may become redundant over time, this Plan purposely provides high-level guidance and a range of options so as to remain relevant and practical over an extended period of time.

The Plan has a number of key objectives:

- **Celebrate** – research and synthesise historical and contemporary information regarding the Sikh community in FNQ, its history and its heritage.
- **Innovate** – develop a strategic framework for fostering greater awareness and meaningful engagement with the heritage and contemporary values of Sikhism on a variety of platforms.
- **Collaborate** – identify opportunities partnerships with like-minded community and other organisations concerned with the conservation and celebration of cultural heritage, particularly in Far North Queensland.

### Use

It is anticipated that the Plan will be consulted and used as follows:

- to understand how to integrate the historical and contemporary values of the Sikh community in FNQ into the design and vision of future projects;
- to understand and identify the key interpretive themes and how they might be recorded, communicated and celebrated;
- as a tool to understand how to engage with the conservation and interpretation of Sikh heritage in the FNQ;
- to establish a clear direction for the future interpretation of, and public engagement with, the history, stories and heritage of the Sikh community in FNQ through identifying a range of suitable interpretation measures;
- provide some guidance for how the interpretive vision, and opportunities identified in this Plan can be implemented; and
- to assist in the pursuit of grant funding by demonstrating a comprehensive and cohesive approach to heritage interpretation that aims to be an effective and enduring cultural asset to the community.

## 1.3 Methodology

### Philosophy

The general philosophy and process used in the development of this Plan is adopted from the Australia ICOMOS *Burra Charter* (2013), which defines interpretation as, 'all the ways of presenting the cultural significance of a place'. Interpretation may be a combination of the treatment of fabric; the use of and activities at the place, and the use of introduced explanatory material.

The best practice guidelines, policies and principles that have guided the approach to this Plan are detailed in Part 3, below.

## The Plan

This project has been developed in a number of stages and delivered in consultation with the broader Sikh community but with the Sikhs in FNQ volunteer project committee as key stakeholders. The preparation entailed the following staged approach:

### 1 Inception

An inception meeting was attended by co-contributors of the Sikhs in FNQ project team and Extent Heritage to confirm the requirements, key stakeholders, objectives and approach for the Plan, and to discuss the logistics of the community workshop stage.

### 2 Desktop Review and Research

Existing historical material and primary sources were collated and consulted, and additional research was carried out to gain an understanding of the values, significance, context, and history of the Sikh community in FNQ. A review was also undertaken of tourism, community profile, and visitation statistics (where available and applicable) to identify potential audiences and to inform the development of the Plan.

Contact was also made with wider stakeholders including councillors, local historical groups, and individuals with potential to either provide historical material relating to the Sikh community in FNQ or to provide insight into the wider non-Sikh community's experience of Sikhs. The following groups and individual were contacted via written Expressions of Interest:

- National Trust of Australia (Queensland);
- Cairns Regional Council;
- Cairns Historical Society and Museum;
- Cairns Family History Society, and
- Gordon Grimwade, archaeologist.

Utilising this background research, a preliminary set of themes and workshop questions were developed by Extent Heritage, and then reviewed in consultation with the co-contributors of the Sikhs in FNQ project team, to inform the community workshop stage. Relevant Covid-19 safety protocols and interview consent documentation was also prepared.

### 3 Community Consultation

A one-day workshop was held with members of the Sikh community at the *gurdwara* in Edmonton, Cairns. This workshop was facilitated by Extent Heritage and the co-contributors of the Sikhs in FNQ project team.

The intention of the workshop was to allow Extent Heritage's team of heritage interpretation specialists to engage with the Sikh community and for Sikh community members to discuss and contribute their stories to the project. The workshop was informal in its approach, with several focus groups (led by moderators from Extent and the Sikhs in FNQ project team). This approach allowed for more personal discussions of individual stories, key Sikh values, identification of places of significance to the Sikh community (principally in the Cairns region), workshoping of ideas for interpretation measures, and identification of further resources that may inform the development of the Plan.

Aspects of the workshop were recorded using a range of methods including written forms, digital transcripts, photographs, and audio-visual devices. The intention was not to produce an oral history, but to record information sufficient to inform the development of the Plan.

### 4 Development of the Interpretation Plan

Drawing on the desktop research and review process, and the outcomes and ideas generated in the community workshop, the Extent Heritage team then refined the preliminary themes into a formal thematic framework that would serve as the basis for the recommendation of a range of interpretation options

### 5 Review and Finalisation

Co-contributors of the Sikhs in FNQ project team reviewed the draft Plan and provided written and verbal feedback to Extent Heritage for consolidation into the final issue. In response to this feedback and review process, the final Plan went through an internal review process at Extent Heritage prior to being issued for final review. After incorporating any final feedback, the final Plan was issued.



Figure 2. A focus group discussion underway during the community consultation workshop held in the Gordonvale *gurdwara* February 2021 with members of the Sikh community, Extent Heritage, and the Sikhs in FNQ project team. Image courtesy of Arun Singh Mann.

*From far left to right in a clockwise direction: Jessica Heidrich, Amarjit Mahjel, Sandra Charlton, Gian Singh, Dave Singh, Devo Singh, Manjoot Singh, Harmel Kaur, Surinder Kaur Sodhi, Surinder Singh, Balbir Singh, and Diane Ramsay.*



Figure 3. Dave Singh (left) and Jassi Singh (right) engaged in conversation as part of the community consultation workshop held in the Gordonvale *gurdwara* in February 2021. Image courtesy of Arun Singh Mann.



Figure 5. A focus group discussion underway during the community consultation workshop held in the Gordonvale *gurdwara* in February 2021. Image courtesy of Arun Singh Mann.



Figure 4. A focus group discussion underway during the community consultation workshop held in the Gordonvale *gurdwara* in February 2021. Image courtesy of Arun Singh Mann.

*From far left to right in a clockwise direction: Dilraj Singh, Eleanor Banaag, Harpal Singh, Rajwinder Chohan, Rani Chohan, Manmeet Sandhar, Gajjan Singh, and Karam Singh.*



Figure 6. Manjoot Singh (left) and Jessica Heidrich (bottom) in discussion with Diane Ramsay (right) during the community consultation workshop held in the Gordonvale *gurdwara*.



## The interpretation process

The following graphic provides a high-level overview of the heritage interpretation process, including the role of an Interpretation Plan in that process. As shown in this graphic, this 'Plan' stage should be followed by an 'Implementation' stage.

### RESEARCH

- Targeted review and analysis of a range of factors that need to be considered as part of the subsequent Consult and Plan stages.
- Involves reviewing historical and community resources, analysing contemporary audience and tourism statistics, and undertaking additional historical research to gain an understanding of the existing historical and contemporary context.

### CONSULT

- Consultation with key stakeholders and community members
- Opportunity to record and discuss stakeholder and community perspectives, stories, places and values.
- Opportunity to identify resources and options for the future implementation of the Plan.

### PLAN

- Product of the previous research and consultation stages.
- Provides the overall strategic framework for planning and managing heritage interpretation.
- Integrates historical research and community and stakeholder consultation to identify themes and interpretation concepts for further detailed design and implementation.

### IMPLEMENT

- Commences once the Plan has been finalised.
- Involves the funding, detailed design, fabrication and installation of the interpretation devices detailed in the Plan.
- May be undertaken progressively or in stages over a period of time.

## 1.4 Authorship

The following staff members at Extent Heritage have prepared this Plan:

- Eleanor Banaag, senior associate,
- Jessica Heidrich, senior heritage advisor, and
- Gabrielle Harrington, heritage advisor.

The report has been reviewed by Dr Andrew Sneddon, Director, for quality assurance purposes.

## 1.5 Terminology

### The Burra Charter

The terminology in this Plan follows definitions presented in *The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance* (the 'Burra Charter') (Australia ICOMOS 2013). Article 1 provides the following definitions:

**Adaptation** means changing a *place* to suit the existing *use* or a proposed use.

**Compatible use** means a *use* which respects the *cultural significance* of a *place*. Such a use involves no, or minimal, impact on cultural significance.

**Conservation** means all the processes of looking after a *place* so as to retain its *cultural significance*.

**Cultural significance** means aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations. Cultural significance is embodied in the *place* itself, its *fabric*, *setting*, *use*, *associations*, *meanings*, *records*, *related places* and *related objects*. Places may have a range of values for different individuals or groups.

**Fabric** means all the physical material of the *place* including elements, fixtures, contents and objects.

**Interpretation** means all the ways of presenting the *cultural significance* of a *place*.

**Maintenance** means the continuous protective care of a *place*, and its *setting*. Maintenance is to be distinguished from repair which involves *restoration* or *reconstruction*.

**Place** means a geographically defined area. It may include elements, objects, spaces and views. Place may have tangible and intangible dimensions.

**Preservation** means maintaining a *place* in its existing state and retarding deterioration.

**Reconstruction** means returning a *place* to a known earlier state and is distinguished from *restoration* by the introduction of new material.

**Related place** means a *place* that contributes to the *cultural significance* of another place.

**Restoration** means returning a *place* to a known earlier state by removing accretions or by reassembling existing elements without the introduction of new material.

**Setting** means the immediate and extended environment of a *place* that is part of or contributes to its *cultural significance* and distinctive character

**Use** means the functions of a *place*, including the activities and traditional and customary practices that may occur at the place or are dependent on the place.

## The Ename Charter

The terminology in this Plan also follows definitions presented in *The ICOMOS Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites* (the 'Ename Charter') (ICOMOS 2008):

**Cultural Heritage Site** refers to a place, locality, natural landscape, settlement area, architectural complex, archaeological site, or standing structure that is recognized and often legally protected as a place of historical and cultural significance.

**Interpretation** refers to the full range of potential activities intended to heighten public awareness and enhance understanding of cultural heritage site. These can include print and electronic publications, public lectures, on-site and directly related off-site installations, educational programmes, community activities, and ongoing research, training, and evaluation of the interpretation process itself.

**Interpretive infrastructure** refers to physical installations, facilities, and areas at, or connected with a cultural heritage site that may be specifically utilised for the purposes of interpretation and presentation including those supporting interpretation via new and existing technologies.

**Presentation** more specifically denotes the carefully planned communication of interpretive content through the arrangement of interpretive information, physical access, and interpretive infrastructure at a cultural heritage site. It can be conveyed through a variety of technical means, including, yet not requiring, such elements as informational panels, museum-type displays, formalized walking tours, lectures and guided tours, and multimedia applications and websites.

**Site interpreters** refer to staff or volunteers at a cultural heritage site who are permanently or temporarily engaged in the public communication of information relating to the values and significance of the site.

## 2. Objectives

### CELEBRATE

- Define an interpretative 'vision' for telling the story of the Sikh community in FNQ
- Acknowledge, celebrate, and foster awareness of the significance of the contribution, and the continuing presence, of the Sikh community in FNQ
- Establish a framework for stimulating learning, understanding, and exploration of the history, culture and contemporary values of Sikhism

### INNOVATE

- Encourage 'place-making' by identifying linkages between key places, themes and heritage interpretation measures
- Establish clear, practical recommendations for future heritage interpretation, suitable for further design and implementation
- Demonstrate and encourage best practice heritage interpretation consistent with relevant industry standards and guidelines

### COLLABORATE

- Aim to reach a wide and diverse audience through varied types and approaches to interpretation that are meaningful, practical and culturally appropriate
- Identify opportunities for community involvement and collaboration in the future design and implementation of heritage interpretation

### 3. Interpretation principles

This Part outlines the relevant best practice guidelines, policies and principles that have guided the approach towards developing a meaningful, culturally appropriate interpretation plan tailored to the Sikh community of FNQ.

These guidelines, policies and principles, along with an understanding of the heritage values and historical context assist in ensuring that the approach towards heritage interpretation is tailored, meaningful and culturally appropriate.

#### 3.1 The Burra Charter

The *Burra Charter* (Australia ICOMOS 2013) is considered the guiding document of best practice standards for the management of cultural and natural heritage within Australia. The *Burra Charter* states that it can be applied to all types of places of cultural significance including natural, Indigenous and historic places with cultural values.

Principles of the *Burra Charter* appropriate and relevant to this Plan are summarised in Table 1, below.

Table 1. Relevant *Burra Charter* articles to interpretation

Article	Number	Description
5. Values	5.1	Conservation of a place should identify and take into consideration all aspects of cultural and natural significance without unwarranted emphasis on any one value at the expense of others.
6. Burra Charter Process	6.1	The cultural significance of a place and other issues affecting its future are best understood by a sequence of collecting and analysing information before making decisions. Understanding cultural significance comes first, then development of policy and finally management of the place in accordance with the policy. This is the Burra Charter Process.
	6.2	Policy for managing a place must be based on an understanding of its cultural significance.
	6.3	Policy development should also include consideration of other factors affecting the future of a place such as the owner's needs, resources, external constraints and its physical condition.
	6.4	In developing an effective policy, different ways to retain cultural significance and address other factors may need to be explored.
	24.2	Significant associations between people and a place should be respected, retained and not obscured. Opportunities for the interpretation,

Article	Number	Description
24. Retaining Associations and Meanings		commemoration and celebration of these associations should be investigated and implemented.
	24.2	Significant meanings, including spiritual values, of a place should be respected. Opportunities for the continuation or revival of these meanings should be investigated and implemented.
25. Interpretation	25.1	The cultural significance of many places is not readily apparent and should be explained by interpretation. Interpretation should enhance understanding and engagement and be culturally appropriate.

#### 3.2 The Ename Charter

The *ICOMOS Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites* (the 'Ename Charter') (ICOMOS 2008) is the most recent development in the guiding principles specific to interpretation of cultural heritage.

The *Ename Charter* sets forth seven cardinal principles upon which interpretation and presentation, in whatever form or medium deemed appropriate, should be based. Ratified in 2008, the Ename Charter defines its purpose as being:

to define the basic principles of Interpretation and Presentation as essential components of heritage conservation efforts and as a means of enhancing public appreciation and understanding of cultural heritage sites.

(ICOMOS 2008)

Principles of the *Ename Charter* appropriate and relevant to this Plan are summarised in Table 2, below.

Table 2. Relevant *Ename Charter* principles to interpretation

Number	Principle	Description
1	Access and understanding	This principle identifies that interpretation and presentation programmes should facilitate physical and intellectual access by the public to cultural heritage sites. It should enhance personal experience through communicating the importance of a cultural heritage site, and also encourage individuals and communities to reflect on their own perceptions of the site. The aim should be to stimulate further interest, learning, experience, and exploration. Interpretation should identify the varied audiences that will potentially engage with the presentation in order to effectively connect with them.

Number	Principle	Description
2	Information Sources	This principle identifies that interpretation and presentation should be based on evidence gathered through accepted scientific and scholarly methods as well as from living cultural traditions. Interpretation should be able to demonstrate that it is well-researched through the range of oral and written information, material remains, visual reconstructions, environmental, archaeological, architectural, and historical data. The data needs to be palatable to a varied audience, linking this principle with Principle 1 above.
3	Context and setting	This principle dictates that the interpretation and presentation of cultural heritage sites should relate to their wider social, cultural, historical, and natural contexts and settings. Interpretation should explore the significance of a site in its multi-faceted historical, political, spiritual, and artistic contexts. It should consider all aspects of the site's cultural, social, and environmental significance and values. The surrounding landscape, natural environment, and geographical setting are integral parts of a site's historical and cultural significance, and, as such, should be considered in its interpretation.
4	Authenticity	The design of a heritage interpretation programme should respect the traditional social functions of the site and the cultural practices and dignity of local residents and associated communities. All visible interpretive infrastructures (such as kiosks, walking paths, and information panels) must be sensitive to the character, setting and the cultural and natural significance of the site, while remaining easily identifiable.
5	Sustainability	The interpretation plan for a cultural heritage site must be sensitive to its natural and cultural environment, with social, financial, and environmental sustainability among its central goals.
6	Inclusiveness	The Interpretation and Presentation of cultural heritage site must be the result of meaningful collaboration between heritage professionals, hosts and associated communities, and other stakeholders.
7	Research, training and evaluation	Continuing research, training, and evaluation are essential components of the interpretation of a cultural heritage site.

### 3.3 Historical themes

The Queensland thematic framework (Blake 1996; DEHP 2013) identifies ten historic themes to assist heritage practitioners to identify and assess heritage within the broader patterns of the historical development of Queensland.

Several of these historic themes are relevant to understanding the broad significance of the contribution that Sikhs made (and continue to make) to the history and development of Australia and the Far North Queensland and Cairns regions (see Table 3, below).

Further considered of the Queensland historical framework in relation to the custom thematic framework development for this Plan is presented in Part 5, below.

Table 3. Overview of the Queensland historical themes relevant to understanding the contribution of the Sikh community within the broader patterns of the historical development of Queensland. *Source:* Blake (1996); DEHP (2013).

Queensland historical theme	Sub-theme
1. Peopling places	1.2 Migration from outside and within 1.4 Family and marking the phases of life
2. Exploiting, utilising and transforming the land	2.4 Agricultural activities
3. Developing secondary and tertiary industries	3.5 Struggling with remoteness, hardship and failure
4. Working	4.7 Working as exploited/indentured labour
6. Building settlements, towns, cities and dwellings	6.1 Establishing settlements
7. Maintaining order	7.6 Defending the country
8. Creating social and cultural institutions	8.1 Worshipping and religious institutions 8.2 Cultural activities
10. Providing health and welfare services	10.2 Caring for the homeless and destitute

In addition, the Cairns region historical thematic framework (Heritage Alliance 2011) identifies eleven historic themes to assist heritage practitioners to understand what is distinctive about Cairns' history and heritage in comparison to other regions.

Several of these Cairns-specific themes are relevant to this Plan in terms of understanding the significance of the contribution of the Sikh community to the development of the Cairns area, rather than FNQ more broadly (see Table 4, below).

Table 4. Overview of the Cairns region historical themes relevant to understanding the contribution of the Sikh community within the broader patterns of the historical development of Cairns. *Source:* Heritage Alliance (2011).

Cairns region historical theme	Sub-theme
2. Peopling Cairns	2.2 Arrival of new settlers to the Cairns region
3. Developing and utilising the land in the Cairns region	3.3 Agricultural pursuits
3. Developing secondary and tertiary industries	3.5 Struggling with remoteness, hardship and failure

4. Developing Cairns' local and regional industries	4.2 The sugar industry
5. Working in the Cairns region	5.1 Working for the sugar cane industry
7. Building settlements, towns, and cities in the Cairns region	7.1 Planning and forming settlements 7.3 Buildings and architecture
8. Administering Cairns	8.5 Defending the country
9. Creating social and cultural institutions in Cairns	9.1 Worshipping in Cairns 9.2 Participating in cultural activities in Cairns
11. Providing health & welfare services in the Cairns region	11.1 Caring for the whole community

### Personal

- Refers to the unique personal context of the visitor.
- Incorporates the sum of all of their existing knowledge and experiences including their existing knowledge of the specific experience.
- Includes their interests, motivations, concerns and aspirations for the visit. For example, a visitor that is actively seeking the experience and has some level of knowledge and understanding would have a different experience to one that has no pre-existing knowledge and happens to engage in the experience by chance.

### Social

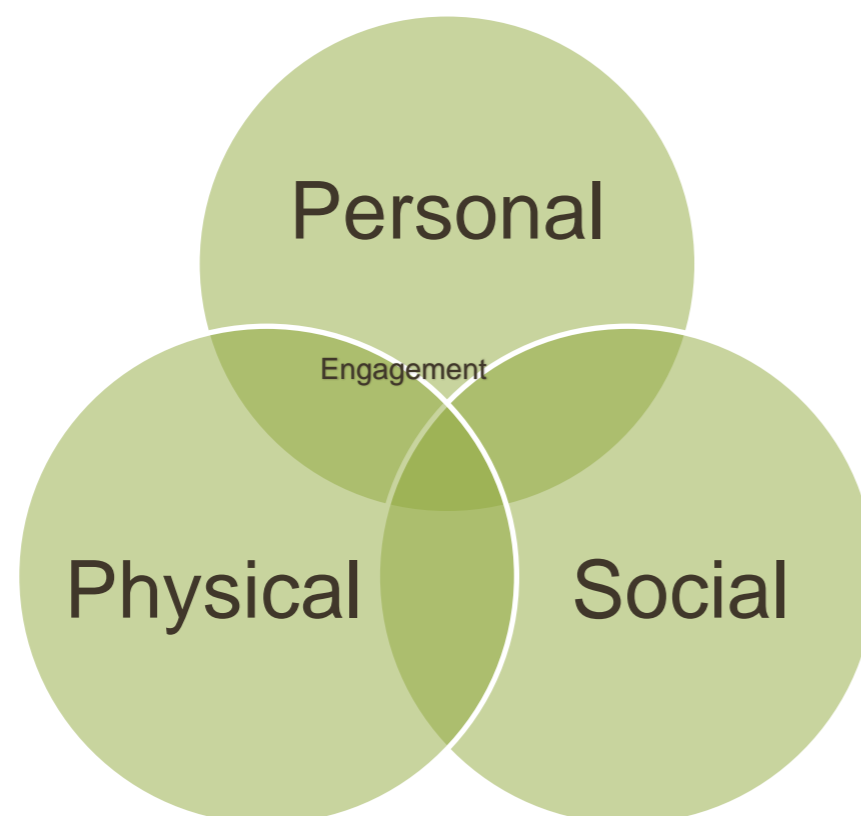
- Refers to the motivations and group dynamics that impact on a visitor's experience.
- Includes whether visitors choose to come to (and engage in) an experience alone or with other people. For example, a visitor who engages in an experience alone would have a different experience to one that does so within a family or peer group, or as part of a school or educational group.

### Physical:

- Refers to the elements of the physical environment that can impact on a visitor's experience.
- Includes (but is not limited to) signage, landscaping, and the level of physical comfort in the location.
- The physical environment influences the length of time a visitor spends in a place, and catering for the visitor's physical comfort removes impediments to enjoying the experience.

## 3.4 Enhancing visitor experience

Although how visitors react to an interpretive experience depends on a number of factors, three are predominant: **personal**, **social** and **physical**. These three variables are to be taken into consideration when developing interpretation.



## 4. Historical context

### 4.1 Sikhism: beliefs, traditions, and customs

Sikhism (Sikhi, ਸਿੱਖੀ in Gurmukhi) is a monotheistic religion primarily established in sixteenth and seventeenth century India with the birth of the founder of the Sikh tradition, Guru Nanak, in 1469 in the Punjab region in South Asia. It is now the fifth-largest organized religion in the world, with an established theology, scripture and ethical codes (Australian Sikh Association 2018).

The Sikh faith is based on the teachings of Guru Nanak Dev and nine successive Sikh Gurus, who furthered the mission and values of Sikhism over the course of almost 250 years. The Gurus historically shared their wisdom through *sabads*, relatively messages written in poetic form and set to a *rag*, a system of musical measures (Sikh Research Institute 2014). After the declaration of the last living Guru in 1708, these *sabads* were compiled into what is called the *Guru Granth Sahib*, the holy scripture of Sikhism and a text accorded respect equivalent to that of a human Guru whenever handled or discussed. The *Guru Granth Sahib* includes the words of Sikh Gurus alongside teachings from diverse leaders from many faiths, exemplifying Sikhs' openness to diverse perspectives and religious tolerance.

The word 'Sikh' comes from the Sanskrit root 'śiṣya', meaning 'disciple' or 'learner', and accordingly, the freedom to choose and practice religion freely is at the foundation of Sikhism. Guru Nanak Dev envisioned a highly egalitarian society in which all human beings were entitled to equal rights and individual respect and in which social distinctions that produce inequities including gender, race, religion and caste are rejected (Sikh Research Institute 2014). The Sikh faith is strictly monotheistic, believing in one supreme Creator, free of gender and all-pervading, and encourages its followers to connect with the Divine within the context of their daily life, through meditation and prayer, honest labour and selfless community service.

Sikhs aim to practice three main principles in their daily lives:

- *Naam Japna* – to be in constant remembrance of the ever-present force of the Creator.
- *Kirat karni* – to earn in a just manner with integrity and honesty.
- *Vand chakna* – to share the rewards of life rather than merely accumulating wealth.

For practising Sikhs, their identity is also rooted, in part, in the observance and maintenance of five articles of faith, known as the Five Kakars:

- *kes* (uncut hair, principally covered by a turban for men or a simple piece of fabric for young boys);
- *kara* (an iron or steel bracelet);
- *kanga* (a wooden comb);
- *kirpan* (a traditional sword); and
- *kachera* (knee-length shorts).

Those of the Sikh faith are further distinguished through their middle or surnames: as a reflection of casting off one's caste and social status, all Sikh males adopt 'Singh' (meaning 'lion') and women adopt 'Kaur' (meaning 'princess') as part of their names.

As in every religion, people observe their faith at different levels. As a result, not all Sikhs choose to maintain the Five Kakars or maintain Singh or Kaur in their names and instead choose to retain their Sikh identity by virtue of their religion and language; however, this does not exclude one from the Sikh community nor reflect a person's lack of commitment to Sikhism.

The Sikh place of worship and learning, or *gurdwara*, is historically a refuge for the homeless and the destitute and a centre of social activity. In a *gurdwara*, everyone is considered equal and people of all faiths and backgrounds are welcome. The prerequisites for entering a *gurdwara* are removing one's shoes and covering one's head with a handkerchief, scarf, or other cloth. A typical *gurdwara* has a large area for communal gathering, a kitchen area, a sacred area where the *Guru Granth Sahib* is placed on high palanquin under a decorated canopy, and a display of the *nishan sahib*, a saffron-coloured triangular flag bearing the symbol of the Sikh faith (the *khanda*), outside the building. A typical service would include the singing of hymns, reciting of passages the *Guru Granth Sahib*, Sikhism's holy scriptures, and the exposition of Sikh history, tradition, and theology. At the end of the service, congregants pray and then head to the *langar*, a community kitchen area usually in the ground floor area of the *gurdwara* that serves free meals to people from all walks of life. Everyone is encouraged to sit on the floor side by side and eat together, thereby removing barriers of caste and class.

This tradition of nourishing the Sikh and non-Sikh community alike can be traced back to the early days of Sikhism. At the first *langar* meals, hungry people from all Indian castes sat side-by-side on the ground in the *gurdwara* to receive their food and eat together, at a time people of different social castes were rigidly segregated in all daily activities. At the heart of this tradition of *langar* is the principle of *seva*, selfless service or work performed for others without expecting anything in return. To prepare, serve and clean up after free meals is just one of the many ways in which Sikhs reach out to and strengthen their local communities: *gurdwaras* can also variously incorporate clinics, schools, guest quarters and community centres.

No specific time, day or month is regarded as sacred for Sikhs, although the Sikh community assemble to commemorate historical events, to celebrate *gurpurabs* (a day associated with the life of the Guru), and to celebrate rites of passage both as families and a congregation, or *sangat*.

Generally, the Sikh community practice cremation and believe in reincarnation of their soul after death. Arrangements for funerals can widely vary, but a typical cremation involves the preparation of the deceased's body, a cremation attended by the bereaved family, close friends and relatives and involving the recital of prayers, and the conduct of funeral services as either the *gurdwara* or at the place of cremation (or both). Historically, cremation involved collecting and stacking timber for the building of a funeral pyre in a designated outdoor site the day prior to the funeral. On the day of the funeral, the deceased would be laid on a stretcher in the midst of the timber pyre, additional timber would be placed over the top and usually the eldest son would ignite the fire, which was kept burning for the remainder of the day. After observing a period of three days, the site was revisited by the bereaved family, the ashes were then removed and either returned to the deceased's homeland or scattered in a suitable river. In contemporary times, cremation is undertaken at a modern crematorium.

The universal nature of the Sikh way of life reaches out to people of all faiths and cultural backgrounds, encouraging individuals to see beyond their differences, act in service of others, and to work together towards a more open, progressive society. The emphasis is on a leading a worldly, successful life as a family-orientated, contributing member of society, but with a mind attuned to an awareness of God. Sikhism, therefore, recognises oneness in all.

## 4.2 Sikhs in Australia

### 4.2.1 Early migration

In Australia, and also in the FNQ region and Cairns area, the Sikh community has a long history; however, the experiences and contributions of early Sikh immigrants have often been overlooked in the dominant narrative of Australian colonial history.

Following the annexation of the Sikh Empire of Maharaja Ranjit Singh by the British East India Company in 1849, the first phase of Indian migrants began arriving in various territories controlled by the British, including Australia, brought over as indentured labourers or domestic servants for British immigrants (Ballantyne 2006; McCarthy 2013; Tatla 1999). The decline of convict transportation (and its subsequent abolishment) led to a decline in available labour in newly established New South Wales colony (which at the time included Queensland and Victoria), which in turn increased demand for agricultural and domestic labourers (Kenna and Jordan 2019).

The first recorded evidence of Sikh migrants to Australia were Pooran Dabee Singh and Nunkey Kaur, who arrived in Brisbane in 1844 on the brigantine, 'Minerva', from Benares, Varanasi, India. They were brought to Australia and employed by Mr Phillip Friell and Mr Gordon Sandeman under a five year indentured labour contract, along with 23 other Indian migrant workers, which paid 4 rupees per month (equivalent to 8 shillings or 50 cents) with accommodation and rations (ASHA 2016). During this period, there is little, if any, evidence of permanent settlement: many workers returned to India as soon as their contract terms were up or sought a domicile certificate to stay in Australia (McCarthy 2013).

From 1860 to 1901, another phase of Indian migration to Australia occurred, primarily Sikhs and Muslims from the Punjab region. At this time, significant trade opportunities had begun to be established between Australia and India, particularly the export of valuable commodities such as horses and sandalwood (ASHA 2016). By the 1890s, the increased trade networks led to an influx of Punjabi immigrants to Australia.

Another factor influencing migration was related to the shortage of suitable farmland in Punjab. Upon the death of a landowner, it was customary for his land to be equally divided between each of his sons; a practice that resulted in the size of farms in Punjab becoming progressively smaller, often too small for successful subsistence farming (Kenna 2013, 13). This lack of adequate land for farming combined with other social and economic pressures prompted Sikh families to emigrate to Australia (Tatla 2004, 11).

At this time, Sikh men commonly immigrated to Australia to work, sending money regularly back to their families in India. Often these men spent many years working hard in the cane fields, or as a hawker or cameleer before returning home briefly to visit their families. This pattern of migration occurred well into the mid-twentieth century, but was compounded by the harsh restrictions imposed on migrants by the *Immigration Restriction Act 1901*.

In the early days of Federation, Australia was very concerned about maintaining a racially pure, distinctly British society and made every attempt to limit the entry of non-British individuals into Australia. Established in 1901 (and remaining in place until 1973), the *Immigration Restriction Act 1901* was a landmark law that provided the cornerstone of the unofficial 'White Australia' policy and aimed to maintain Australia as a nation populated mainly by white Europeans (NAA 2021). This restrictive legislation made it extremely difficult for non-whites, including Sikhs, to enter to Australia unless they were merchants or students and even then, they were likely to be barred upon re-entry to Australia (Sikh Council of Australia n.d.). A particular aspect of this policy was a controversial dictation test, which became the chief way to control (and exclude) unwanted migration as those who failed were refused entry or deported. Underpinned by notions of racial superiority, the test allowed immigration officials a considerable degree of power over allowing (or rejecting) a person's entry into Australia: it could be administered in any European language (i. e. the choice of language was at the officer's discretion) and administered any number of times (i. e. regardless of receiving a passing grade) (NAA 2010).

At the same time, these ideologies of race were in direct competition with the need for manual, domestic and agricultural labourers to support the development of the newly established Federation. As a result, although government policy heavily restricted the arrival of non-British individuals, the reality of the situation was somewhat different (Jupp 2004). While the government's restrictive immigration policies and dictation testing impacted who was allowed in from India, those who had come prior to 1901 could still move somewhat freely between India and Australia, and many did (McCarthy 2013). Small numbers of Sikhs who lived in British territories like Australia were progressively joined by others, as violence, land shortage, and economic pressures in their native country drove more and more Sikhs to seek out opportunities abroad. At the time of Federation in 1901, there were roughly 3,000 'Hindoos' (a misnomer) living in Australia, with most living in Queensland and New South Wales (Jupp 2001). The majority were Sikhs and Muslims, in spite of the Australian tendency to officially (but mistakenly) label them Afghan, Hindoo, or even Syrian (Jupp 2001).

Throughout the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth century, Indian immigrants in Australia existed in an unusual, often precarious position. Indian-born migrants were often discriminated against for being foreigners and yet, as British subjects, were also regarded as more closely akin to white Australians than many other immigrant groups (McCarthy 2013).



QUEENSLAND.

"OATHS ACT OF 1867," SECTION 14.

RECORD OFFICE, H.M. CUSTOMS, BRISBANE.  
13599  
25 DEC 03

I, Bucksis Singh  
now residing at Brisbane  
do solemnly and sincerely declare that the answers to the following questions are true.

- Of what nationality are you? ... Hindoo
- Where were you born, and when? ... Punpaut - 1870
- When did you come to Australia? ... 1896
- Where have you lived since you came to Australia? (State places, and period of residence in each.)  
Brisbane my headquarters but I travel from one place to another.
- Are you married? If so, of what nationality is your wife, and where does she live?  
Yes - Hindoo - Punpaut.
- Have you any children? If so, what are their respective ages, and where do they live?  
Yes - 1 boy - 10 years - Punpaut
- What is your present occupation? ... Hawking
- What other occupations (if any) have you carried on since you came to Australia?  
None
- How long do you intend to remain in Australia?  
Permanently
- Do you own any property in Australia? If so, state its nature and value. (Full particulars should be furnished on opposite sheet.)  
As shown opposite sheet
- Are you naturalized? If so, state when and where, and give number of Certificate.  
I am a British Subject.

I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true, and by virtue of the provisions of the "Oaths Act of 1867."

Made and declared before me at Brisbane  
this 23 day of October 1903 ਕਰਿਸ਼ਨ ਸਿੰਘ  
J.P.

Book No. 538  
Form No. 21.  
COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA. No. 38  
Immigration Act 1901, 1932 and Regulations.

**CERTIFICATE EXEMPTING FROM DICTATION TEST.**

I, RUPERT BRISBANE CURD the Collector of Customs for the State of QUEENSLAND. in the said Commonwealth, hereby certify that Charlie Duleep Singh of Cairns hereinafter described, who is leaving the Commonwealth temporarily, will be exempted from the provisions of paragraph (a) of Section 3 of the Act if he returns to the Commonwealth within a period of three years from the date of departure shown below.



Date 7. 1. 37 R. Blane  
Collector of Customs.

**DESCRIPTION.**

Nationality <u>Indian</u>	Birthplace <u>India (Barupind)</u>
Age <u>70 years</u>	Complexion <u>Copper</u>
Height <u>6 ft.</u>	Hair <u>Grey</u>
Build <u>medium</u>	Eyes <u>Brown</u>

Particular marks \_\_\_\_\_  
(For thumb prints, see back of this document.)

**PHOTOGRAPHS.**

Full Face:  Profile: 

Charlie Duleep Singh  
experience  
7/1/37

Date of Departure 12. 1. 37 Port of Embarkation Talmeville  
Ship Marulla Destination India

Date of Return 26. 12. 34 Ship Marulla  
Port Brisbane R. Hulish  
Arno Aylmer  
Customs Officers.

B.7/2.29.-294.

Figure 7. A customs declaration page for Bucksis Singh, identifying his intention to re-enter Brisbane in 1903 and his present occupation as a hawker. Source: National Library of Australia.

Figure 8. A certificate exempting Charlie Duleep Singh of Cairns from the dictation test required for immigrants to Australia under the *Immigration Restriction Act 1901*, provisional to returning to Australia within 3 years. Source: National Library of Australia.

## 4.2.2 Cameleers

For more than 50 years until the 1920s, camel trains and the cameleers who handled them gradually opened up an otherwise isolated, inaccessible part of the Australian outback to new settlers (Stevens 2011). In long strings of up to 70, these camel trains sustained life and new endeavours in emerging outback communities: they carried building and railway materials, food, furniture, water, mail and medicine inland, returning with valuable agricultural resources and products.

The idea of introducing camels to Australia was suggested in the early 1800s and by the 1860s, many Punjabi cameleers had arrived in Australia to handle the influx of camels that were imported and introduced by private speculators. First used for Burke and Wills' ill-fated expedition in 1860, camels were able to withstand the lack of water, extreme heat and sandy conditions, which made them invaluable to the early explorers and pioneers. In the 1870s, the cameleers and their camel trains played a vital role in the exploration and construction of the Overland Telegraph Line, and also provided an important means of connecting the coastal cities with inland Australia during the gold rush era.

Despite their different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds, these men tended to be subject to racist attitudes, with European settlers collectively referring to the cameleers as 'Ghans'. In reality, these men actually came from a number of locations including Afghanistan, Baluchistan, the Punjab, Sindh and northern India. There were also a number of Sikh cameleers. Even though they practised different religions, brought different skills, and spoke a wide variety of languages, there was a strong bond between cameleers. In addition to Muslim cameleers, there were also a number of Sikh cameleers. Today, there are many Australian descendants proudly carrying their Islamic or Sikh surnames.



Figure 9. Unloading the camel team in front of the store at Boulia, c.1895. *Source:* SLQ JOL Neg: 146104.

## 4.2.3 Hawkers

Many of the earliest Sikh migrants started businesses supplying goods to the colony, both as store keepers and travelling hawkers. Hawking or peddling was a common occupation in India and one that was easily transplanted to rural Australia. Between the 1890s and 1930s, travelling Sikh hawkers regularly visited Australian country towns to sell their fruits, vegetables, fabrics and other luxury goods brought from the cities. In many places, these hawkers were a lifeline for remote rural settlements in terms providing essential resources and a means of communication. They travelled widely and were generally welcomed by rural communities, providing news, letters and a wide range of goods in their mobile shops. Hawkers were considered a source of delight for rural communities, particularly women and children who had few of the comforts of their relatives who lived in the cities. Within Queensland, the majority of hawkers were initially based in Townsville or Rockhampton, although some moved towards Cairns as the area developed.

Many Sikh hawkers sent some of their profits back to their families and invested the rest in establishing themselves in the new colony, with some building stores and buying land. However, as their families were not allowed to join them, many of the early Sikh pioneers travelled back and forth periodically to India, working in Australia to raise money and returning to India to see and raise their family. By the 1890's, many hawkers had settled in rural Queensland, as well as in parts of the northern New South Wales and rural Victoria, and began seeking employment in the agricultural sector (McCarthy 2013). However, with the advent of the automobile, hawking as a profession eventually become obsolete (Jupp 2001).



Figure 10. Two men and children pose with their horse-drawn hawker's wagon. Image courtesy of John Henwood. *Source:* Lee (2020).



Figure 11. A hawker's wagon belonging to Dava Singh, now preserved in the Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame and Outback Heritage Centre in Longreach, Queensland. *Source:* Extent Heritage.

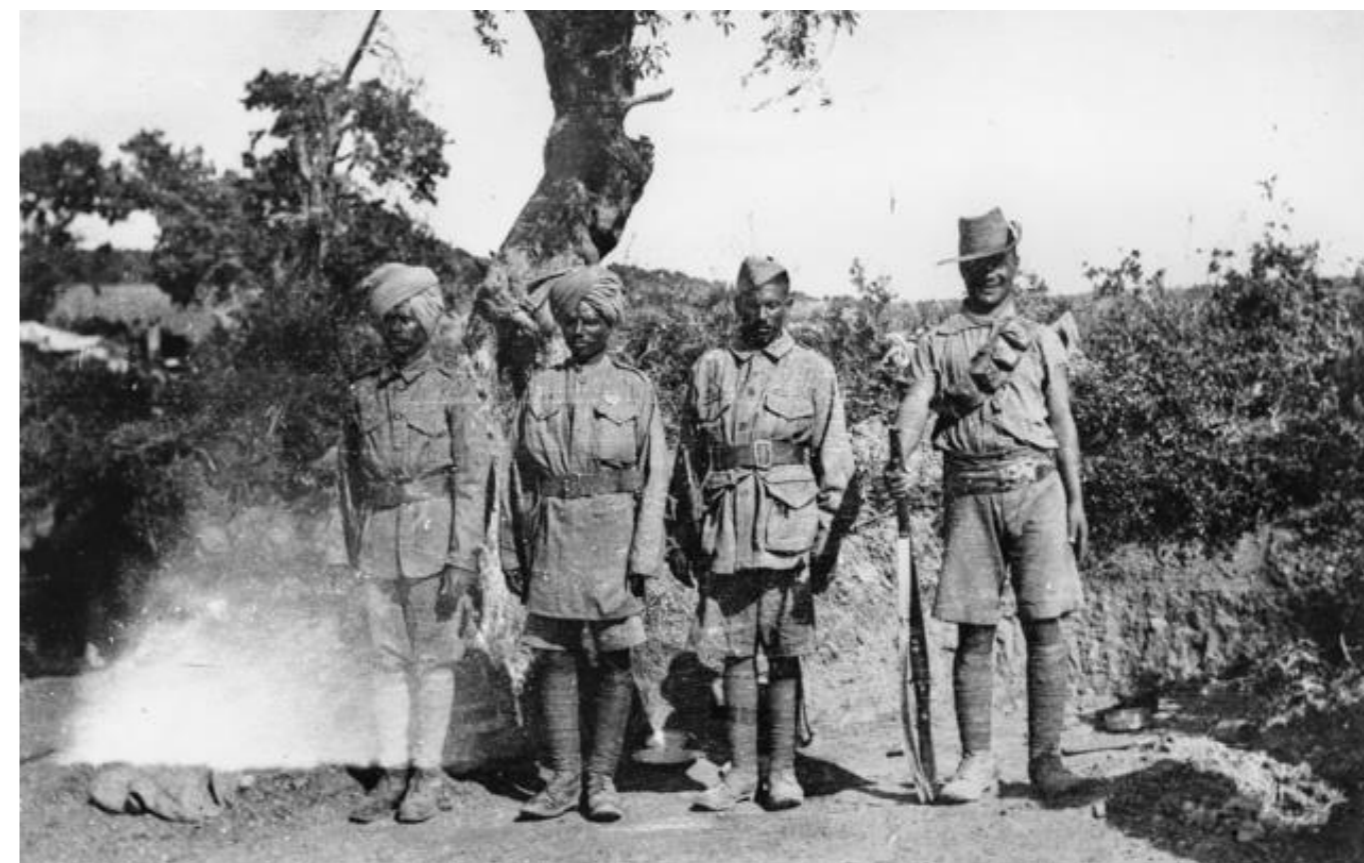


Figure 12. Group portrait of three Indian troops and a Gurkha (far right), all unidentified, at Walden Grove, Gallipoli Peninsula, 25 April 1915. The two soldiers on the left are Sikhs. Image C00730. *Source:* Australian War Memorial.

### 4.3 The Sikhs and the ANZACS

An often overlooked aspect of the history of Sikhs in Australia is their role serving not only as part of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZACs), but also fighting alongside ANZAC forces as part of the British Indian Army in the First World War (Stanley 2015).

In the First World War, approximately 1.2 million Indians volunteered to fight for the British army, making them the largest volunteer army in that conflict. At least 19 Sikhs are known to have specifically enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) and the New Zealand Expeditionary Force (NZEF) (ASHA n.d.). In 1915, about 15,000 Indian troops (including Sikhs, Hindus and Punjabi Muslims) served in the doomed eight-month Gallipoli campaign. They served in an infantry brigade, a mountain artillery brigade, in medical units and in a large contingent of mule drivers (Stanley 2015). Prior to the publication of previously disregarded regimental histories and forgotten officers' memoirs, their part in the invasion of Gallipoli has been largely unknown.

The Sikh turban is known in Punjabi as a *dastar* or *puggaree*; a mandatory article of faith for Sikhs. Interestingly, the Australian Army slouch hat features a seven-pleated cloth band also called a 'puggaree' (ASHA 2016).



Figure 13. A group of Sikh soldiers bathing and unwrapping their turbans either at Gallipoli or the Sinai Peninsula. Call No: PXB 244, File number: FL1535388. *Source:* Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales.

#### 4.4 Sikhs in Far North Queensland

The earliest Sikhs immigrants first arrived in North Queensland in the late nineteenth century, primarily in response to shortages of labourers willing to work on farms in the humid climate of the tropics but also coinciding with the import of indentured labour from the Solomon Islands (Gordon Grimwade & Associates 2005). In the early 1880s, there appears to have been few Sikhs willing to travel to and work in Queensland: 'Indians were unobtainable' (Bolton 1963, 144). In response to continuing concerns that the tropics were unsuited to 'white' labour, some farmers appealed (albeit unsuccessfully) to the Colonial Office in London in attempt to overturn the colonial Queensland government's opposition to 'coloured' migration (Gordon Grimwade & Associates 2005).

However, by the last years of the nineteenth century, there was an initial influx of Indian migrants (including Sikhs) in and around the Far North Queensland, including in the Cairns area (Bolton 1963, 244; see also Heritage Alliance 2011). In part, this may have been in response to the European settlement of Cairns in 1876 (and subsequently, its formal declaration as a town in 1903) and also that of Gordonvale in 1877. The early development of the Cairns region was influenced by (and dependent on) the town's function as a port for the transport of goods to and from the tropics, the discovery and mining of gold, the establishment of early railways and roads, and the subsequent development of specific agricultural pursuits and industries, namely timber getting and sugar (Heritage Alliance 2011). In particular, the climatic conditions in FNQ were found to be ideal for the growing of sugar cane, which greatly influenced the initial migration of Melanesian and Chinese labour, and the subsequent migration of Indian and southern European migrants, to work in the sugar industry (Heritage Alliance 2011).

Many of these early Indian migrants were Sikhs, migrating to Australia from the Punjab and settling in the Northern Rivers District of NSW, particularly in Woolgoolga (Bhatti 2001). Many Punjabi Sikhs were also drawn to FNQ in search of work and soon established themselves there, working as seasonal labourers clearing land on farms, and also on banana and sugar plantations (Bhatti 2001). In 1893, the allocation of Queensland government funding and the ratification of the *Sugar Works Guarantee Act* facilitated the construction of central cooperative mills throughout the colony, including the Mulgrave and Mossman Mills in the Cairns district (Heritage Alliance 2011). Encouraged by the availability of work in the cane fields, this initial influx of Indian workers continued and by 1906, a large Indian camp was established at the intersection of Lake and Wharf Streets in Cairns (Heritage Alliance 2011; see also Jones 1927, 384). Small townships also developed around the centralised mills to provide services to cane cutters and the farming community.

While there was no official ban on 'coloured' labourers prior to Federation, Queensland did enact such a ban in 1913 (de Lapervache 1984). This meant that migrants were not allowed, by law, to work in the sugar cane fields, which were heavily unionized and selective about union membership (Bahtti 2001). At the same time, it is apparent that migrants very much did the hard labour in Queensland's cane fields. This is likely as a result of an exemption for British passport holders to work, as long as they could pass a required dictation test similar to aforementioned one required for entry into Australia. For example, in 1914, over 1,000 exemptions were issued for cane workers and by the early 1930s, approximately 43% of all canecutters were 'of foreign birth' (de Lapervache 1984). Many were Indian migrants, and it was through these exemption networks that the earliest Sikh migrants gained employment in the agricultural sector (and began to establish ties with) in the Cairns area and in FNQ more broadly.

The hard-working ethic of the Sikh people and the importance placed on honest, fruitful labour is reflected in the nature of cane cutting work. Canecutters worked in gangs and relied on teamwork, as the industry operated on a collective-price-rate system in which all gang members would share their earnings equally. Sugar cane was often grown and milled on the same property, and for the seven months of the cane season, workers lived in barracks provided by the farmer. The humid, primitive conditions of the tropics were tough: workers usually laboured for minimal wages under dubious contracts and with primitive food and living conditions (Balanzategui 1994). Over time, the back-breaking physicality of manual cane cutting itself created a well-earned reputation of canecutters as workers of endurance and strength.

Between 1878 and 1891, nine plantations were established in Far North Queensland and by the late nineteenth century, the sugar production and cane cutting industry had become firmly established in the Cairns region. The first sugar mill in the Cairns district was the Pioneer Mill on the Hap Wah Plantation, which first crushed cane in 1882, followed by the Hambledon Mill at Edmonton (1883), the Pyramid Estate Mill (1884), and the Mulgrave Central Mill at Gordonvale (1896) (Balanzategui 1994; Bottoms 1995; Heritage Alliance 2011). With government intervention, these major plantations gave way to small independent farms and communally owned 'co-op' central mills, which prompted the establishment (or where existing, further development) of townships and communities clustered around the mills.

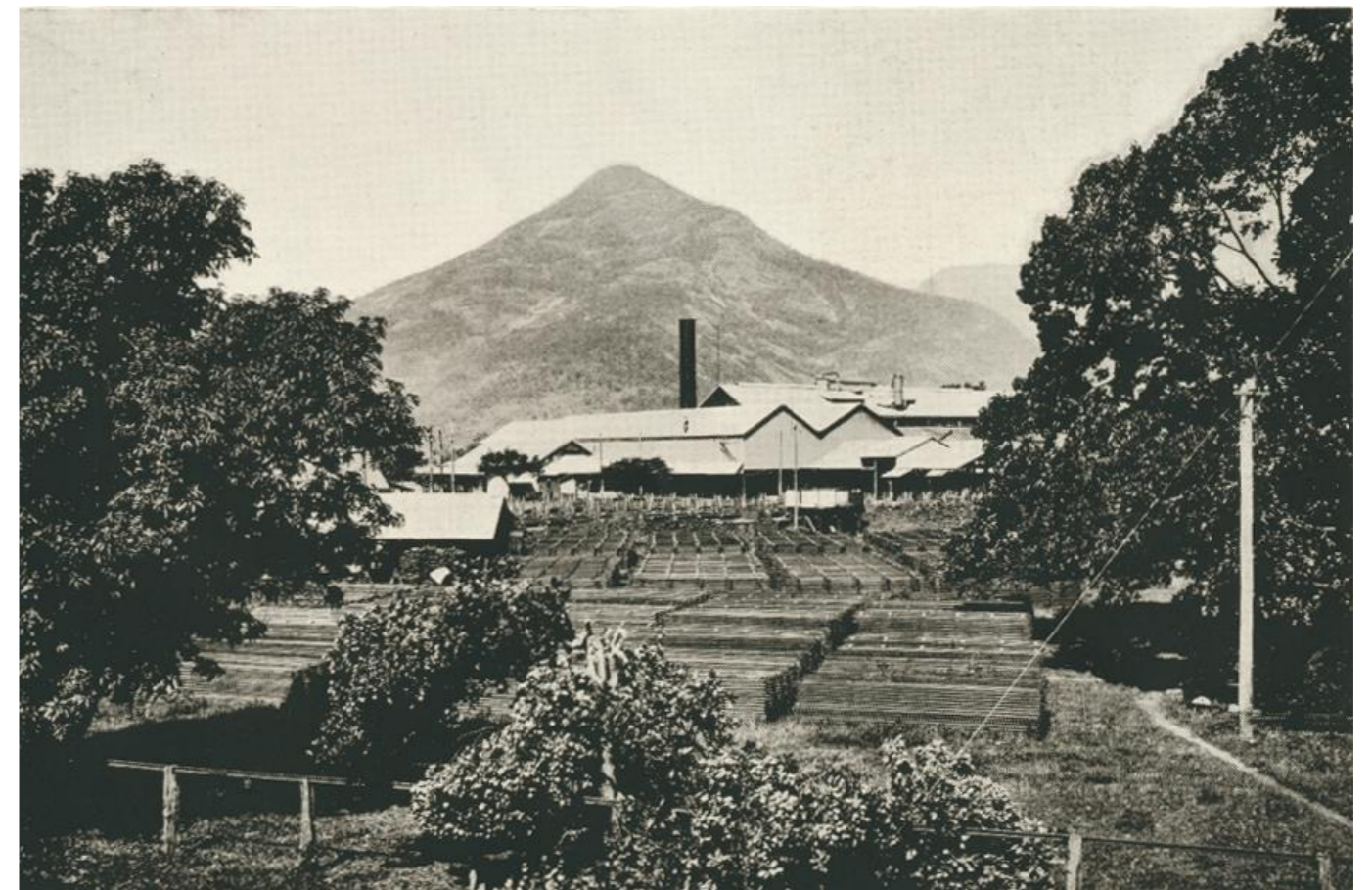


Figure 14. Mulgrave Central Sugar Mill, Gordonvale, c.1935. Source: Centre for the Government of Queensland (2018).

For the Sikh canecutters working and living on these farms and co-op mills, the seasonal nature of this work meant that most divided their lives between Australia and India, working hard for a period of years in the cane fields (some working stints in both Queensland and NSW), and regularly sending their earnings back to their families in the Punjab. Periodically, these Sikh workers would return home to see their families in India during the 'off-season' and then apply for an exemption to re-enter Australia to work again (Kennedy 1988-1989), often moving back and forth between India and Australia several times. In some cases, sons returned with their fathers or nephews returned with their uncles to cut cane together.

Year-round work in the cane fields led to more permanent settlement in the FNQ region: some Sikhs were able to purchase and manage their own farms, after working hard years cutting cane for other landowners, which not only considerably eased economic pressures but also allowed them to permanently bring their families over to Australia (Kennedy 1988-1989). Farms were owned by Sikhs in North Cairns, Gordonvale, Edmonton, Mossman, Babinda, and even as far as Innisfail and Townsville. In many cases, the whole family lived and worked on the farm, and it became a way of life. Within the Cairns area, there are still those continuing the tradition of sugarcane farming and/or working in the industry over several generations.



Figure 15. Don Daleep Singh (left) with two cane farmers (centre and right). Image courtesy of Andrew R Singh Bains. Source: Grewal (2021).

Following the Second World War, the Sikh labour force and Sikh community in the FNQ region began to grow, led by the gradual return of the sons of many of Australia's pioneering Sikh 'grandfathers'. Mostly born in India and brought over as teens to assist in the labour and remittances of that labour's wages, these boys were now young adults, and often replaced their own fathers as their family's representative in Australia. Several factors facilitated this including: the loosening of Australia's immigration policy post-war; India's independence from Britain (1947); the partition of India and Pakistan into Hindu and Muslim states (1947) that divided the Punjab, the homeland of the Sikhs; and the loss of viable agricultural land and increased migration as a result of the disruption and violence experienced by Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims, during the years after the partition (Bhatti 2001; Butalia 2000; Fox 1985).

In addition, Queensland's sugar cane labour unions opened up membership as a result of post-war labour shortages, allowing migrant workers to legally cut cane without the need for special exemption (McCarthy 2013). For many Sikh families, who had been previously unable to join their men labouring in Australia under the existing restrictive immigration policies, the post-war climate provided the impetus for them to reunite. More and more Sikhs were able to secure residency in Australia and gradually brought their families out to join them and permanently settle in the FNQ region, including in the Cairns district.

Originally, sugar cane was cut when it was green; however, many canecutters began to develop Weil's disease as a result of exposure to rat's urine on the leaves. This eventually led to industry changes to harvesting practices, such as burning cane prior to it being cut. By the 1960s and 1970s, the introduction of mechanical loaders and harvesters meant that manual cane cutting and loading was no longer a necessary profession. A number of the pioneering Sikhs in the Cairns area subsequently moved south to Woolgoolga in NSW, another early centre of Sikh migration and major contemporary Sikh community. The first Sikh *gurdwara* in Australia was established in Woolgoolga in June 1968 and this community still maintains strong historical and cultural links with the Sikh community of the FNQ. Some Sikh families were able to embrace these monumental changes in the sugar growing industry, purchasing their own harvesting machinery, initially for use on their own farms but by the early 1990s, for contract harvesting in the Cairns district (Grewal 2021). However, in the mid to late 1990s, the sugar industry witnessed a massive downturn due to the oversupply of sugar in the world market. This triggered a slump in the cane industry and as a result, a spike in operating costs such as wages, fuel, fertiliser and electricity. During this period, many of the older generations encouraged the younger generations to get tertiary-level qualifications and then utilise these skills to seek corporate jobs outside of the agricultural sector, or to diversify into other agricultural ventures (e.g. horticulture, banana cropping) (Grewal 2021).

The early establishment and growth of the sugarcane and banana growing industries enabled Sikh migrants to travel to Australia, gain employment in the agricultural sector, and establish ties in FNQ. The historic and cultural significance of these industries to the origins of the Sikh communities in FNQ (and in Australia more broadly) cannot be understated: farming and manual labouring provided an honourable living and a means of supporting one's family back in India; land ownership and settlement afforded social status and a means of ultimately establishing permanent roots in Australia; and the development and continuing growth of the Australian economy through agricultural industry is inextricably tied to the efforts and legacy of those early Sikh labourers and their families. The gradual recognition of the importance of the Sikhs community is likely one of the factors that has enabled the practising of traditional Sikh customs in FNQ, particularly cremation and the establishment of *gurdwaras*.

Although cremation was not legally recognised in Queensland until the *Cremation Act 2003*, Sikhs were cremating their dead long before this time in the state. One of the earliest reported Sikh cremations in the

Cairns area dates to June 1916, which notes a cremation site on ‘the Mulgrave road’ (*The Northern Herald*, 16 June 1916, 41). In the early 1950s, a parcel of land was allocated as a Sikh cremation area, in consultation with Sikh community elders and the Cairns City Council and in recognition of the religious needs and traditional customs of the Sikh community. This reserve was used for cremations by the Sikh community until c.1980, when cremations were relocated to a corner of the present Cairns cemetery. In 1985, the Cairns Crematorium opened and cremations have since been held there (see Part 5.2, below).

In the 1960s, members of the Cairns Sikh community tried (albeit unsuccessfully) to gather the funds and community support for the construction of a *gurdwara*, or temple. Until sufficient support for the construction of their own temple could be attained, religious services were held for several years in alternative venues, such as a local R.S.L., a local Masonic temple and individual families’ houses, including the Majhel’s family house on Draper Street in Gordonvale. The traditional Sikh customs and community practices were well and truly alive prior to having a formal place of worship. In addition to the funds raised through generous community donations over a period of years (including from the Woolgoolga Sikh community), the ultimate stimulus for the building of the first *gurdwara* was the donation of land for such purposes by Gian Singh, whose grandfather came to Australia as a hawker in 1893 and whose family had been in FNQ for 90 years at the time.



Figure 16. The Singh family outside the Guru Nanak Sikh Mission Temple, near Edmonton, which is the older of two *gurdwaras* in the Cairns region. Image courtesy of National Archives of Australia.

From left to right: Dulcie, Mrs Curpal Singh, Gian Singh, Ranjit Singh, and Dulcie’s husband, Kirpal.



Figure 17. Members of the Sikh community officially erect the *Nishan Sahib* on the site of the Edmonton *gurdwara* in 1983. Image courtesy of Surinder Kaur Sodhi.

#### 4.5 A contemporary Sikh community

With the dismantling of the ‘White Australia Policy’ by the Holt government in 1966 and the subsequent introduction of more progressive policies such as the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*, another wave of Sikh migration to Australia occurred, with most coming either to join their families here in Australia or to seek opportunities to utilise their business and/or professional skills. Even though the main economic contribution of the Sikh community remained within the agricultural sector, younger generations of Sikhs became involved in and contributed to a range of professional industries (e.g. law, commerce, education, medicine, social work, or small business ownership). Honest work and serving the community are important tenets of the Sikh faith and as a result, many Sikhs have developed businesses that service the urban and rural communities of the Cairns area.

During this time, the first *gurdwara*, the Guru Nanak Mission Temple, was established c.1983 at Edmonton, just north of Gordonvale. A second, larger *gurdwara*, located on the Bruce Highway near Gordonvale, was established in the mid-1980s (according to anecdotal community knowledge). A third *gurdwara*, the Guru Nanak Sikh Education Centre, was built in Innisfail. The establishment of these *gurdwaras* provided a

much-needed focal point for the Sikh community of FNQ, particularly in the Cairns district, and have remained at the heart of the community since their construction: it was where Sikhs come together for *sangat* (or congregational worship), to read the *Guru Granth Sahib*, and practise *sewa* in the langar. Various members of the community are selected and responsible for running the *gurdwara*, and coordinating its daily operations, finances, events, and maintenance. It is privilege and a virtue of the Sikh faith to help with the running of the *gurdwara*, regardless of the role.

According to the 2021 Australian census, there are at least 27,700 persons who identify as Sikhism as their religion in Queensland and Punjabi continues to be the fastest-growing language in Australia with more than 239,000 people using it at home (ABS 2021). Within the Cairns district, there are more than 80 Sikh families and including fourth or fifth generation descendants of those early pioneering Sikh migrants who first came to FNQ to work and live in the mid-1840s. Others are first or second generation, whose families came to Queensland prior to or following the Second World War, influenced by the loosening of Australia's immigration policy post-war and the division of the Punjab.

While official policy has shifted over time to assist migrant communities with settling into life in Australia, attitudes about diversity and its place in the fabric of Australian society have been more conservative (McCarthy 2013). For Sikhs living in FNQ, their diasporic identity is a reflection of several factors and forces: their own history as a community living in Australia, the shifting history of Australia's immigration policy, and changing attitudes on the ground in the Cairns district over time. This identity is the product of intersecting, and at times conflicting, notions of belonging both in Australia and in Punjab, and is filtered through the way that the non-Indian and Sikh communities (including Australian-born Sikhs and those of previous, Indian-born generations) interact with one another.

Like other Sikh diasporas, the Cairns and broader FNQ Sikh communities have adapted their practice to suit contemporary culture and there is a greater degree of integration with the Anglo-Saxon Australian community amongst Australian-born Sikhs than those of previous, Indian-born generations. There is also use of dual languages, Punjabi and English, within the community and the cultural traditions of the Sikh community permeate and breathe life into their respective Australian communities. However, there is still a level of ignorance (and perhaps a lack of knowledge) in the general Australian community regarding the Sikh people and their contribution to the development of FNQ, as well as their beliefs and the contemporary role of Sikhism. Sikh communities, however, are continually working to enhance the understanding of their history, community and ongoing contributions within the general populace. For example, the Woolgoolga Sikh community have had some success in creating a permanent place for their community's history with the Sikh Heritage Museum of Australia (opening in 2019) and the Sikh Heritage Walk.

The preparation (and future implementation) of this Plan is, therefore, a key step towards creating more permanent places to the history and significance of the Sikh community in FNQ, as well as building awareness about (and creating platforms for engagement with) the contemporary values of Sikhism.

## 5. Thematic framework

A thematic framework identifies and describes themes that are significant and distinctive to a particular place, event and/or community. It is a valuable tool commonly utilised in the heritage management industry by heritage professionals and historians alike to contextualise objects, places, and events so that they can be consistently understood, assessed, and where relevant, linked within the context of a broad theme, rather than as singular items of heritage interest.

The framework is intentionally broad, so as to prompt broad-scale thinking about a particular place, event and/or community place and its wider context.

Some readers may expect a thematic framework to be arranged as a chronological outline of key events. However, this is not the aim. Rather, the aim is to provide a guide for approaching the assessment, interpretation and ongoing management of the history and heritage of the Sikh community of FNQ through a focus on the underpinning processes and/or factors that shaped it.

The following thematic framework is a custom series of themes and sub-themes developed as part of the preparation of this Plan, and intended to be utilised as the guide for future heritage interpretation and implementation of this Plan.





## SIKHISM: BELIEFS, TRADITIONS AND CUSTOMS

Sikh culture – religious customs and core values

Community service and connections

The role of the gurdwara

Cremation and marking the phases of life



## THE EARLY DAYS – SIKHS IN AUSTRALIA

Migrating from Punjab to Australia – factors and experiences

Living and working in a new land

Dealing with hardship, racial ideologies and restrictive immigration

Maintaining connections between Australia and India



## SERVING ONE'S COUNTRY AND COMMUNITY

Fighting for Australia – Sikh ANZACS

Serving regional and rural communities – Sikh hawkers

Opening up Australia – Sikh cameleers

Australia and India – Dividing livelihoods and families



## SIKHS IN FAR NORTH QUEENSLAND

Working the land – farming, banana and sugar plantations

The contribution of Sikh canecutters and farmers to FNQ industry

Generations of Sikhs – working, living and raising families in the tropics

Establishing Sikh communities in FNQ



## A CONTEMPORARY SIKH COMMUNITY

Working in and serving the community

Maintaining cultural traditions: acceptance and resistance

Memories of life in Punjab and Australia

Sikhism in modern Australian society

Table 5, below, outlines the relevant Queensland state themes (Blake 1996; DEHP 2013) and Cairns regional themes (Heritage Alliance 2011), previously identified in Part 3.3, and aligns them with the thematic framework created specifically for this Plan. Correlating these state, regional and localised themes (and sub-themes) is a simple, but effective means of identifying common linkages between localised histories, values, experiences and places, and the broader regional and state-wide patterns of historical development. Future interpretation measures are to be built on these themes, and the linkages between themes.

Table 5. Overview of the linkages between the five themes (and their respective sub-themes) specific to this Plan and the relevant Queensland state and Cairns regional thematic frameworks.

Localised theme		Localised sub-themes	
<b>SIKHISM: BELIEFS, TRADITIONS AND CUSTOMS</b>		Sikh culture – religious customs and core values Community service and connections The role of the <i>gurdwara</i> Cremation and marking the phases of life	
Regional theme	Regional sub-theme	State theme	State sub-theme
9. Creating social and cultural institutions in Cairns	9.1 Worshipping in Cairns 9.2 Participating in cultural activities in Cairns	8. Creating social and cultural institutions	8.1 Worshipping and religious institutions 8.2 Cultural activities
Localised theme		Localised sub-themes	
<b>THE EARLY DAYS - SIKHS IN AUSTRALIA</b>		Migrating from Punjab to Australia – factors and experiences Living and working in a new land Maintaining connections between Australia and India Dealing with hardship, racial ideologies and restrictive immigration policies	
Regional theme	Regional sub-theme	State theme	State sub-theme
2. Peopling Cairns	2.2 Arrival of new settlers to the Cairns region	1. Peopling places	1.2 Migration from outside and within
3. Developing secondary and tertiary industries	3.5 Struggling with remoteness, hardship and failure	3. Developing secondary and tertiary industries	3.5 Struggling with remoteness, hardship and failure
Localised theme		Localised sub-themes	
<b>SERVING ONE’S COUNTRY AND COMMUNITY</b>		Fighting for Australia – Sikh ANZACS Serving regional and rural communities – Sikh hawkers Opening up Australia – Sikh cameleers Australia and India – Dividing livelihoods and families	

Regional theme	Regional sub-theme	State theme	State sub-theme
3. Developing secondary and tertiary industries	3.5 Struggling with remoteness, hardship and failure	3. Developing secondary and tertiary industries	3.5 Struggling with remoteness, hardship and failure
8. Administering Cairns	8.5 Defending the country	7. Maintaining order	7.6 Defending the country

Localised theme	Localised sub-themes
<b>SIKHS IN FAR NORTH QUEENSLAND</b>	<p>Working the land – farming, banana and sugar plantations</p> <p>The contribution of Sikh canecutters and farmers to FNQ industry</p> <p>Generations of Sikhs: working, living and raising families in the tropics</p> <p>Establishing Sikh communities in FNQ</p>

Regional theme	Regional sub-theme	State theme	State sub-theme
3. Developing and utilising the land in the Cairns region	3.3 Agricultural pursuits	2. Exploiting, utilising and transforming the land	2.4 Agricultural activities
4. Developing Cairns' local and regional industries	4.2 The sugar industry	3. Developing secondary and tertiary industries	3.5 Struggling with remoteness, hardship and failure
5. Working in the Cairns region	5.1 Working for the sugar cane industry	4. Working	4.7 Working as exploited/indentured labour
		6. Building settlements, towns, cities and dwellings	6.1 Establishing settlements

Localised theme	Localised sub-themes
<b>A CONTEMPORARY SIKH COMMUNITY</b>	<p>Working in and serving the community</p> <p>Maintaining cultural traditions: acceptance and resistance</p> <p>Memories of life in Punjab and Australia</p> <p>Sikhism in modern Australian society</p>

Regional theme	Regional sub-theme	State theme	State sub-theme
7. Building settlements, towns, and cities in the Cairns region	7.1 Planning and forming settlements 7.3 Buildings and architecture	8. Creating social and cultural institutions	8.1 Worshipping and religious institutions 8.2 Cultural activities
9. Creating social and cultural institutions in Cairns	9.1 Worshipping in Cairns 9.2 Participating in cultural activities in Cairns	10. Providing health and welfare services	10.2 Caring for the homeless and destitute

## 6. Constraints and opportunities

### 6.1 Audiences

Celebrating, communicating and engaging with a community's history, heritage, stories, and cultural values is fundamental to successful interpretation. There is likely to be a range of potential audiences from different age groups and cultural or language backgrounds, or with varying abilities, education levels, and interests. Identifying and considering these potential audiences is an integral part of this Plan, as it directly informs the development of the thematic framework and the range (and nature) of proposed interpretation measures.

Key audiences are likely to be:

#### **Local Sikh communities in FNQ, particularly centred around the *gurdwaras*.**

- The Sikh communities in FNQ has a first-hand, diverse understanding of the significance and the role that Sikhs have played (and continue to play) in the development of this region. These communities can serve as 'gatekeepers' or mediators in terms of accessing particular places (e.g. *gurdwaras*, cremation sites). Fostering authentic relationships with the Sikh community is also integral to linking into the substantial visiting friends and relatives market. This is important because local Sikh residents have the potential to act as guides and navigators for the heritage tourism activities undertaken by such visitors. In addition, it is important to foster a sense of mutual understanding about the purposes of any proposed interpretation measures amongst the local Sikh community, as well as a level of ownership.

#### **General local community near the *gurdwaras*, and the general public in the Cairns area or FNQ more broadly.**

- A key market for interpretation measures would be non-Sikh residents, either in the Cairns region or FNQ more broadly, including those visiting beyond their hometown. This audience group has the potential to have some prior understanding of the history of Sikhs in FNQ (including in their local area), which presents opportunities to reveal another dimension of knowledge to an already familiar story. Also, the interest of the broader tourism market in cultural and heritage-based tourism experiences is informed in part local sources (and uptake) of information. Therefore, engaging the non-Sikh population of FNQ and Cairns in particular in supporting and promoting future interpretation measures and ventures will be vital for the success of future interpretation measures.

#### **International visitors staying with friends and/or relatives in the Cairns area, particularly Indian visitors that have a shared history and interest in the Sikh heritage of Far North Queensland, or more broadly, Australia.**

AND / OR

#### **International visitors and tourists with no prior knowledge of the Sikh heritage of FNQ.**

- The international market generally is traditionally a major market for Queensland tourism, and particularly Tropical and Far North Queensland. However, the international market has been significantly impacted by COVID-related travel and health restrictions in the 2020-2021 period, with an estimated \$650 million in lost international visitor spend in Tropical North Queensland in 2020 alone and international visitor spending dropping to 18% in 2021. (TTNQ 2020). It is important to note that although the international market is likely to be slower to recover and return to pre-COVID levels, Tropical and Far North Queensland will continue to be an important tourism market for the Sikh community in the future as Australia moves into a post-pandemic era.
- India is a key growth market for Queensland, with approximately 76,000 Indian visitors spending approximately \$152 million in the year ending March 2020 (TEQ 2020). Importantly, the primary reason for visitation to Queensland was leisure or holiday purposes (63%), followed by visiting family or relatives (28%) (TEQ 2020). The majority of these visitors are also first-time visitors to Queensland. Whilst the Indian international visitor market is relatively small, it is an audience group with a predisposition to the topic and one that also predominantly visits friends and relatives as part of their trip(s). Engaging the local Sikh community in future interpretation ventures and measures will be integral, as if the local community has an awareness of an interpretive experience, there is a good chance that they will bring their visiting friends/relatives to see it.

#### **Local primary and secondary school populations (students and teachers) across the Cairns area, and more broadly within Far North Queensland, that have an interest in educational materials or excursions that may be developed and incorporated into the curriculum.**

- A key market for any future educational interpretation measures would be primary and secondary school populations, including students and teachers, either in their local area or whilst they are visiting on educational excursions. This audience group has capacity to engage with the history and heritage of the Sikhs in FNQ at a high level, whether via undertaking visits to places of interest or hosting speakers from the Sikh community. This audience group in particular presents opportunities to involve younger generations of both the Sikh and non-Sikh community in the history and values of Sikhism.

These audiences can also be broadly categorised into the following groups:

#### **Regular visitors**

Regular visitors are most likely to include members of the Sikh community, but may also extend to interested members of the general community. These visitors are likely to represent a range of demographic and cultural backgrounds, but have a common interest in the history of their local area and have access to places of interest. This audience type will already have some level of background knowledge and/or basic awareness of the history and heritage of Sikhs in FNQ. As regular visitors, their reception of interpretation will likely be mostly indirect in nature and as an audience type, they are less likely to directly seek out information out or to stop along a regular route. In order to capture this audience, interpretation will therefore need to be more direct in placement and in design quality (i.e. perhaps more eye-catching and interactive in nature to attract those people who have familiarity with the place or whose experience with the space is more fleeting).

### Occasional visitors

Occasional visitors likely consist of tourists, either from other parts of Queensland, Australia or international. This includes individuals visiting local residents, those staying in or passing through the area for recreational purposes, and/or school or community groups undertaking organised excursions to visit areas of interest to the Sikh community. This audience type will likely have the most interaction with heritage interpretation measures and a majority of this audience type will not be local to the area. This audience type will generally have limited (or even no) background knowledge of or prior awareness about the history and heritage of Sikhs in FNQ, and therefore can be characterised as a more active audience base with a tendency to seek out sources of information and learning experiences. Interpretation needs to be more wide-ranging to capture this audience, including a combination of traditional and more contemporary design approaches and a combination of direct and indirect placements.

### Specialist visitors

Specialist visitors are likely to consist of official delegates or nominated representatives, which may include representatives of other Sikh communities, local government representatives, politicians, cultural delegates, other community-based groups, heritage professionals, staff involved in special events etc. This audience type is likely to experience a place with a specific purpose in mind, where the information they receive is specifically tailored towards the purpose of their visit and shaping their level of experience. In order to capture this audience, interpretation will therefore need to be more physically or visually direct in nature, and may need to be specific to their interests and interactive.

## 6.2 Places of interest

There are a number of places that have a link with the Sikhs in FNQ story. Most are not within the management control of the Sikh community and as such, the latter may have limited influence over the way in which these locations are interpreted (and therefore, would need to establish a relationship with the relevant managing body).

These physical locations are recommended to be targeted as foci for future interpretation.

### The Cairns Sikh *gurdwaras*: one at Edmonton (c.1983) and one at Gordonvale (mid-1980s, c.1985).

- *Gurdwara* are Sikh places of worship and community gathering, but also welcome people of all faiths. The local Sikh community has control and influence over the way in which these locations are interpreted and as such, are recommended to be the primary focus for any physical interpretive methods, such as traditional signage. Such signage could be located on the perimeter of the *gurdwaras*, providing information to the local community that might be curious but reticent about visiting.

**Opportunities:** installation of heritage interpretation signage/panels (with option to include QR-coded information to visitors to access additional information) as a means of providing information to general public/passers-by relating to the history and use of the *gurdwara*; utilisation of the aforesaid signage content as basis for establishing a virtual heritage trail; utilisation of the aforesaid signage content as basis for sharing information across digital platforms (e.g. Sikhs in FNQ Facebook platform, ASHA website); utilisation of *gurdwara* as a venue for 'open day' events to encourage members of the non-

Sikh community to engage with Sikhism and foster a positive experience with the *gurdwara* and their local Sikh community.

### Former cremation ground in Cairns Botanic Gardens and Centenary Lakes

- The Cairns Botanical Gardens Cultural Heritage Study (Gordon Grimwade & Associates 2005, 22-24) identifies a former Sikh cremation ground as a place of interest within the area now known as Cairns Botanical Gardens and Centenary Lakes. The Heritage Study identifies the former cremation area as being located approximately 170 metres (m) north of Greenslopes Street in the vicinity of Lot 343 NR6739, which was possibly the reserve originally set aside for this purpose.
- This cremation ground was established c.1953 by the Cairns Sikh community in consultation with the Cairns City Council and was in use until c.1980. From the 1980s, cremations were relocated to a site within the Cairns Martyn Street Cemetery (on the corner of Martyn and Anderson Streets, but accessible via Little Street) and, subsequently, to the Cairns Crematorium from c.1985.
- A Cairns Sikh community elder, Mr Sucha Singh Chohan, recalls that this cremation ground was set amongst dense, low scrub and access was often difficult, to the point where the area had to be relocated each time it was needed. At one stage, this area was fenced using concrete posts and strands of wire; however, these were removed by vandals. Thereafter, the area was relocated each time it was needed by pacing an approximate distance from the road and searching for evidence of past fires.
- This cremation ground has been extensively modified in the late twentieth century as part of the establishment of the Cairns Botanic Gardens and Centenary Lakes, and now presents as an area of lawn with clumps of trees. This modification of a former cremation ground without consideration of its cultural and/or social significance to the local Sikh community is a reflection of the lack of cultural recognition generally. However, plans reportedly exist that show the boundaries of the original site and would enable it to be re-identified for the purposes of future interpretation (Grimwade & Associates 2005).
- We understand that previous efforts have been made to research and publicly recognise the history and significance of this Sikh cremation ground. However, permanent markers or interpretative signage have yet to be erected. During the community workshop conducted as part of the preparation of this Plan, members of the Sikh community expressed an association with this former cremation ground, despite its changed use and appearance, and concerns were raised in terms of the need for appropriate recognition.
- This location (approximately 170 m north of Greenslopes Street in the vicinity of Lot 343 NR6739) is a place important as a former cremation ground used by the local Sikh community and has significant potential to be officially and appropriately identified as a place of remembrance for those who were cremated there, and a place that demonstrates the cultural and religious customs of a minority cultural group in FNQ.

**Opportunities:** installation of a memorial feature (e.g. a bench seat, a plaque with option to include QR-coded information for visitors to access additional information) and/or heritage interpretation signage as a means of marking the former cremation grounds, providing information to general public/passers-by relating to the social importance of these places for the local Sikh community.

### Former Sikh cremation ground within the Cairns Martyn Street Cemetery, Cairns

- During the community workshop conducted as part of the preparation of this Plan, members of the Sikh community expressed knowledge about a former Sikh cremation ground within the area known as the Cairns Martyn Street Cemetery, located on the corner of Martyn and Anderson Streets (but accessible via Little Street).
- Members of the Sikh community recalled that this former cremation ground was situated what is now the oldest part of the cemetery post-1980, after cremations were relocated from the aforementioned Centenary Lakes site. The exact location of the former cremation area is unknown, but would be able to be discerned through future consultation with the local Sikh community and Sikhs in FNQ project team.
- We understand that previous efforts have been made to research and publicly recognise the history and significance of this Sikh cremation ground. However, no permanent markers or interpretative signage currently exist. During the community workshop conducted as part of the preparation of this Plan, members of the Sikh community expressed an association with this former cremation ground, despite its changed use and appearance, and concerns were raised in terms of the need for appropriate recognition.
- This location (within the area known as the Cairns Martyn Street Cemetery, accessible via Little Street) is a place important as a former cremation ground used by the local Sikh community and has significant potential to be officially and appropriately identified as a place of remembrance for those who were cremated there, and a place that demonstrates the cultural and religious customs of a minority cultural group in FNQ.
- This place is important as a former cremation ground used by the local Sikh community, as a place of remembrance for those who were cremated there, and as a place that demonstrates the cultural and religious customs of a minority cultural group. During the community workshop conducted as part of the preparation of this Plan, members of the Sikh community expressed an association with this former cremation ground, and a concern that it is suitably recognised.

**Opportunities:** installation of a memorial feature (e.g. a bench seat, a plaque with option to include QR-coded information to visitors to access additional information) and/or heritage interpretation signage as a means of marking the former cremation grounds in the Cairns area, providing information to general public/passers-by relating to the social importance of these places for the local Sikh community.

### The Cairns Esplanade

- The Cairns Esplanade and boardwalk comprises a 2.5 km stretch of pedestrian and shared paths showcasing landscaped parklands and recreational lawn areas along the picturesque foreshore of Cairns. This promenade, with its prominence as a tourist attraction and a high volume of pedestrian traffic, is a prime location to raise the public profile of the history and significance of the Sikh community, particularly for international and interstate visitors.
- Opportunities:** installation of heritage interpretation signage/panels (with option to include QR-coded information to visitors to access additional information) along the Esplanade's boardwalk as a means

of providing information to tourists/general public/passers-by relating to the history and contribution of Sikhs to the development of Cairns (and FNQ more broadly); installation of a public art commission that speaks to the 'Sikh story' along the Esplanade's boardwalk as a means of engaging tourists/general public/passers-by; utilisation of the aforesaid signage content as basis for establishing a virtual heritage trail.

### Mulgrave Settlers Museum, Gordonvale

- The Mulgrave Settlers Museum retains a collection of objects, photographs and documents relating to the history of the former Mulgrave Shire, encompassing the lifestyle and activities of the district's early European settlers, timber getters, Chinese immigrants, and gold miners and the local area's wartime history. The Museum is open to the general public, runs a library and local history research service, encourages volunteer membership, and facilitates several events such as the monthly meeting of the Mulgrave Historical Society.

**Opportunities:** establishment of a mutual, formal partnership between the Sikhs in FNQ project and the Mulgrave Settlers Museum members and volunteer base; opportunities for the promotion and communication of Sikh heritage through 'pop-up' exhibitions/installations and/or joint community events; creation of a depository of information relating to the history of the Sikh community held in and managed by the museum for public access/research purposes.

### Norman Park, Gordonvale

- The former sugar milling town of Gordonvale, now part of the southern urban sprawl of Greater Cairns, is centred around a 'village green' of sorts known as Norman Park. The park is bordered by the township's commercial thoroughfare along Norman Street on one side and the Mulgrave Central Mill and Gordonvale railway station on the other side, with a playground, tennis court, and a war memorial, and a former air raid shelter (maintained as a memorial) in the centre.
- On the side of Norman Park adjacent to Norman Street is a 1995 statue of a cane farmer, designed by Anna Holan. It was bequeathed by the estates of Charlie and May Crossland to honour the pioneers of the sugar industry in the Mulgrave area. The statue is surrounded by a circular mosaic depicting various scenes relating to the cane cutting and sugar growing industry, bounded by a low brick wall. One side of the mosaic includes depictions of flags representing the various nationalities of the migrant workers, whose pioneering efforts and hard labour underpinned the early establishment and subsequent growth of the sugar industry in FNQ. One of the flags depicted is the Indian national flag. Apart from the latter, however, there is currently no recognition in this park of the contribution of the Sikh community to the sugar industry and the role that the township of Gordonvale played in the development of their community.
- During the community workshop conducted as part of the preparation of this Plan, members of the Sikh community expressed an association with Gordonvale and suggested that it would be appropriate as a place to suitably recognise the contribution of the Sikh community to the sugar industry (i. e. through a Sikh canecutter statue or through a plaque to accompany the existing statue and mosaic).

**Opportunities:** installation of heritage interpretation signage/panels (with option to include QR-coded information to visitors to access additional information) as a means of providing information to locals/tourists/general public/passers-by relating to the history and contribution of Sikhs to the

development of the Mulgrave Shire area and Gordonvale specifically; utilisation of the aforesaid signage content as basis for establishing a virtual heritage trail; installation of a public art commission within Norman Park that speaks to the ‘Sikh story’ as a means of engaging locals/tourists/general public/passers-by.

### Surviving sugarcane or banana growing industry infrastructure

- The surviving buildings and infrastructure relative to the sugarcane or banana growing industry are still visible in the landscape of FNQ and Cairns, and provide tangible evidence of the region’s post-contact history and the importance of the sugar industry. Despite their importance, this surviving buildings are, however, often ageing, vulnerable to cyclones and flood damage, and susceptible to change.
- Examples include (but are not limited to): the Mulgrave Central Mill, Gordonvale and various former cane cutters barracks, including the Smart Barracks (Cairns), Strazguzzi Barracks (Edmonton), Bennett Barracks (Aloomba), Bombadieri and Vella Barracks (Babinda), Rossi Barracks (Gordonvale). Those buildings and infrastructure known to have been where Sikh cane canecutters worked or were housed, or those located close to mills or in aesthetic locations, are considered of particular interest. For example, the ripple-iron barracks at Behana Gorge Road in the shadow of Walsh’s Pyramid (near Gordonvale) are a prime example with high potential for improved heritage interpretation.
- Improved interpretation (either on-site or online, but preferably on-site or nearby as part of a heritage trail) of these extant buildings has potential to help tell the story of how the FNQ farming industry from the late 1880s through to the 1960s relied upon seasonal migrant labourers to manually harvest cane and banana crops. They are powerful and tangible symbols of a way of life that is now lost, but that has made a significant contribution to the evolution of FNQ’s community and environment.

**Opportunities:** installation of heritage interpretation signage/panels (with with option to include QR-coded information to visitors to access additional information) external to surviving buildings and infrastructure as a means of providing information to locals/tourists/general public/passers-by relating to the contribution of Sikhs to the FNQ industry; utilisation of the aforesaid signage content as basis for sharing information across digital platforms (e.g. Sikhs in FNQ Facebook platform, ASHA website); utilisation of the aforesaid signage content as basis for establishing a virtual heritage trail.



Figure 18. The Gordonvale *gurdwara*, established c.1985.



Figure 19. The Edmonton *gurdwara*, c.1983, the first Sikh temple established in Queensland.



Figure 20. The general vicinity of the former Sikh cremation ground within the Cairns Botanic Gardens and Centenary Lakes. *Source:* Gordon Grimwade & Associates (2005).



Figure 21. The existing cane cutter statue and memorial mosaic in Norman Park, Gordonvale. *Source:* Extent Heritage (2021).



Figure 22. A section of the Cairns Esplanade boardwalk. *Source:* Extent Heritage (2021).



Figure 23. An typical canecutter’s barracks still surviving and visible in the landscape. *Source:* Extent Heritage (2021).



Figure 24. The Mulgrave Central Mill, Gordonvale. *Source:* Extent Heritage (2021).



Figure 25. The general vicinity of the former Sikh cremation ground within the Cairns Martyn Street Cemetery, accessible via Little Street. *Source:* Sikhs in FNQ Project.

## 6.3 Stakeholders

The integration of stories and research with consultation and feedback from various stakeholders should underpin the detailed development of the content and design of future interpretation projects. In addition to the Sikh community itself, this may consist of other local community groups and societies, or government bodies such as local councils. Consultation and creating reciprocal links with stakeholders is an important part of ensuring that interpretation is realised in a meaningful, culturally appropriate and practical way.

Key stakeholders for the implementation of this Plan may include (but are not limited to):

- The Sikh communities of Cairns and FNQ more broadly – has a significant role to play in the adoption and implementation of this Plan and in creating meaningful, reciprocal partnerships with other stakeholders that allow for the promotion, celebration and preservation of Sikh heritage.
- The Sikh community of Woolgoolga, NSW – due to its historical and contemporary links to the Sikh community in FNQ, the Woolgoolga Sikh community has a potentially significant role to play in the adoption and implementation of this Plan through the creation of a meaningful, reciprocal partnership. Specifically, there is opportunity to form connections with the existing Sikh heritage trail within Woolgoolga as a means of knowledge sharing and gaining community support for the adoption of a separate, but interconnected FNQ Sikh heritage trail (virtual and/or physical).
- The Guru Nanak Sikh Association, Gordonvale – caters to the religious, educational, social and welfare needs of Sikhs living in Gordonvale, and potentially has a key role in activating community support for the implementation of Plan.
- Cairns Regional Council – has a management responsibility for areas of public and Council-owned land within which potential interpretation measures may be planned and implemented in the future, and has an important role to play in terms of potential funding avenues and providing opportunities for developing partnerships with key Council strategies, local businesses and existing events.
- The Mulgrave Settlers Museum and Mulgrave Historical Society – caters to the conservation and recording of local Mulgrave Shire history, including that of the Sikh community, primarily through a volunteer base. Both have an important role in terms of promoting to is open to the general public, runs a library and local history research service, encourages volunteer membership, and facilitates several events such as the monthly meeting of the Mulgrave Historical Society.
- The Cairns Museum and Cairns Historical Society – the Museum is the custodian for a diverse collection of objects, photographs and archival records relating to the people, places, events and changing environment of Cairns and Far North Queensland. The Society is a not-for-profit association run and managed by volunteers, with the support of paid staff members and an active broader membership of local, national and international supporters. There are opportunities to work with and contribute to the Society's extensive archival and photographic collections, physical exhibitions, and educational programs.
- The Queensland Sikh Association – an incorporated association with the objective of promoting a greater awareness of the heritage of Queensland Sikhs and potentially has a key role in activating community support for the implementation of this Plan.
- The State Library of Queensland – is the leading reference and research library in Queensland, responsible for collecting and preserving a comprehensive collection of Queensland's cultural and documentary heritage. There may be opportunities to connect with and contribute to SLQ's range of organisational partnerships, public programming and events, and community-orientated and oral history initiatives.
- The Queensland Museum Network – is a network of public museums that act as the custodian of the state's natural and cultural heritage and tell the changing story of Queensland. This network includes the flagship Queensland Museum in Brisbane, but also the Museum of Tropical Queensland in Townsville, the only branch dedicated to researching and interpreting the cultural and natural heritage of tropical Queensland. There may be opportunities to connect with and contribute to the Queensland Museum Network's range of organisational partnerships, public programming and events, and community-orientated initiatives.
- The Australian Sikh Heritage Association – an incorporated association with the objective of promoting a greater awareness of the rich, shared heritage of Australian Sikhs. ASHA is a supporter of the preparation of this Plan.
- The National Trust of Australia (Queensland) – is a not-for-profit organisation and member-based charity that advocates for the recognition and care of heritage, and opportunities for connection with significant places, collections and stories. There may be opportunities to receive advocacy from the NTAQ for particular interpretation measures.

## 6.4 Civic cultural planning

An often over-looked, but important element of heritage interpretation planning, design, and implementation is integration with civic cultural planning and cultural services frameworks. These frameworks play an important role in local government decision-making and guides the delivery of cultural services for the whole local government area.

For example, Cairns Regional Council has recently undertaken a staged and progressive process towards the development of the new framework for prioritising, coordinating and managing the city's resources, delivering ongoing cultural programming, and providing grants and infrastructure that will stimulate and sustain the cultural vitality of the region (Cairns Regional Council 2021). This resulted in the endorsement of the *Strategy for Culture and the Arts 2022*.

Notwithstanding this specific Strategy (which will reviewed and superseded over time), it is evident that there are multiple, broad opportunities to seek support for and plan interpretation measures that align and engage with the implementation of Council's cultural planning strategies. This may include (but is not limited to):

- Establish a small committee of passionate Sikh community members to initiate and build a proactive, community-led relationship with Council to identify opportunities to:
  - collaborate on projects across Council libraries and public venues;
  - value-add to existing public festival programs;



- collaborate on heritage tourism projects in particular locations, such as Gordonvale’s ‘town square’ space, the Cairns Esplanade, and the Cairns City Library; and
  - work with the Council Education Officer and tertiary education and schools to initiate targeted educational opportunities, points of entry for young people to become engaged in Sikh heritage and cultural heritage ventures.
  - contribute to upcoming capital works and revitalisation projects suitable for public art and design;
  - contribute stories of Sikh people, places, events and collections to the Cairns Arts and Culture Map; and
  - contribute to the Council’s ongoing Cultural Resource Mapping Project.
- Partner with Council to foster an integrated approach to the development of heritage interpretation measures, such as:
    - self-guided walking tours or heritage trails - via virtual and/or physical platforms; and
    - community-based mural and public art projects - especially those that contribute to revitalising and restoring neighbourhoods, communities and public spaces;
    - pop-up artist installations, such as part of the Beautiful Art Spaces / Urban Spaces initiative.
  - Seek support from existing and proposed funding programs designed to assist with community festivals and events, or to provide in-kind cultural support grant allocation (e.g. Festivals Funding Program, Arts and Cultural Infrastructure Grant Program, Regional Arts Development Fund Program).

## 6.5 Existing interpretation

An important question underpinning this Plan is:

*How is the story of the Sikh community, and its associated heritage and contribution to Far North Queensland, currently remembered or identified through heritage and/or tourism avenues?*

Generally, the story of the Cairns Sikh community, their customs and their contribution to the development of Far North Queensland (and the sugar industry in particular), is either not represented, or is only minimally represented in terms of heritage interpretation. In addition, Sikhs are frequently, and incorrectly, referred to as ‘Hindu’ or more broadly, as ‘Indian’.

The below examples of heritage interpretation were identified as part of the community consultation stage. Not all of these examples specifically relate to the Cairns Sikh or Far North Queensland Sikh story; however, they do illustrate potential existing interpretation ‘sites’ or ‘platforms’ that are recommended to be included and built on as part of future heritage interpretation.

### Norman Park, Gordonvale

- As noted in Part 5.2 above, there is an existing statue of a cane farmer honouring the pioneers of the sugar industry in the Mulgrave Shire area. The statue is surrounded by a circular mosaic depicting

various scenes relating to the cane cutting and sugar growing industry, including depictions of flags representing the various nationalities of the migrants workers (including those of Indian nationality) whose pioneering efforts and hard labour underpinned the establishment and growth of the sugar industry in the Cairns district. Although this depiction of the Indian flag is important and the existing statue/mosaic does generally tell the story of migrant canecutters, it does not specifically recognise the contribution of the Sikh community to the sugar industry and the role that the township of Gordonvale played in the development of their community.

- In addition, Norman Park contains existing heritage interpretation signage relating to the history and use of the Gordonvale Water Tower, sited across the road from the Mulgrave Mill. While this signage does not specifically recognise the contribution of the Sikh community to the sugar industry and the role that the township of Gordonvale played in the development of their community, it is noted here as an existing example of heritage interpretation signage in Norman Park.
- During the community workshop conducted as part of the preparation of this Plan, members of the Sikh community expressed an association with Gordonvale and suggested that Norman Park may be appropriate as a place to suitably recognise the contribution of the Sikh community to the sugar industry. This location, being Norman Park, provides an excellent location for establishing more traditional heritage interpretation measures (i.e. the design and installation of a specific Sikh cane cutter statue, the design and installation of a plaque to accompany the existing statue and mosaic, or the design and installation of additional heritage interpretation signage).

### Cairns Museum

- The Cairns Museum contains permanent exhibitions in Galleries 1 and 2 that tell story of Cairns told through the lives of locals, and also tell the story of the early development of Cairns through the industries that made it prosper (including sugar growing). These exhibitions contain two interpretation panels that make reference to Sikhs in Far North Queensland. One panel details the harsh living conditions experienced by canecutters and includes a quote from Sucha Singh Chohan, who recalls what his gang had to eat for breakfast during cane cutting season. The other panel detailing some of the challenges faced by those who came to live and work in Cairns in the early days and highlights the journey of Kishan Singh Chohan, who first arrived in 1901 and cut cane in the Cairns area until he was 65.
- There is an important opportunity to build on this existing interpretation by establishing a more formal, consistent relationship with the Cairns Museum. There are excellent opportunities for facilitating temporary online and/or physical exhibitions, establishing a publicly accessible depository of archival and oral history records, and cross-promoting the future measures of this Plan.



Figure 26. Existing interpretation signage in Norman Park, Gordonvale, relating to the history and use of the Gordonvale Water Tower. Image courtesy of Extent Heritage 2021.

*This interpretation signage does not relate to Cairns Sikh or Far North Queensland Sikh story; however, it is an example of existing heritage interpretation in Gordonvale and Norman Park specifically, which is a potential site of interest for future interpretation measures.*



Figure 28. Detail of the mosaic showing depictions of flags representing the various nationalities of the migrants workers, whose pioneering efforts and hard labour underpinned the sugar industry in the Cairns district. One of the flags depicted is the Indian national flag. Image courtesy of Extent Heritage 2021.

*Apart from this depiction of the Indian national flag in the mosaic, this statue and mosaic does not specifically recognise in the contribution of the Sikh community to the sugar industry and the role that the township of Gordonvale played in the development of their community.*

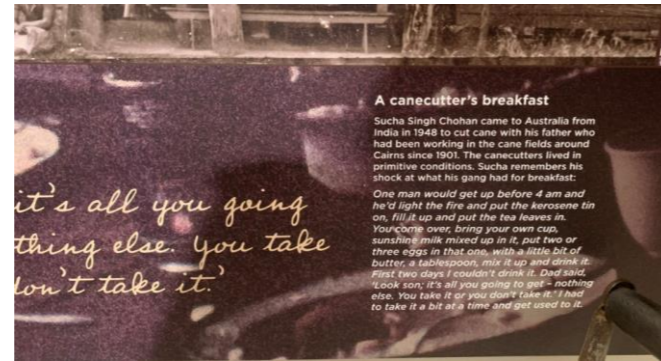


Figure 27. Detail of an exhibition interpretation panel in the Cairns Museum. Image courtesy of Extent Heritage 2021.

*This panel provides insight into the harsh living conditions experienced by cancutters and includes a quote from Sucha Singh Chohan, who recalls what his gang had to eat for breakfast during cane cutting season.*



Figure 29. Detail of an exhibition interpretation panel in the Cairns Museum. Image courtesy of Extent Heritage 2021.

*This panel provides insight into the challenges faced by those who came to live and work in Cairns in the early days and highlights the journey of Kishan Singh Chohan, who first arrived in 1901 and cut cane in the Cairns area until he was 65.*

## 6.6 Existing data sources

Another important question underpinning this Plan is:

*What are the existing data sources for understanding and researching the story of the Sikh community?*

- Australian Sikh Heritage Association Inc (ASHA): This association aims to document, preserve, share and collaborate with regards to Australian Sikh heritage and the story of Sikhs at a national level. Their website (<http://www.australiansikhheritage.com>) includes a range of free-use data resources, such as downloadable educational resources on Sikh Australians (developed by the History Teachers' Association of Western Australia), downloadable brochure content relating to various aspects of Australian Sikh heritage, a reading list of recommended resources, and links to other relevant resources, such as an introductory booklet to Sikhism produced by the Sikh Research Institute. As part of the preparation of this Plan, an unofficial repository of scanned historical information collated by ASHA from the Cairns Museum (e.g. newspaper articles, photographs, correspondence etc.) was made available to Extent Heritage by the Sikhs in FNQ Project. This is an important existing data source; however, it does require cataloguing and further analysis.
- Queensland State Archives (QSA): The QSA website (<https://www.archivesearch.qld.gov.au/>) has an online catalogue 'ArchiveSearch', which is also a useful resource for gathering immigration data. As part of the preparation of this Plan, an unofficial repository of official documentation and historical records from the QSA relating to the immigration of individual Sikhs to Australia was made available to Extent Heritage by the Sikhs in FNQ Project. This is an important existing data source; however, it does require cataloguing and further analysis.
- National Archives of Australia (NAA): The NAA contains a range of resources related to Sikh migration to Australia including historical records, transcripts, official records, photographs, etc. As part of the preparation of this Plan, an unofficial repository of official documentation, historical photographs and records from the NAA relating to approximately 40 individual Sikhs was made available to Extent Heritage by the Sikhs in FNQ Project. This is an important existing data source; however, it does require cataloguing and further analysis.
- Community workshop: As a part of the community consultation component of this project, some audio and audio-visual recordings of workshop participants were captured by both Extent Heritage and the Sikhs in FNQ Project team. These recordings provide invaluable first-hand insight into the values, experiences and views of members of the Cairns Sikh community, particularly with regards to their own life experiences migrating to and living in Far North Queensland. This is an important existing data source that requires cataloguing and further curation as part of future interpretation measures.
- Cairns Historical Society (CHS): The CHS archives generally holds a wealth of historical data relating to the history of Cairns, including personal memoirs, family history and reminiscences, academic and Government papers, books, unpublished reports, newspapers, journal articles, and maps. These resources are accessible at the CHS Research Centre and can be made digitally available on request. As part of the preparation of this Plan, Extent Heritage visited the CHS Research Centre and conducted searches of the collection using various search teamers such as 'Singh', 'Sikh', 'Indian'
- Sikhs in FNQ Facebook platform: This is the official platform for Sikhs in FNQ Project, which was originally established to encourage community interest in and support for the preparation of this Plan,

and subsequently evolved to generally promote the history of Sikhs in Far North Queensland. The platform features a range of posts with images, videos and resource links that provide ongoing engagement with the Sikh community in the history of Sikhs in Far North Queensland. This platform provides an excellent online interpretation location that should be harnessed to gather further stories of the Sikh community, promote the Plan and facilitate wider community engagement with its recommendations and measures, and link interpretive content. It also has the capacity to generate wider interest in the future implementation of this Plan by creating links to other online sources of information, which assists in raising the platform's visibility on Google (Search Engine Optimisation).

## 6.7 Educational linkages

There is a potentially strong opportunity to establish linkages between the story of the Sikhs in Far North Queensland and aspects of the Prep to Year 10 Australian curriculum, and the Senior Secondary (Years 11-12) curriculum.

In the Australian Curriculum, one of the central learning aims is *Intercultural Understanding*: learning about and engaging with diverse cultures in ways that recognise commonalities and differences, create connections with others and cultivate mutual respect. Although *Intercultural Understanding* is more apparent in some learning areas than others, it is broadly applicable to Languages, Arts, HASS, History, Geography, and Civics and Citizenship. The intention is that students come to understand how personal, group and national identities are shaped, and the variable and changing nature of culture.

The three key, interrelated components for *Intercultural Understanding* are:

- Recognising culture and developing respect.
- Interacting and empathising with others.
- Reflecting on intercultural experiences and taking responsibility.

The opportunity therefore exists to develop educational materials or a historical resource package that aligns with key Queensland curriculum descriptors and aims to build cross-cultural understanding from a young age.

There is also opportunity to establish a program of excursions or visits to the Cairns Gurdwaras, as part of student learning about different cultural practices and the links with Far North Queensland and Sikhs. There is also opportunity for individual schools to host speakers from the local Sikh community as part of the curriculum content or as part of existing cultural awareness programs within the school.

This opportunity is further explored in Part 7.7, below.

## 6.8 SWOT analysis

The following SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis examines the information we have collected and outlined above, from our historical research, stakeholder and community workshops, our application of historic themes and best practice guidelines, and our interpretation of relevant tourism and demographic information, to distil and outline the current environment and factors that are key considerations for the future implementation of this Plan.

## STRENGTHS

A series of strong historic themes to interpret  
Active and engaged community, with capacity to share knowledge and experiences  
Existing spaces and places that have the potential to serve as foci for interpretation measures  
e.g. gurdwaras, former cremation grounds, former sugar industry infrastructure  
Existing network of support from wider (national) Sikh community  
First-hand knowledge of community history is still accessible via community elders

## WEAKNESSES

Dispersed community and places of interest - no single focal point  
Language barrier - English not necessarily first language spoken  
Low administrative capacity - reliance on volunteer base  
Lack of previous experience in cultural heritage management and interpretation  
Varying levels of engagement from within the Sikh community  
Need for engagement outside of the Sikh community  
Lack of previous interpretation relating to Sikh heritage in FNQ

## OPPORTUNITIES

To attract grant funding from both government (local, state) and non-government organisations  
To activate public engagement with the values of Sikhism, the history of Sikhs in FNQ and the role of the Sikh community in the historical development of Cairns  
To contribute to (and tie in with) existing tourism and cultural strategies  
To explore potential learning opportunities that link to primary and secondary school education  
To establish a Sikh heritage trail in the Cairns area  
To tell the Sikh story in a meaningful and culturally appropriate way  
To explore the Sikh beliefs that recognise oneness, presenting an opportunity to acknowledge the importance and history of Indigenous Australians.  
To forge connections with other Sikh communities in Australia, particularly in Woolgoolga.

## THREATS

Lack of sufficient funding  
Lack of external community interest  
Aging community elders - limited time to record oral histories  
Lack of political will to support and promote community heritage projects  
Inability to gain community agreement on projects and initiatives

## 7. Interpretation measures

This part of the Plan outlines a range of potential interpretation measures for telling the story and sharing the rich heritage of the Sikh community of FNQ. These measures are grounded in the historical context and thematic framework established in this Plan, with the intention of engaging with both the tangible and intangible aspects of heritage of the Sikh community of FNQ, and providing a breadth of interpretation approaches and media to connect with diverse, contemporary audiences.

Each measure identifies a range of opportunities that could facilitate its implementation, and are intended to provide an overarching framework for the subsequent detailed design, planning and implementation stages. The indicative costs, priority and other practical elements of each interpretation measures is summarised in Table 6, below.

This part of the Plan is intended to provide the primary basis for future detailed design and implementation, as well as grant funding opportunities and applications.

The interpretation measures are as follows, in no particular order.

- Sikh heritage trail (physical, virtual, or combination of both).
- Public art installation and/or workshops.
- Collection of women's short stories.
- Commemoration of former Sikh cremation grounds.
- Oral history program.
- Exhibition and display (permanent physical, travelling, and/or virtual).
- Educational resources.
- Culture and arts events.

## 7.1 Sikh heritage trail

### Celebrate

This interpretation measure aims to promote and celebrate the history and heritage of Sikhs in FNQ, with a focus on those in the Cairns area, through the development of a heritage trail, either physical or virtual (or ideally, a combination of both), supported with high-quality interpretative material.

The intention of such a trail, regardless of whether it is physical or virtual, would be to encourage visitors to visit places of significance to the Sikh community, thereby increasing engagement with their heritage and history. A heritage trail has the potential to increase awareness of the local Sikh heritage and stimulate an interest in the community and its culture, to publicly acknowledge places of significance to the Sikh community, and provide a 'ready-made' recreational or educational excursion 'route'. Since the story of the Cairns Sikh community, their customs and their contribution to the development of Far North Queensland is either not represented, or is only minimally represented in terms of heritage interpretation, the development of a trail provides opportunity to convey that story.

The recommendation would be for it to be self-guided in nature, with flexibility being the major advantage: the experience is generally less formal, allowing users to complete or divert from the route at their leisure, pausing for as long (or as little) as they like at places of interest, and navigating it on the spur of the moment, or as part of a planned itinerary.

Although multiple themes (and subthemes) are applicable, a heritage trail would benefit from focussing on a singular theme or focal point that is then tied to particular physical locations, or online resources, to show what is special or unique about the Sikh heritage of the local area. Themes and sub-themes that could be celebrated include:

- *Sikhism: Beliefs, traditions and customs*
  - Sikh culture – religious customs and core values.
  - The role of the *gurdwara*.
  - Cremation and marking the phases of life .
- *The early days: Sikhs in Australia*
  - Living and working in a new land.
- *Sikhs in Far North Queensland*
  - Working the land – farming (including dairying and paw paw cropping), banana and sugarcane plantations, and industries such as tobacco and logging.
  - The contribution of Sikh canecutters and farmers to FNQ industry.
  - Establishing Sikh communities in FNQ.

This interpretation measure has the potential to reach a breadth of audiences, including 'regular', 'occasional' and 'specialist' visitor types. Notwithstanding this broad audience reach, the recommendation is for a Sikh heritage trail in the FNQ region broadly but with a focus on the Cairns area. This trail is recommended to be principally designed for international and/or interstate visitors to the area, with a dual educational use by school students as part of planned excursion programs or online learning activities. There would also be the opportunity to increase accessibility by providing multi-lingual content, and supplementary online content that can be accessed by persons of various learning abilities.

### Innovate

Information about particular items on a heritage trail can be conveyed in a number of ways, depending on the choice of format (i.e. physical and/or virtual). Specific opportunities that can be explored in the development of a heritage trail include:

- Creation of a physical heritage trail that identifies and connects places with significance and connection(s) to the stories, heritage and history of the Sikh community of Cairns, and FNQ more broadly. Options to consider include (but are not limited to):
  - Places with the potential for inclusion in a heritage trail include (but are not limited to): the *gurdwaras* at Edmonton and Gordonvale; the former Sikh cremation grounds in the Cairns Botanic Gardens and Centenary Lakes, and the Cairns Martyn Street Cemetery; the canecutter statue in Norman Park, Gordonvale; Cairns Esplanade; surviving examples of sugar-industry infrastructure associated with the Sikh community such as Mulgrave Central Mill in Gordonvale and former cane cutters barracks. These are disparate places or 'sites' and therefore, it is important to consider how visitors or users of the trail would access and complete the route (i.e. Which parts are accessible via walking? Which parts would require vehicle transport between locations?). A combination of walking and driving components of the route would be acceptable, as it would facilitate access to the maximum possible variety of users; however, the nature and length of the route would need to be factored into the design.
  - Option to install interpretative signage at strategic locations places with significance and connection(s) to the stories, heritage and history of the Sikh community of Cairns and FNQ more broadly. Albeit traditional forms of interpretation, signage is still a particularly useful format for orientating visitors and for providing an overview of a particular place or story. The design of such signage should be simple, practical and permanent with a homogeneity centred around a common 'Sikh heritage trail' motif. The format is dependent upon local council's signage policies, individual preference, and available funding; however, it is preferable to use traditional materials such as wood and/or metal.
  - Option to install physical signpost or trail markers at strategic locations (either instead of or in addition to interpretation signage). Similar to the signage option, the design of such markers should be simple, practical and permanent with a homogeneity centred around a common designed 'Sikh heritage trail' motif. Although the design and materials are likely to be dependent upon local council's signage policies, individual preference, and available funding, it is preferable to use traditional materials such as wood and/or metal. An alternative approach could be to cast the trail motif in metal, as a form of plaque, and embed that in the ground or footpath in a publicly accessible location external (but close to) the location of interest.

- Creation of a virtual trail (either website-based or via an application) to provide an interactive visitor experience and a platform for providing mobile-friendly, accessible links to additional digital learning resources. There is the option to create a standalone virtual trail, or to create one that complements a physical trail. Applications can be simple information sharing or more high-tech involving augmented reality. Available technology is developing rapidly and a number of options are available for developing engaging online content that links disparate places and brings the stories to life. Options include (but is not limited to):
  - The use of QR codes on physical signage, signposts or trail markers, which provide a digital link to a mobile-friendly webpage or website that contains additional information and learning resources about that particular place or location. QR functionality is built into the camera application of most mobile phones, and is a commonplace technology most visitors would be familiar with.
  - The development of webpage or website content, which could be utilised to link digital interpretation content to QR codes, or which could serve as a standalone virtual heritage trail. Content could include (but are not limited to): short audio-visual clip outputs from an oral history program or audio narration of women's short stories; high-quality scans of primary sources (historical photographs, official written records, articles); an interactive trail route map; links to other sources of information (e.g. ASHA website, Sikhs in FNQ project platform, upcoming events).
  - A simple, but still effective virtual 'trail' alternative could encompass the development of a Google map of the known places of significance to (or with connections to) the Sikh community of FNQ. This publicly accessible, free-to-use online map could then be embedded into the Sikhs in FNQ project online platform, and/or shared via the ASHA website to provide an initial source of information while the primary trail is in the process of development.
  - Regardless of the format, many regional areas may not have access to Wi-Fi (or in some cases, visitors themselves) and therefore, it is suggested that any applications be developed to be native to the device. This means the application can be downloaded onto the device prior to a user leaving a location with available Wi-Fi, and then it will function even where there is no WiFi available. It also allows for the development of content in multiple languages, which will be an integral component of engaging international and interstate visitors (as well as Punjabi-speaking members of the Sikh community).
- Explore opportunities to connect with the existing Cairns Esplanade boardwalk network and the Cairns Esplanade Heritage Walk. This would be an excellent place to act as a trail head, as this public promenade provides an excellent location to establish trail markers and signage in an area of the public domain particularly prone to exposure to international and interstate visitors.
- Create linkages between the heritage trail, whether physical or virtual, and other local facilities associated with cultural tourism, such as museums, visitor information centres, and picnic areas. It is common practice to end a heritage trail at a visitor information centre, museum exhibition, or relevant community centre, where the trail brochure and additional information may be distributed.
- Explore opportunities to use branding as an interpretation approach for the development of a Sikh heritage trail. It is important to have a simple, recognisable and yet individualised identify for the trail

that could be repeated in the form of motifs on physical trail markers, as well as online as part of the aesthetic design or 'look' of the virtual trail component.

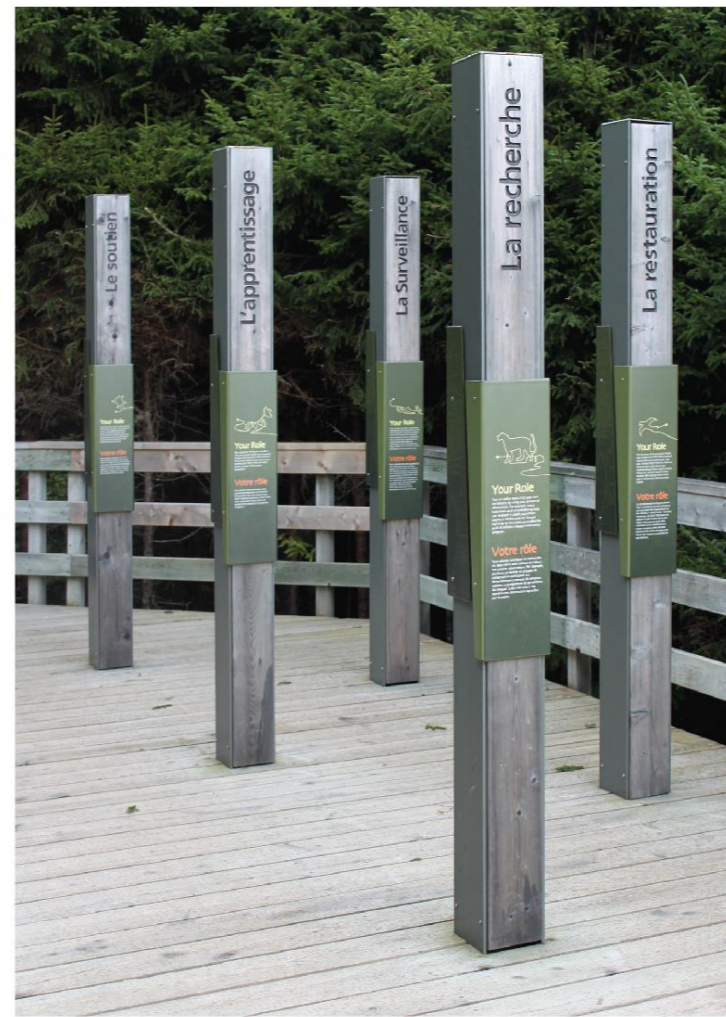
- Explore opportunities to develop a brochure or pamphlet to complement users of the trail and to serve as a means of promoting the trail as part of existing tourism strategies. The brochure should be brief, easy to handle and read, and well-laid out with clear and consistent branding. The intent is to introduce the visitor to individual items on the trail, provide an overview of Sikh heritage and history, and include an illustrated map showing the individual items on the trail, numbered and listed in a key. The design and publication of brochures may be resourced within the community, depending on the capabilities and expertise available, or may need to be outsourced to a professional consultant.
- Consider the 'pros' and 'cons' of implementing a physical-only or virtual-only trail, or a combination of both. The advantage of physical route marking is that the trail is obvious and in effect, advertises itself. The disadvantage is that physical signage is static, and its installation, maintenance and re-design can be costly, and can attract vandals. Conversely, while a virtual approach often requires a higher-level of upfront design, and ongoing maintenance and activity to ensure the information is current and functional, it is flexible and has the capacity to reach audiences without them needing to physically travel or be in a place of interest.
- Consider how to integrate with (or if unrelated, learn from) existing heritage trails in the wider Cairns district, such as the Bungara Heritage Trail, the Anzac Trail, Cairns CBD Heritage Walk, and the Cairns Southern Trail (Tropical Coast drive from Edmonton to Gordonvale and Babinda).


### Collaborate


It is worthwhile spending the time and effort to involve a range of people and organisations in the planning, funding and implementation of the trail so that there is a real sense of community ownership of the project. Collaborations with the following stakeholders, groups and organisations has the potential to make for a more meaningful, effective and supported approach:


- Professional website, QR code/app developers and/or qualified heritage professionals with demonstrated experience in designing and implementing trail-based or heritage interpretation content.
- Members of the Sikh community of Cairns and FNQ more broadly.
- Cairns Regional Council (refer to opportunities identified in Part 6.4, above).
- Tourism Cairns and Tourism Tropical North Queensland.
- Local businesses who may be a potential source of sponsorship.
- Cairns Museum and Cairns Historical Society.
- Queensland Sikh Association and Australian Sikh Heritage Association.

This interpretation measure also has the opportunity to overlap and integrate with other interpretation measures, including: (7.2) Public art; (7.3) Collection of women's short stories; (7.4) Commemoration of Sikh cremation grounds; (7.5) Oral history program; (7.6) Exhibition and display; (7.7) Educational resources; and (7.8) Culture and arts events.



 Interactive Map  
History and map integrated for a seamless experience.

 Learn On-The-Go  
Indulge in bite-sized histories and stunning images.





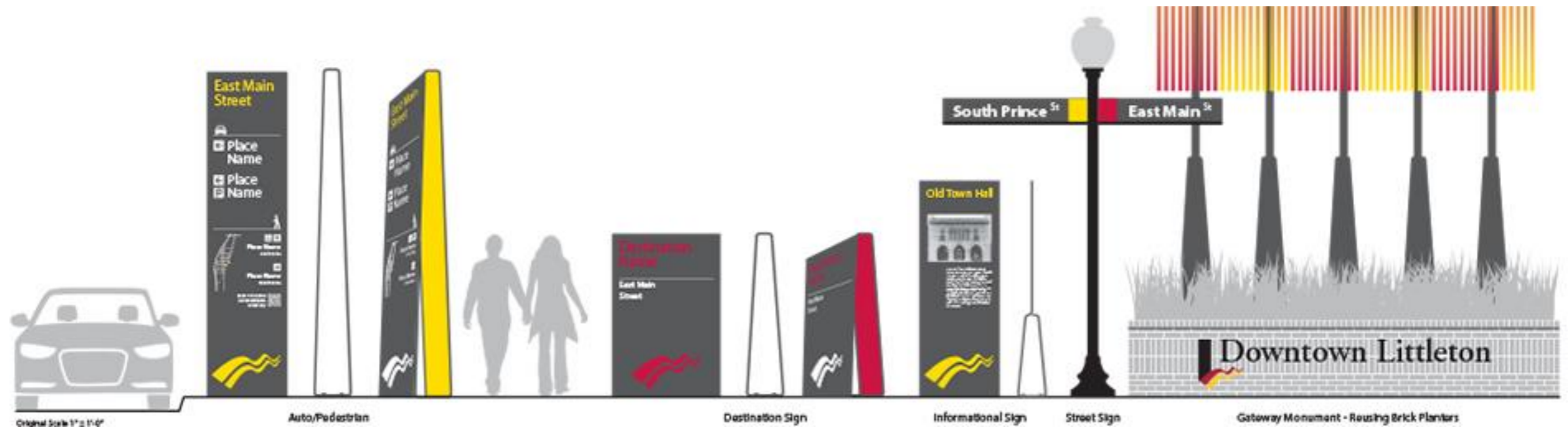



Figure 30. A schematic for a suite of exemplar interpretive and placemaking signage, with the signage forms differing according to their different functions (i. e. information signage, location or directive signage, place marking signage). Notwithstanding these differences, this suite of signage has a clear, consistent and cohesive style that makes it recognisable as part of the one interpretive measure and provides continuity to the 'story' being told or journey being taken.

## 7.2 Public art

### Celebrate

It is well established that public art installations adds great value not only physically to a public space and urban design, but also in their contribution to, and enhancement of, community or cultural identity. Art installations can either be permanent fixtures through specialist artist commissions, or temporary, such as installations as part of annual art competitions or transient sculptural works.

The aim of a public art installation as a heritage interpretative measure in this Plan is two-fold:

- To actively engage the wider public and a range of audiences in the culture of the Sikh community through a design or concept that emulates its cultural values and/or historical experiences.
- To foster a sense of pride within the Sikh community by providing a highly experiential and often emotive expression of those values in the form of a public art installation.

As the purpose, function and form of public art installations are fluid, public art has the capacity to celebrate and promote the principal themes and sub-themes identified in this Plan in an infinite number of ways. Given that an artwork would function as part art - part interpretation device, it is important that the concept, design and placement of the final installation aligns with this Plan's thematic framework. In effect, the public art would have a dual purpose of art and interpretation.

As public art installations are generally placed in areas that are not transient – but rather in areas such as the Cairns Esplanade where there is a confluence of visitors, activities and functions – this interpretation measure has the potential to reach a breadth of audiences, including 'regular', 'occasional' and 'specialist' visitor types. There is also potential for engagement with not only the Sikh community, but also the wider community (i.e. non-Sikh community and general public).

### Innovate

Specific public art opportunities that can be explored include:

- Permanent sculptural installations – drawing inspiration from stories, events and persons/groups of significance to the Sikh community and aligned with the thematic framework identified in this Plan. This could be literal in its interpretation (e.g. a Sikh canecutter figure) or more conceptual in its presentation.
- Visual (photographic or mural) installations – drawing inspiration from stories, events and persons/groups of significance to the Sikh community and aligned with the thematic framework identified in this Plan. Such an installation could be either permanent or temporary.
- Physical installations inspired by *phulkari*, the folk embroidery of the Punjab with its characteristic coloured silken thread designs with floral and geometrical motifs. There are distinct varieties of *phulkari* and the craft itself is traditionally a women's activity. There is a strong opportunity to empower women within the local Sikh community to develop a public art installation inspired by the identifiable designs of *phulkari*. As an installation, there are a range of options for the form:

- A public display of traditional *phulkari* textiles, created or donated by members of the Sikh community and displayed as part of temporary exhibition.
- A designed impression of the distinctive symbols and designs of *phulkari* within the public domain (i. e. a street murals, mosaic or tile installations, woven textile installations). This approach would require consultation with Cairns Regional Council, but would provide a means of creating a permanent, visible marker of Sikh cultural heritage in the urban landscape of Cairns. There is also strong potential for integration with the development of a physical Sikh heritage trail, as a *phulkari*-inspired motif or tile could be utilised as a physical marker of places of interest.
- An interactive *phulkari* weaving public workshop, hosted by women of local Sikh community, which ultimately results in the creation of a 'living' exhibition of woven elements created by the wider (i. e. Sikh and non-Sikh) community.

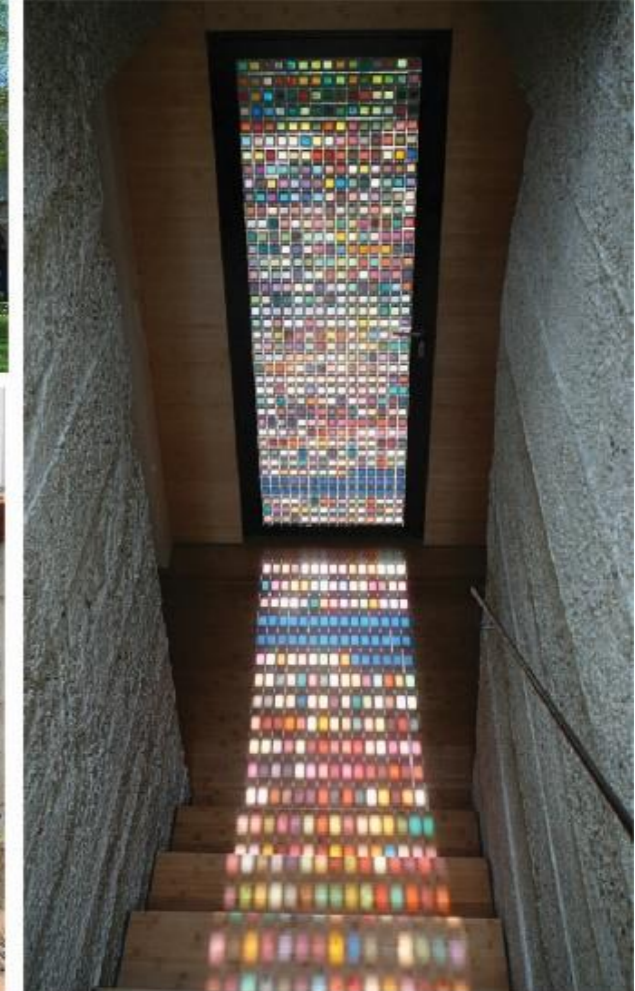
### Collaborate

Collaborations with the following stakeholders, groups and organisations has the potential to make for a more meaningful, effective and supported approach to this interpretation measure:

- Individual local artists.
- Members of the Sikh community of Cairns and FNQ more broadly.
- The Embroiderers' Guild (QLD).
- Cairns Regional Council (refer to opportunities identified in Part 6.4, above).
- Cairns Art Gallery.

Should any original artwork be planned, organisations or individuals from whom original artwork can be commissioned should be identified through consultation and agreement with those organisations or individuals, including with members of the Sikh community.

This interpretation measure also has the opportunity to overlap and integrate with other interpretation measures, including: (7.1) Sikh heritage trail; (7.3) Collection of women's short stories; (7.5) Oral history program; (7.6) Exhibition and display; (7.8) Culture and arts events.



### 7.3 Collection of women's short stories

This interpretation measure aims to highlight the colourful and inspiring voices, perspectives and experiences of the Sikh women of Cairns (and potentially, FNQ more broadly) through a collection of short stories. More broadly, this measure aims to shed light on and celebrate the roles and contributions of Sikh women, not just within their local community but also in the wider Australian context of women as immigrants, living in regional and agricultural communities, and supporting their families through challenging circumstances.

Capturing and telling authentic community stories, with and for the people of that community, is no easy task but an integral part of meaningful heritage interpretation. There is a strong opportunity to build on the audio-visual recordings of Sikh women obtained during the community consultation workshop as part of the preparation of this Plan. Their stories are significant as they are views that are rarely expressed, both culturally and from the point of view of women. Using this as a basis, it would be imperative to take the time to identify women in the Sikh community, of varying ages and experiences, and empower them to want to tell their stories in their own words, but also to act as co-creators or collaborators in terms of sharing their stories.

Themes and sub-themes that could be used to guide the development of this collection include:

- *The early days: Sikhs in Australia*
  - Migrating from Punjab to Australia – factors and experiences.
  - Living and working in a new land.
  - Dealing with hardship, racial ideologies and restrictive immigration.
  - Maintaining connections between Australia and India.
- *A contemporary Sikh community*
  - Working in and serving the community.
  - Maintaining cultural traditions: acceptance and resistance.
  - Memories of life in Punjab and Australia.

The production of a collection of short stories would be best collected, compiled and transcribed by a professional author or historian, or a qualified heritage consultancy with capacity to engage those services in-house.

#### Innovate

Specific opportunities that can be explored include:

- Publication – the collection of stories could be published as a standalone book; however, the medium should not be limited. There would also be opportunities to publish in journals, online, and/or as part of women's forums, social governance forums, heritage industry conferences, etc.

- Film – in addition to being recorded in writing, the collection of stories could be also captured using audio-visual format and thus available for use as part of exhibition or online content, short film productions and/or documentaries. Film is a highly engaging medium that has a widespread audience reach.
- Exhibitions – the collection of stories could become the focus of or inspiration behind physical and/or virtual exhibitions and displays relating to the heritage and history of Sikhs in Far North Queensland. The dual capture of stories in both written and audio-visual formats would lend itself to this approach, as the latter can be used to supplement other interpretation measures such as art installations, online exhibits, and presentations.
- Audio – in addition to being recorded in writing, the collection of stories could be also captured using audio format and produced as individual recorded stories that could be catalogued as part of an oral history program, made available for public research and/or to complement other physical interpretation measures (e. g. art installations involving soundscapes).
- Explore opportunities to present the collection of stories as part of culture and arts events curated in partnership with local women in the wider community, such as the Women of the World Cairns Festival. This could take the form of women-led conversations, temporary exhibition of audio-visual content, or storytelling or reading performances.

#### Collaborate

Collaborations with the following stakeholders, groups and organisations has the potential to make for a more meaningful, effective and supported approach to this interpretation measure:

- Women from various Sikh communities, not only within the Cairns district and but also across FNQ (and possibly across Australia, such as from other Sikh communities, if desirable depending on the scope of the proposed story collection).
- Qualified professionals (i.e. professional authors, historians and/or heritage consultants) with demonstrated experience in preparing community-led publications.
- The Queensland Women's Historical Association.
- Professional Historians Association (QLD).
- Women of the World Cairns Festival.
- Cairns City Library.
- Cairns Regional Council (refer to opportunities identified in Part 6.4, above).

This interpretation measure also has the opportunity to overlap and integrate with other interpretation measures, including: (7.2) Public art; (7.5) Oral history program; (7.6) Exhibition and display; (7.7) Educational resources; and (7.8) Culture and arts events.



**MOHINDER KAUR ON HER JOURNEY TO GORDONVALE**



**HARMEL 'MERL' KAUR ON INDIAN NAMES, EARLY FRIENDSHIPS AND FARMING**

## 7.4 Commemoration of Sikh cremation grounds

### Celebrate

This interpretation measure aims to celebrate the cultural and religious customs of Sikhs living in FNQ through the commemoration of two of the former Sikh cremation grounds in Cairns: one within the Cairns Botanical Gardens and Centenary Lakes, and one within the Cairns Martyn Street Cemetery (on the corner of Martyn and Anderson Streets). Plans reportedly exist that show the boundaries of the former cremation grounds, which if located, would enable these places to be re-identified for the purposes of future interpretation.

Themes and sub-themes that could be celebrated include:

- *Sikhism: Beliefs, traditions and customs*
  - Sikh culture – religious customs and core values.
  - Cremation and marking the phases of life.
- *Sikhs in Far North Queensland*
  - Establishing Sikh communities in FNQ.
- *A contemporary Sikh community*
  - Maintaining cultural traditions: acceptance and resistance.
  - Sikhism in modern Australian society.

This interpretation measure presents a means of actively promoting wider awareness of the cultural and religious customs of the Sikh community of FNQ broadly, as well as the history and significance of Sikh cremation practices in the Cairns area. It also fulfils a memorialising function, by providing recognition of these former cremation grounds as places of remembrance and of social and cultural importance to the Sikh community. Implementing this interpretation measure has the potential to reach audiences that would be classified as ‘regular’, inclusive of members of the Cairns Sikh community with particular connections to the former cremation grounds, as well as regular users of the Cairns Botanical Gardens, Centenary Lakes, and the Martyn Street Cemetery. It also has the potential to provide exposure to a wider audience of both ‘occasional’ and ‘specialist’ visitors, who may visit these locations as tourists, official delegates, or as part of school or community groups undertaking organised excursions to visit places of interest to the Sikh community.

### Innovate

Specific interpretation opportunities that can be explored include:

- Installation of non-intrusive, simple interpretation signage or a plaque as a means of marking the location of the former cremation grounds as a place of significance for the Sikh community, as well as providing an overview of Sikh cremation customs and the historical use of these kinds of places. Placement of signage or a plaque within a place should be chosen to achieve exposure to the widest

audience, but needs to also consider how the physical fabric of the signage/plaque is to be appropriately integrated into the existing setting of the place (i.e. into an existing parkland or cemetery setting). Example formats include: freestanding signage, mounted or plinth signage, or plaques (freestanding or set in ground). To effectively convey information to the casual viewer, it is recommended that interpretation signage contains a maximum of 250 words broken down in small paragraphs, a maximum of two visual elements, and reflects no more than two distinct themes.

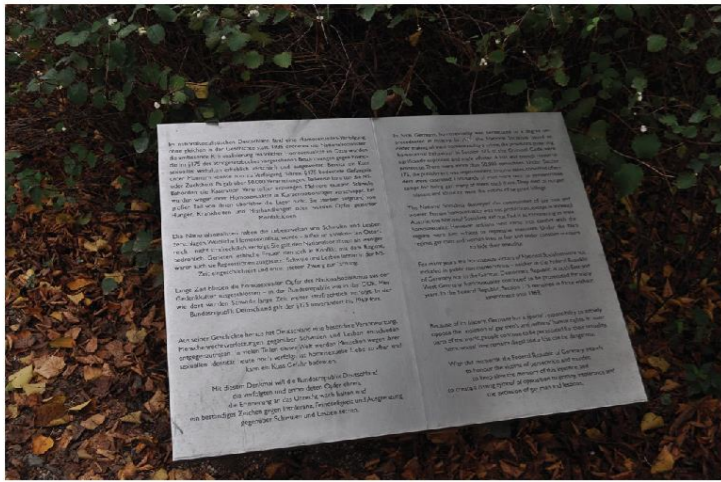
- Sponsorship of a bench or similar outdoor furniture that features a commemorative plaque fixed to the headrest, or set in the ground in front. This option provides a means of not only establishing something physical to commemorate the former location of the Sikh cremation grounds, but also providing something functional that would allow people to sit and reflect in that place.
- Erection of a memorial column, plinth or similar marker (with no written signage or text) as a means of visually marking the location of the former cremation grounds as a place of remembrance for the Sikh community. These memorial columns or markers may include a common motif that could align with a motif developed as part of the Sikh heritage trail.
- Installation of interpretative landscaping elements, such as inlays to elements to footpaths or benches or memorial plantings, to commemorate the significance and/or location of a former cremation ground. Embedding interpretative elements into designed landscape elements can be a practical way to provide highly visible and expressive interpretation that will be interacted with on a day-to-day basis.
- Explore options for place-naming as a means of providing (and where appropriate, physically signposting) a Punjab name for each of the former Sikh cremation grounds. Place naming is a subtle yet effective form of interpretation, and can assist with the characterisation of a place as well as a reflection of its history and values.
- Investigate the protocols associated with the development of any of the aforementioned opportunities, such as consultation with the Sikh community and other relevant stakeholders (e.g. Aboriginal parties, Cairns Regional Council).

### Collaborate

Collaborations with the following stakeholders, groups and organisations has the potential to make for a more meaningful, effective and supported approach to this interpretation measure:

- The Sikh community of Cairns and FNQ more broadly.
- Cairns Regional Council.
- The Cairns Historical Society.
- Queensland and Australian Sikh Heritage Associations.
- The National Trust of Australia (Queensland).

This interpretation measure also has the opportunity to overlap and integrate with other interpretation measures, including: (7.1) Sikh heritage trail; (7.2) Public art; and (7.5) Oral history program.



## 7.5 Oral history program

### Celebrate

Oral history is effectively first-hand evidence of the past – facts, events, experiences, and perspectives relating to a particular community, group or individual. Oral history programs are especially important for minority cultural groups whose lack of opportunity and/or inability to formally record their history might otherwise have meant the loss of important historical facts and perspectives.

Not all recordings of people talking or interviews are oral histories; the latter are substantial, formal records of the past and allow people whose voices might not be otherwise heard to share their experiences and perspectives. There is existing audio-visual content capturing the voices, experiences and perspectives of the Sikh community generally; however, this content is ad-hoc in nature. For a community's first-hand knowledge and experiences to be of use in the future, it needs to be formally recorded, documented, and archived as an oral history, to best practice standards.

This interpretation measure aims to celebrate the rich heritage and history of Sikhs in FNQ through the planning and execution of a formal oral history program. It presents a specific opportunity to build on the existing audio-visual content resulting out of the Sikhs in FNQ Project and the preparation of this Plan, and utilise this wealth of information to create outputs for use as part of other interpretation measures (e.g. virtual heritage trail, online temporary or permanent physical exhibitions, use of QR codes to link to audio-visual content, etc.). In effect, an oral history program would have a dual purpose of recording first-hand community history for posterity and creating resources for future heritage interpretation. Implementing this interpretation measure therefore also has the potential to reach a breadth of audiences, including 'regular', 'occasional' and 'specialist' visitor types, through the creation of outputs that could be applicable to a range of interpretation media.

As the scope of an oral history program is intended to enable a deeper understanding of the cultural heritage significance of Sikhs in FNQ, this interpretation measure would serve to celebrate and promote all of the principal themes and sub-themes identified in this Plan's thematic framework. This thematic framework will be integral in terms of providing a structure and scope for planning and executing an oral history program.

### Innovate

Specific points that need to be explored as part of an oral history program include:

- Engage the services of a qualified heritage professional with demonstrated experience in preparing oral histories. Depending on the format of the program (i. e. audio or video), consider whether the services of a professional videographer would also be required.
- Consider the partnerships that will enable such a project: working with community organisations, colleges or youth groups can help you reach different people, recruit volunteers and interviewees, and collect new stories.
- Consider recruiting a team of dedicated volunteers (including those with dual Punjab and English language abilities) to assist the professional heritage team in the delivery of the project. A range of

skills and staff may be needed for a range of roles, for example: interviewers/fieldworkers, translators, transcribers, data managers, etc.

- Consider other ways to involve the Sikh community in the oral history process, such as creating a community advisory board, hosting events for sharing research findings, providing oral history training, and more.
- Plan for the general stages of an oral history program: (1) Training, preparation and research; (2) Building relationships with interviewees and/or volunteers; (3) Conducting interviews; (4) Documenting and translating interviews; (5) Compiling the formal oral history database or collection; (6) Editing extracts and developing outputs.
- Interviewers should become familiar with the person, topic, and historical context by doing research in primary and secondary sources, as well as through social engagement with individuals and communities and informal one-on-one interactions.
- Determine whether the program is to be conducted utilising audio or video format (or a combination of both). Each format has its merits, but requires different skills. The outputs you may wish to create (e.g. audio-visual content for exhibition displays or audio content for a heritage trail) might influence the choice of format. A common approach is to combine longer audio interviews with shorter, selective follow-up video recordings.
- Regardless of the format, an effective oral history program requires computer equipment and software to access, rename, backup and document the recordings. Seek up-to-date advice on the most suitable equipment, be familiar with the technical options, and get quotes for costs.
- Carefully consider the number of interviews intended to be recorded, their length, the requirements for interviewee copyright agreements, and the process of recording/transcribing/archiving into a collection or database. This information and a summary of the proposed methodology is usually required as part of funding applications.
- Allow sufficient time to identify and recruit a broad cross-section of interviewees. It is important to consider that an effective oral history program is time-consuming: for example, an experienced full-time interviewer may be expected to complete interviews with 30-50 people in a year. In addition, it takes on average up to six hours to transcribe word-for-word a one-hour interview (6:1 ratio), notwithstanding any translations required.
- Be aware of the responsibilities to interviewees in terms of recording agreements and intellectual property: each interviewee will need to sign an Interview Participation Agreement, which documents an interviewee's consent to take part in the project, and an Interview Recording Agreement, which determine how their interview should be archived, made publicly available and used to create other outputs. Personal details of interviewee should be kept separate from the recordings, but should be clearly cross-referenced in line with the signed agreements. In practice, where good relationships have been established and maintained, most people are comfortable to assign copyright in the knowledge that their stories will help build public understanding about the past.
- Consider where to deposit the completed oral histories, and approach potential partners as part of the planning phase. Explore opportunities to create partnerships with a local museum, library or archive to



help ensure the recorded oral histories are documented and archived to professional standards, held in compliance with data protection legislation, and accessible to the public in the long term.

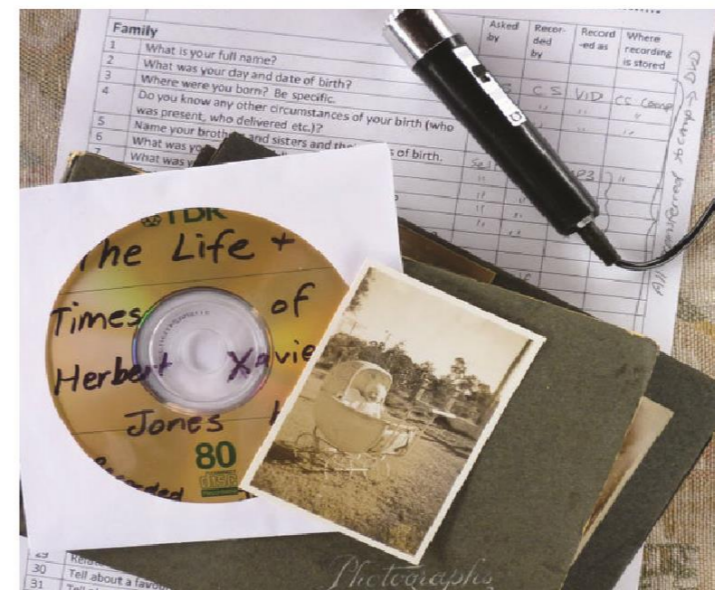
- Explore opportunities to curate a 'shelf space' or database for the recorded oral histories in a local museum, library or archive. This could include audio and audio-visual recordings, and written transcripts of those recordings, collated in a single, accessible database or catalogue to enable public access and research. It would also be important to consider the need for multi-lingual user guides.
- Utilise the outputs of the oral history program to create a range of content (e.g. short, selective audio and video recordings for use in exhibition displays, on online platforms, as part of a heritage trail and/or or part of the development of educational materials).

### Collaborate

Collaborations with the following stakeholders, groups and organisations has the potential to make for a more meaningful, effective and supported approach to this interpretation measure:

- Qualified heritage professionals with demonstrated experience in preparing oral histories
- The Sikh community of Cairns and FNQ more broadly.
- The Cairns Museum and Cairns Historical Society.
- The State Library of Queensland, Brisbane.
- Cairns Regional Council.

The material produced through an oral history program has the strong capacity to be shared through a range of outputs, such as exhibitions, art installations, public events and/or performances, educational materials, films, and heritage trail or walking tour content. This interpretation measure therefore has the opportunity to overlap and integrate with other interpretation measures, including: (7.1) Sikh heritage trail; (7.3) Collection of women's short stories; (7.6) Exhibition and display; and (7.7) Educational resources.



## 7.6 Exhibition and display

### Celebrate

This interpretation measure aims to celebrate the key stories, values, and experiences of Sikh culture and identity in FNQ (or in Cairns more specifically) through the creation of a targeted, exhibition-based interpretation experience. Unlike public art installations that are typically displayed outdoors in the 'public' domain, exhibition-based interpretation is principally delivered indoors and therefore is open to a range of different interpretation opportunities such as traditional display cases and signage, web-based and digital media, and temporary, travelling, rotatory or permanent exhibitions.

As the scope of a public exhibition, regardless of whether it is physical or virtual, is intended to enable a deeper understanding of the cultural heritage significance of Sikhs in FNQ, this interpretation measure has the capacity to align with and promote any of the principal themes and sub-themes identified in this Plan's thematic framework. This thematic framework would be integral in terms of providing a structure and scope for planning and executing any public exhibition(s). Specifically, an exhibition or display could choose to focus on a single theme as means of exploring particular events, perspectives and experiences in detail, or could choose to address all of the theme as a means of providing an overview of the heritage and history of Sikh communities in FNQ.

The range of ways in which an exhibition can explore and translate the themes is expansive, and as such the concept and design of an exhibition has the capacity to be shaped by a range of specialists including artists, community groups, exhibition designers and curators, historians, and heritage interpretation specialists. Implementing this interpretation measure also has the potential to reach a breadth of audiences, including 'regular', 'occasional' and 'specialist' visitor types, depending on the location, format and focus of the exhibition. With that in mind, the experience gained from exhibition displays is often much more intimate, allowing opportunities for more detailed, focused and personal stories and themes to be interpreted.

### Innovate

Specific opportunities that can be explored include:

- Traditional signage and case exhibition displays within a public museum setting (or similar public venues, such as libraries, airports or community centres) – these could be designed as permanent displays or as temporary 'pop up' exhibitions in conjunction with cultural events and festivals. To effectively convey information to the casual viewer, it is recommended that interpretation signage contains a maximum of 250 words broken down in small paragraphs, a maximum of two visual elements, and reflects no more than two distinct themes
- A travelling or rotating exhibition that could be loaned to other regional museums as a means of increasing engagement with other local audiences. This could take the form of a physical travelling exhibition of interpretative signage and artefacts (e.g. *phulkari*), or could take the form of a digital travelling exhibition that is 'opened' as a live online event and then is hosted on a publicly accessible website for a set period of time.
- A permanent or temporary display hosted at either (or both) of the Cairns *gurdwaras* – this provides opportunity for occasional and specialist visitors to the *gurdwaras* to still learn about the significance

and role of these places without the need for major upkeep or involvement from members of the community. Alternatively, such displays could be the feature of open days, supplemented by community-led tours and activities hosted in the *gurdwara* itself by the Sikh community.

- Mixed media exhibitions incorporating a combination of traditional signage-based interpretation and digital technologies (i.e. QHR codes, online content, iPad or TV screens displaying short videos, tablet devices with interactive applications) – as the visitor's exhibition experience is often gained indoors, a mixed-media approach allows for the implementation of different methods and media for display including the integration of lighting, sound, film/projection, and interactive and/or digital activities, etc.
- Online 'virtual' exhibition showcasing the wealth of resources available relating to the history and heritage of Sikhs in FNQ, including historical photographs, audio-visual content produced as a part of oral history program, educational learning resources, etc. – this approach is valuable as contemporary audiences are likely going to engage with digital forms of interpretation, and the use of the latter has the capacity to expand the reach and level of audience interaction. This approach also lends itself well to collaboration between multiple historical organisations and stakeholder groups. This could also be realised through the creation of standalone, website-based content about the history and heritage Sikhs in Far North Queensland, which would be grounded in the thematic framework identified in this Plan and would serve as a central interpretation resource.

### Collaborate

Collaborations with the following stakeholders, groups and organisations has the potential to make for a more meaningful, effective and supported approach to this interpretation measure:

- Qualified heritage professionals with demonstrated experience in designing and implementing heritage exhibition content, including traditional and more contemporary digital-based devices
- Cairns Regional Council (refer to opportunities identified in Part 6.4, above).
- The Sikh community of Cairns and FNQ more broadly.
- The Cairns Museum and Cairns Historical Society.
- Cairns City Library.
- A network of Far North Queensland regional museums, such as Australian Workers Heritage Centre (Barcaldine), or the Australian Sugar Heritage Centre (Mourilyan).

This interpretation measure also has the opportunity to overlap and integrate with other interpretation measures, including: (7.1) Sikh heritage trail; (7.2) Public art installation; (7.3) Collection of women's short stories; (7.5) Oral history program; (7.7) Educational resources; and (7.8) Culture and arts events.



## 7.7 Educational resources

### Celebrate

This interpretation measure aims to celebrate Sikh culture and develop a wider appreciation of the heritage and history of Sikhs in FNQ through the development (and implementation) of educational classroom resources.

As identified in Part 6.7, above, there is a potentially strong opportunity to establish linkages between the story of the Sikhs in FNQ and Cairns and aspects of the Australian Curriculum. Of the 8 learning areas of the Australian Curriculum, the most applicable are HASS Humanities and Social Science (HASS), which encompasses five teaching subjects: F-6/7 HASS, 7–10 Civics and Citizenship, 7–10 Economics and Business, 7–10 Geography, and 7–10 History. Within each subject, each year level has specific content descriptions that describe the knowledge, understanding and skills that teachers are Prep to Year 10 expected to teach, and that students are expected to learn.

In particular, 5–6 HASS and 9 History are the subjects and year level bands most likely to be most suited to the development of educational resources that not only align with key curriculum descriptions, but also with this Plan’s thematic framework. Relevant content descriptions may include (but are not limited to):

Year / Subject	Content Descriptions
	<p><i>Inquiry and Skills</i></p> <p>Develop appropriate questions to guide an inquiry about people, events, developments, places, systems and challenges (ACHASSI094) (ACHASSI122)</p> <p>Locate and collect relevant information and data from primary sources and secondary sources (ACHASSI095) (ACHASSI123)</p> <p>Examine different viewpoints on actions, events, issues and phenomena in the past and present (ACHASSI099) (ACHASSI127)</p>
5/6 HASS	<p><i>Knowledge and Understanding</i></p> <p>Stories of groups of people who migrated to Australia since Federation (including from one country of the Asia region) and reasons they migrated (ACHASSK136)</p> <p>The contribution of individuals and groups to the development of Australian society since Federation (ACHASSK137)</p> <p>The nature of convict or colonial presence, including the factors that influenced patterns of development, aspects of the daily life of the inhabitants (including Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islander Peoples) and how the environment changed (ACHASSK107)</p> <p>The role that a significant individual or group played in shaping a colony (ACHASSK110)</p>
	<p><i>Historical Knowledge and Understanding</i></p> <p>Experiences of non-Europeans in Australia prior to the 1900s (ACDSEH089)</p> <p>Living and working conditions in Australia around the turn of the twentieth century (ACDSEH090)</p>
9 History	<p>Laws made by federal Parliament between 1901-1914 including the Harvester Judgement, pensions, and the Immigration Restriction Act (ACDSEH092)</p> <p><i>Historical Skills</i></p> <p>Identify and select different kinds of questions about the past to inform historical inquiry (ACHHS166)</p>

Year / Subject	Content Descriptions
	<p>Evaluate and enhance these questions (ACHHS167)</p> <p>Identify and locate relevant sources, using ICT and other methods (ACHHS168)</p> <p>Process and synthesise information from a range of sources for use as evidence in an historical argument (ACHHS170)</p> <p>Identify and analyse the perspectives of people from the past (ACHHS172)</p>

The scope of an educational package would be best defined in accordance with the principal themes and sub-themes identified in this Plan’s thematic framework. This thematic framework will be integral in terms of planning and executing individual educational resources, which are recommended to use a thematic (rather than a chronological) structure for exploring the history and heritage of Sikhs in FNQ and Cairns.

Implementing this interpretation measure has the potential to reach audiences that would be classified as ‘occasional’ visitors, an audience type that can be difficult to capture without an organised approach to interpretation and without a targeted or focal location for their learning experience.

### Innovate

Specific educational interpretation opportunities that can be explored include:

- Engage services of qualified educationalists and/or heritage practitioners with demonstrated experience in developing educational content to develop a series of educational classroom resources that align with the learning areas and content descriptions of the Australian Curriculum. This could be realised as a series of standalone resources, or as a complete history curriculum educational package. Resources may include (but are not limited to):
  - Bespoke classroom worksheets and PowerPoints that explore a particular theme (and its sub themes) but also target specific curriculum descriptions through an inquiry-based approach to learning (available for download as ‘ready-made’ online learning resources).
  - A online database of primary and secondary historical sources (e. g. photographs, scanned documents, short video clips, articles) for student investigation of the history and heritage of Sikhs in Far North Queensland.
- Explore opportunities for establishing extra-curricular student excursions to the Cairns *gurdwaras*, or if established public exhibitions and displays relating to the history of Sikhs in FNQ. These excursions could be either as part of the delivery of specific history curriculum content or as a ‘one-off’ visit. Such excursions would be reliant on the establishment of a partnership and defined excursion program between members of the Sikh community and the local school network. There is also potential to create website-based content about the significance and history of the *gurdwaras*, linked to a particular theme(s) in this Plan, which could then be made available to the visiting students prior to their visit as a supporting learning resource. This could be a standalone webpage or one integrated into another website, such as a page linked to the Sikhs in FNQ Project or a page hosted by an interested stakeholder (e.g. Cairns Museum).

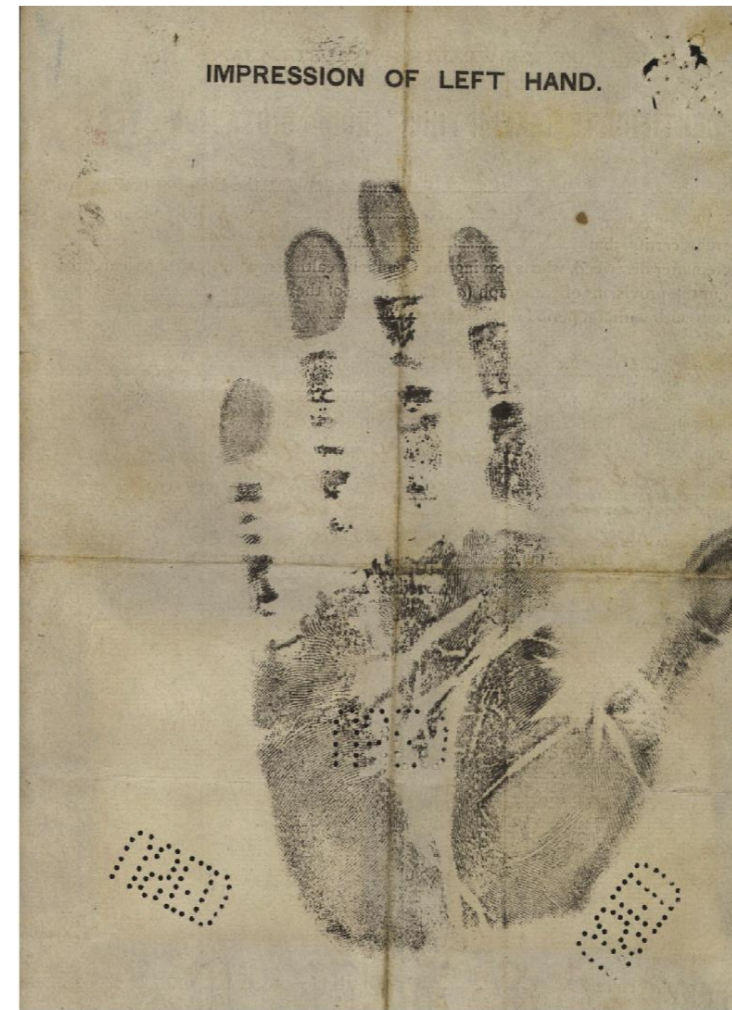
- Explore opportunities for individual schools to host speakers from the local Sikh community as part of the delivery of specific history curriculum content or as part of a school's existing cultural awareness programs. The aim of such a program would be to improve children's understanding of their local historic context and how it relates to broader inquiry topics in Australia's history, to facilitate a deeper involvement of the Sikh community in the life of local schools, and to enable teachers to feel more confident in making effective use of local heritage resources in delivering the curriculum.
- Explore opportunities to create partnerships with local Council, museums and libraries to help promote developed educational resources in the wider community.

### Collaborate

Collaborations with the following stakeholders, groups and organisations has the potential to make for a more meaningful, effective and supported approach to this interpretation measure:

- Qualified heritage and/or educational professionals with demonstrated experience in creating educational and teaching resources.
- Host organisations, specifically primary and secondary schools in the Cairns area specifically, but also across Queensland more broadly.
- The Queensland History Teachers' Association (QHTA), which is a voluntary organisation comprised of primary and secondary teachers, academics and educationalists whose aim is to support and assist history teachers and the development of the subject in Queensland. It may be beneficial to explore opportunities to create a partnership with the QHTA, as their counterpart organisation in Western Australia was responsible for the development of an educational resource package for ASHA and the Sikh Association of WA.
- The Sikh in FNQ project team, particularly those with educational connections and/or backgrounds.
- The Cairns Museum and Cairns Historical Society.
- The State Library of Queensland.
- Cairns Regional Council (refer to opportunities identified in Part 6.4, above).

This interpretation measure also has the opportunity to overlap and integrate with other interpretation measures, including: (7.1) Sikh heritage trail; (7.3) Collection of women's short stories; (7.5) Oral history program; and (7.6) Exhibition and display.



CURRICULUM LINKS					
Key concepts	Scarcity   Cause and effect   Continuity and change   Significance   Perspectives   Empathy				
Key Inquiry Questions	What significant people shaped the political and social development of the Swan River Colony and the country as a whole during the 1800s?				
Historical Knowledge	The patterns of colonial development and settlement (e.g. geographical features, climate, water resources, transport, discovery of gold) and how this impacted upon the environment and the daily lives of the different inhabitants (Sikh, European). The contribution or significance of one group in shaping the Swan River Colony, including their motivations and actions (e.g. groups such as explorers, farmers, pastoralists, convicts or individuals such as James Stirling, John Septimus Roe, Thomas Peel) (ACHSHK01)				
Historical skills	<table border="1"> <tr> <td><b>QUESTIONING AND RESEARCHING</b> Identify current understandings, consider possible misconceptions and identify personal views on a topic (e.g. KWL chart, concept map) Develop and refine a range of questions required to plan an inquiry Locate and collect information and/or data from a range of appropriate primary sources and secondary sources (e.g. museums, media, library catalogues, interviews, internet) Record selected information and/or data using a variety of methods (e.g. use graphic organisers, paraphrase, summarise) Use ethical protocols when gathering information and/or data (e.g. acknowledge the work of others, reference work appropriately, obtain permission to use photographs and interviews)</td> <td><b>ANALYSING</b> Identify different points of view/perspectives in information and/or data (e.g. analyse language, identify motives) Use criteria to determine the reliability of information (e.g. consider accuracy, reliability, publication date, usefulness to the question) Interpret information and/or data collected (e.g. sequence events in chronological order, identify cause and effect, make connections with prior knowledge) Translate collected information and/or data to a variety of different formats (e.g. create a timeline, draw maps, convert a table of statistics into a graph)</td> <td><b>EVALUATING</b> Draw and justify conclusions and give explanations, based on the information and/or data in texts, tables, graphs and maps (e.g. identify patterns, interrelationships) The decision-making process (e.g. share opinions and personal perspectives, consider different points of view, identify issues, develop possible solutions, plan for action, identify advantages and disadvantages of different options)</td> <td><b>COMMUNICATION AND REFLECTING</b> Present findings, conclusions and/or arguments, appropriate to audience and purpose, in a range of communication forms (e.g. written, oral, visual, digital, tabular, graphic, maps) and using subject-specific terminology and concepts Develop a variety of texts including narratives, descriptions, biographies and persuasive texts, based on information collected from source materials Reflect on learning, identify new understandings and act on findings in different ways (e.g. suggest additional questions to be investigated, propose a course of action on an issue that is significant to them)</td> </tr> </table>	<b>QUESTIONING AND RESEARCHING</b> Identify current understandings, consider possible misconceptions and identify personal views on a topic (e.g. KWL chart, concept map) Develop and refine a range of questions required to plan an inquiry Locate and collect information and/or data from a range of appropriate primary sources and secondary sources (e.g. museums, media, library catalogues, interviews, internet) Record selected information and/or data using a variety of methods (e.g. use graphic organisers, paraphrase, summarise) Use ethical protocols when gathering information and/or data (e.g. acknowledge the work of others, reference work appropriately, obtain permission to use photographs and interviews)	<b>ANALYSING</b> Identify different points of view/perspectives in information and/or data (e.g. analyse language, identify motives) Use criteria to determine the reliability of information (e.g. consider accuracy, reliability, publication date, usefulness to the question) Interpret information and/or data collected (e.g. sequence events in chronological order, identify cause and effect, make connections with prior knowledge) Translate collected information and/or data to a variety of different formats (e.g. create a timeline, draw maps, convert a table of statistics into a graph)	<b>EVALUATING</b> Draw and justify conclusions and give explanations, based on the information and/or data in texts, tables, graphs and maps (e.g. identify patterns, interrelationships) The decision-making process (e.g. share opinions and personal perspectives, consider different points of view, identify issues, develop possible solutions, plan for action, identify advantages and disadvantages of different options)	<b>COMMUNICATION AND REFLECTING</b> Present findings, conclusions and/or arguments, appropriate to audience and purpose, in a range of communication forms (e.g. written, oral, visual, digital, tabular, graphic, maps) and using subject-specific terminology and concepts Develop a variety of texts including narratives, descriptions, biographies and persuasive texts, based on information collected from source materials Reflect on learning, identify new understandings and act on findings in different ways (e.g. suggest additional questions to be investigated, propose a course of action on an issue that is significant to them)
<b>QUESTIONING AND RESEARCHING</b> Identify current understandings, consider possible misconceptions and identify personal views on a topic (e.g. KWL chart, concept map) Develop and refine a range of questions required to plan an inquiry Locate and collect information and/or data from a range of appropriate primary sources and secondary sources (e.g. museums, media, library catalogues, interviews, internet) Record selected information and/or data using a variety of methods (e.g. use graphic organisers, paraphrase, summarise) Use ethical protocols when gathering information and/or data (e.g. acknowledge the work of others, reference work appropriately, obtain permission to use photographs and interviews)	<b>ANALYSING</b> Identify different points of view/perspectives in information and/or data (e.g. analyse language, identify motives) Use criteria to determine the reliability of information (e.g. consider accuracy, reliability, publication date, usefulness to the question) Interpret information and/or data collected (e.g. sequence events in chronological order, identify cause and effect, make connections with prior knowledge) Translate collected information and/or data to a variety of different formats (e.g. create a timeline, draw maps, convert a table of statistics into a graph)	<b>EVALUATING</b> Draw and justify conclusions and give explanations, based on the information and/or data in texts, tables, graphs and maps (e.g. identify patterns, interrelationships) The decision-making process (e.g. share opinions and personal perspectives, consider different points of view, identify issues, develop possible solutions, plan for action, identify advantages and disadvantages of different options)	<b>COMMUNICATION AND REFLECTING</b> Present findings, conclusions and/or arguments, appropriate to audience and purpose, in a range of communication forms (e.g. written, oral, visual, digital, tabular, graphic, maps) and using subject-specific terminology and concepts Develop a variety of texts including narratives, descriptions, biographies and persuasive texts, based on information collected from source materials Reflect on learning, identify new understandings and act on findings in different ways (e.g. suggest additional questions to be investigated, propose a course of action on an issue that is significant to them)		

## Sikh and Indian Australians

A historical resource for Year 5, 6 and 9 students developed by the History Teachers' Association of Western Australia.

A variety of teacher resources and learning sequences, including:

- The British Empire and development of the Swan River Colony
- Ethnic diversity in colonial Australia
- A portal into the daily lives of Sikh hawkers in the colonies
- Was there ever a white Australia?
- Story of Sikh Migration
- What Sikhs believe
- The Puggaroo and other useful terms
- Sikh Anzac profiles

Access the resource at [http://htawa.net.au/sikh\\_indian\\_australians/](http://htawa.net.au/sikh_indian_australians/)

Logos for Sawa, HTAWA, and the Australian Heritage Association are visible at the bottom.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA  
Immigration Restriction Act 1901-1925 and Regulations. No. 97/488

### CERTIFICATE EXEMPTING FROM DICTATION TEST.

I, William Howe Irvine, the Collector of Customs for the State of Queensland, in the said Commonwealth, hereby certify that Am Singh (S. 10/10/10), hereinafter described, who is leaving the Commonwealth temporarily, will be exempted from the provisions of paragraph (a) of Section 3 of the Act if he returns to the Commonwealth within a period of three (3) years from this date.

Date 20th Dec 1907 Collector of Customs

**DESCRIPTION**

Nationality Indian Birthplace Punjab, India  
Age 31 years Complexion Dark  
Height 5ft 6in Hair Black  
Build Slender Eyes Black

Particular marks Light scar on forehead between eyes  
(For impression of hand see back of this document.)

Full Face — Profile —

Date of departure 6-1-08 Destination India  
Ship Arman Port Amoy  
Date of return 10-5-11 Ship Keeloo  
Port Amoy

Signature: William Howe Irvine  
Customs Officer

## 7.8 Culture and arts festivals

### Celebrate

This interpretation measure aims to facilitate the celebration and engagement with the contemporary values of Sikhism (and contemporary experiences of Sikhs living in Cairns and FNQ more broadly) through accessible, practical and current culture and arts events or outreach programs. Specifically, there is opportunity to form partnerships with, and then engage and participate in cultural platforms that are already being provided for typically by local government, arts and culture organisations.

Themes and sub-themes that could be celebrated include:

- *Sikhism: beliefs, traditions and customs*
  - Sikh culture – religious customs and core values.
  - Community service and connections.
  - The role of the *gurdwara*.
- *The Sikhs in Far North Queensland*
  - The contribution of Sikh canecutters and farmers to FNQ industry.
- *A contemporary Sikh community*
  - Working in and serving the community.
  - Maintaining cultural traditions: acceptance and resistance.
  - Sikhism in modern Australian society.

Implementing this interpretation measure has the potential to reach audiences that would be classified as 'occasional', an audience type that can be difficult to capture without an organised approach to interpretation (i.e. ability to plan a visit) and without a targeted or focal location (i.e. a specific event) for their learning experience. It also has potential to provide exposure to a wider audience of 'specialist' visitors, who may be attending Cairns for a specific event and are more likely to be engaged if it is part of a wider program and atmosphere of diverse cultural offerings.

### Innovate

Specific interpretation opportunities that can be explored include:

- Community stalls that sell food at regular market days and/or temporary events such as fairs, arts and culture festivals etc. This presents an opportunity to increase face-to-face engagement between non-Sikh and Sikh members of the local community, to share traditional foods that form an important part of Sikh culture, and to promote the importance of *langar* and community service through food to Sikhism.

- Wider promotion of cultural festivals already established in the Sikh faith (i. e. Diwali, Sikh New Year (Baisakhi), Hola Mohalla), as a means of encouraging cross-cultural awareness within the general non-Sikh public regarding the cultural practices and values of the Sikh community.
- Community open days at either (or both) of the Cairns *gurdwaras* during Cairns Multicultural Month, where non-Sikh members of the wider community are invited to visit the *gurdwara*, participate in activities or visit displays that might be held there, and engage with members of the Sikh community in what is a traditional place of worship, but also one of gathering and learning.
- Targeted participation at specific culture and arts events organised by local government or arts and culture organisations. These 'pop up' public cultural events aim to increase face-to-face engagement and facilitate greater cross-cultural understanding between non-Sikh and Sikh members of the local community (i.e. dispel common misconceptions). This may include (but is not limited to): designing and installing temporary exhibitions, conducting cultural performances, phulkari weaving or turban tying workshops, conducting guest speaker presentations, hosting a form of charitable '*langar*' service outside the *gurdwara* in the public domain (i.e. in a park or public square) etc. Potential host events include the Cairns Festival, Women of the World Cairns Festival, Australian Heritage Festival (held by National Trust), Cairns Show, Gordonvale Cottage Markets, Cairns Food and Wine Festival, Carnival on Collins, and Babinda Harvest Festival.
- Explore opportunities to establish an annual (or bi-annual) Sikh cultural festival in Cairns specifically focused on celebrating the customs and cultural values of Sikhism, the social and economic contribution of Sikhs to FNQ, and places of importance to local Sikh communities. This would require long-term planning, secure funding sources, and collaboration and partnership with a range of community and external stakeholders.

### Collaborate

In addition, collaborations with the following groups and organisations may make for a more meaningful, effective and supported approach:

- The Sikh community of Cairns and FNQ more broadly.
- Cairns Regional Council (refer to opportunities identified in Part 6.4, above).
- Cairns Art Gallery.
- Cairns and Regional Multicultural Association.
- Guru Nanak Sikh Association, Gordonvale.
- Queensland Sikh Association / Australian Sikh Association.
- The National Trust of Australia (Queensland).

This interpretation measure has the opportunity to overlap with others including: (7.1) Sikh heritage trail; (7.2) Public art; (7.3) Collection of women's short stories; and (7.6) Exhibition and display.



## 8. Next steps

The recommendations, interpretation measures and opportunities identified in this Plan can be implemented in stages over a longer period of time, depending on the availability of funding, capacity for community involvement and stakeholder support, and project management expertise.

In terms of 'next steps', the following stages are generally to be followed to execute any given interpretation measure set out in this Plan:

### Concept Design

- Choose a broad interpretation measure (or interpretation opportunity) to pursue.
- Develop high-level concept(s) and methodology for the selected measure/opportunity. As an example, this may include:
  - the 'look and feel' for signage and printed materials;
  - a narrative focus or scaffold for the collection of short stories;
  - a visual concept for an art installation;
  - a scaffold for an educational package;
  - a concept for a heritage trail, etc.

It is noted that this Plan does provide mood board-style illustrations for each interpretation measure as a means of providing some examples and visual inspiration.

- Seek funding and in-kind support. It is noted that this Plan does provide high-level cost estimates for the development of some interpretation measures to assist with budgeting.

### Detailed Design

- Develop detailed design for the selected measure/opportunity, building on the aforesaid concept stage.

The level of detailed required at this stage needs to be sufficient to enable, for example, the physical manufacturing of signage or trail markers, the physical printing of an educational curriculum package of worksheets or the collection of short stories, or the online implementation of digital content.

### Fabrication and Implementation

- Manufacture (and if applicable, physically install) interpretation devices and content as required. This includes both virtual/online and physical measures.
- This stage is often run concurrently to the detailed design stage above, ensuring continuity and efficient delivery of the interpretive measure.

### General Recommendations

- This Plan is to be circulated within and adopted by the members of the Sikh community.
- This Plan is to be followed by (and form the basis for) a design and implementation process.
- Any interpretation measure set out in this Plan may be pursued, in no particular order.
- This Plan is recommended to be shared with relevant stakeholders (e.g. local Cairns MP, Cairns Regional Council representatives, Cairns Museum and Cairns Historical Society representatives) as a means of facilitating partnerships and support for its initiatives. This is recommended to take the form of a formal meeting between external stakeholders and members of the Sikhs in FNQ Project team.

The following Table 6 provides an overview of the various factors that need to be considered for the implementation of the interpretation measures outlined in Part 7 of this Plan. It provides some indicative timeframes and budgets that may assist in prioritising, designing and implementing those interpretation measures and opportunities.



Table 6. Overview of heritage interpretation measures

Heritage interpretation measure	Indicative budget	Timeframe	Stakeholder involvement	Recommended places of interest	Priority
<b>Sikh heritage trail</b>					
Physical-only trail <i>Inclusive of interpretation signage, physical trail markers, and a brochure / pamphlet</i>	\$10,000 – \$20,000* *dependent on extent of trail and nature of signage and considering detailed design, manufacturing, installation, etc.	1.5 – 2 years	Professional website, QR code/app developers and/or qualified heritage professionals with demonstrated experience in designing and implementing trail-based or heritage interpretation content	Edmonton and Gordonvale <i>gurdwaras</i> Former Sikh cremation grounds (Cairns Botanic Gardens and Centenary Lakes, and Cairns Martyn Street Cemetery)	
Virtual-only trail <i>Inclusive of the use of QR codes that provide a digital link to a mobile-friendly website or application that contains additional information and learning resources</i>	\$2,000 – \$5,000* *dependent on extent of virtual platform and involvement of professional third parties, hire/use of online platform, writing and filming of audio-visual content.	1.5 – 2 years	Sikh community of Cairns and FNQ Cairns Regional Council, Multicultural Community Services Tourism Cairns Tourism Tropical North Queensland	Norman Park, Gordonvale Cairns Esplanade Surviving industry infrastructure associated with the Sikh community such as Mulgrave Central Mill in Gordonvale and former canecutters barracks	
Combined physical and virtual trail <i>Inclusive of a combination of interpretation signage, physical trail markers, and use of QR codes that provide a digital link to a mobile-friendly website or application that contains additional information and learning resources</i>	\$20,000 – \$25,000* *dependent on extent of trail and virtual platform, involvement of third parties, and nature of signage, and considering detailed design, manufacturing, installation, etc.	2 – 2.5 years	Local businesses (as potential sources of sponsorship) Cairns Museum Cairns Historical Society Queensland Sikh Association Australian Sikh Heritage Association		
<b>Public art</b>					
Permanent sculptural installation (artist commission)	\$5,000 – \$10,000* *dependent on nature of art commissioned and extent of voluntary time/materials.	1 – 3 years	Individual local artists Sikh community of Cairns and FNQ Cairns Regional Council, Multicultural Community Services	Norman Park, Gordonvale Cairns Esplanade Cairns Art Gallery	
Display of phulkari textiles	\$3,000 – \$5,000* *assuming cost is for venue hire only for phulkari display and cost of producing textiles would be undertaken by community volunteers.	6 months – 1 year	Cairns Art Gallery The Embroiderers' Guild (QLD)		
Phulkari mosaic / mural / tile installation	\$2,000 – \$5,000* *dependent on extent of community voluntary involvement/donated time and resources, and nature of venue hire for installation.	6 months – 1 year			
Phulkari community workshop	\$1,000 – \$1,500* *assuming cost is for workshop venue hire and catering only.	6 months – 1 year			

Heritage interpretation measure	Indicative budget	Timeframe	Stakeholder involvement	Recommended places of interest	Priority
<b>Collection of women's short stories</b>					
Publication of short story collection	\$2,000 – \$5,000* *dependent on extent of community involvement and voluntary time/materials, and extent of professional third party involvement and equipment.	1 – 2 years	Women from various Sikh communities, not only within the Cairns district and but also across FNQ		
Audio-visual recording of short story collection			Qualified professionals (i.e. professional authors, historians and/or heritage consultants) with demonstrated experience in preparing community-led publications		
Presentation of short story content as part of culture/arts event			Queensland Women's Historical Association Professional Historians Association (QLD) Cairns City Library		
<b>Commemoration of Sikh cremation grounds</b>					
Commemorative plaque, plinth and/or signage	\$1,000 – \$3,000* *dependent on nature and quantity of signage and extent of sponsorship and community involvement.	6 months	The Sikh community of Cairns and FNQ Cairns Regional Council The Cairns Museum	Former Sikh cremation grounds in Cairns Botanic Gardens and Centenary Lakes, and Cairns Martyn Street Cemetery	
Sponsorship of memorial bench			Cairns Historical Society Queensland Sikh Association Australian Sikh Heritage Association The National Trust of Australia (Queensland)		
<b>Oral history program</b>					
Oral history	\$10,000 – \$20,000* *dependent on extent of professional third party involvement, hire/use of equipment, writing and filming of audio-visual content, and scope of oral history recording.	2 – 3 years	Qualified professionals (i.e. heritage consultants, oral historians and if required, videographers) with demonstrated experience in preparing oral histories Sikh community of Cairns and FNQ The Cairns Museum Cairns Historical Society The State Library of Queensland Cairns Regional Council		
<b>Exhibition and display</b>					
Physical exhibition	\$40,000 – \$50,000* *dependent on scope of exhibition and extent of professional third party involvement, and requirements for exhibition design, signage, collateral	1 – 3 years	Qualified heritage professionals with demonstrated experience in designing and implementing heritage exhibition content The Sikh community of Cairns and FNQ	The Cairns Museum Network of FNQ regional museums, such as Australian Workers Heritage Centre (Barcaldine), or the Australian Sugar Heritage Centre (Mourilyan)	

Heritage interpretation measure	Indicative budget	Timeframe	Stakeholder involvement	Recommended places of interest	Priority
	(pamphlets, worksheets), display mounts, exhibition space rental and exhibition infrastructure, insurance, etc.		The Cairns Museum Cairns City Library Tourism Cairns Tourism Tropical North Queensland Network of FNQ regional museums, such as Australian Workers Heritage Centre (Barcaldine), or the Australian Sugar Heritage Centre (Mourilyan)	Cairns Library	
Travelling temporary exhibition	\$40,000 – \$50,000* *dependent on scope of exhibition and extent of professional third party involvement, and venue hire and travel requirements, and requirements for exhibition design, signage, collateral (pamphlets, worksheets), display mounts, exhibition space rental and exhibition infrastructure, insurance, etc.				
Online 'virtual' exhibition	\$10,000 – \$15,000* *dependent on extent of professional third party involvement, and requirements for hire/use of online platform, writing and filming of audio-visual content.				
<b>Educational resources</b>					
Bespoke 5/6 HASSS or 9 History educational package	\$5,000 – \$7,000* *dependent on scope of program and extent of professional third party involvement.	1 – 2 years	Qualified heritage and/or educational professionals with demonstrated experience in creating educational and teaching resources Host organisations, specifically primary and secondary schools in Cairns, but also across Queensland Queensland History Teachers' Association (QHTA) The Cairns Museum Cairns Historical Society The State Library of Queensland Cairns Regional Council		
Online database of historical resources					
<b>Culture and arts events</b>					
Community food stalls	\$1,000 – \$5,000* *dependent on extent of community involvement and voluntary time/materials, and extent of third party involvement and equipment.	6 months – 1 year	The Sikh community of Cairns and FNQ Cairns Regional Council Cairns Art Gallery Cairns and Regional Multicultural Association Guru Nanak Sikh Association, Gordonvale Queensland Sikh Association Australian Sikh Association	Regular markets in Cairns district Organised events such as Women of the World Cairns Festival, Cairns Show, Gordonvale Cottage Markets, Cairns Food and Wine Festival, Carnival on Collins, and Babinda Harvest Festival Edmonton and Gordonvale <i>gurdwaras</i>	
Community open days e.g. at <i>gurdwaras</i>	\$1,000 – \$3,000* *dependent on extent of community involvement and voluntary time/materials.	3 – 6 months			
'Pop up' events	\$1,000 – \$5,000*	3 – 6 months	The National Trust of Australia (QLD)		

Heritage interpretation measure	Indicative budget	Timeframe	Stakeholder involvement	Recommended places of interest	Priority
<i>e.g. cultural performances, engagement workshops, guest speaker presentations, public langar service, etc.</i>	*dependent on extent of community involvement and voluntary time/materials, and extent of third party involvement and equipment.				
Bi-annual Sikh cultural festival	\$20,000 – \$50,000* *dependent on scope of festival program and extent of third party involvement.	2 – 4 years			

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