

We don't have any issues
here - do we?

Workshop on the *Protocols*

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Indigenous protocols

- Developed through a consultative process in 1993-94
- Published as:
 - A Byrne, A Garwood, H Moorcroft & A Barnes, *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander protocols for libraries, archives and information services*, Australian Library and Information Association for ATSI LIRN, Canberra, 1995
- Also available (without descriptive sections) at:
 - <http://www.cdu.edu.au/library/protocol.html>

Covered 11 areas

- 'Professional practice' areas:
 1. Content and perspectives
 2. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander intellectual property issues
 3. Accessibility and use
 4. Description and classification of materials
 5. Secret or sacred materials
 6. Offensive materials

Covered 11 areas

'Organisational strategy' areas:

7. Governance and management
8. Staffing
9. Education and training for professional practice

Covered 11 areas

'Community engagement' areas:

10. Awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Islander peoples and issues
11. Copying and repatriation of records to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

2004 Review of Protocols

- Undertaken to assess the value of the Protocols strategy:
 - M Nakata, A Byrne, V Nakata & G Gardiner, 'Mapping the impact of the 1995 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander protocols for libraries, archives and information services', research report, UTS, Sydney, 2005.
- Concluded that the strategy had been useful, the Protocols are still valid (with some additions) but that there had been a major failure in implementation.

2004 Review of the Protocols

- General consensus that the Protocols provide a very useful starting point ... useful for raising awareness ... induction of new staff ... provide an external authority
- But, the Protocols did not provide enough depth or breadth of information to assist many organisations to apply them

2004 Review - Improvements

- Explanations of how and why aspects of the Protocols related to their professional practice
- Reduced and more practical sets of guidelines dealing only with the aspects of the Protocols that applied to their context
- Guidance on how to proceed in specific cases
- More information on indigenous intellectual property issues
- Strategies to promote their collections to communities
- Strategies to encourage indigenous use of their library

2004 Review – New Issues

- Digitisation and Web access to Indigenous materials which amplifies the risk of inappropriate access or use.
- Electronic access to information relating to Indigenous peoples
- Further exploration of the intersection between Indigenous and legislated concepts of intellectual and cultural property rights and ownership and access issues with respect to material that documents Indigenous peoples but is legally owned by others
- Guidelines for interaction with Indigenous clients and for approaching and consulting with Indigenous communities.

2004 Review – Advancing the Protocols

- Ongoing promotion of the issues and the Protocols
- Leadership and a sustained agenda
- Collaboration across the sector especially on Indigenous employment issues, professional preparation and professional development
- Ongoing institutional commitment and support

Recent developments

- Libraries and Indigenous Knowledge Colloquium, State Library of New South Wales, 9-10 December 2004
 - Research papers to be published as special issue of *Australian Academic & Research Libraries* which will also be available as a monograph
 - All papers and presentations will be included in an ebook to be published soon via UTSePress
- Deadly Directions: Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Library Conference 2-3 August 2005
- Strategic discussion at IFLA World Library & Information Congress August 2005

Current state

- Nakata et al review found:
 - “shifts in LIS practice that have helped to constitute an information context more relevant to Indigenous Australian needs and interests ”
 - “practice is patchy rather than standard”
 - “large part of practical activity has focussed on identifying and providing better access to Indigenous materials—historical and cultural—that are held in collections across the nation”

Some examples of good practice

- “Some public libraries identify ... with flag stickers; others shelve their Indigenous material as a separate collection to assist access for Indigenous users. Other public libraries employ outreach strategies to build pathways for Indigenous clients into the library... story telling sessions, visits by Aboriginal identities ... involve the community in book selection .. establishing Indigenous liaison positions or projects to encourage documentation of local Indigenous history and Indigenous use of the library”

Some examples of good practice

- “National Library of Australia produced *Mura Gadi*, an online annotated guide to information relating to Indigenous Australians within the library’s manuscript collection, oral history collection and pictures collection”
- “National Archives of Australia produced guides to Indigenous records, to make them more accessible to Indigenous people”
- “State Library of Queensland appointed its first Indigenous Board member in 1994 and since has established an Indigenous Services section, ... it has established 9 of a proposed 31 Indigenous Knowledge Centres”

Some examples of good practice

- “[in schools] ... evidence of culling of outdated or inappropriate materials and collection building to enhance relevant curriculum areas and general reading ... separate shelving or ... stickers ... and, in Queensland, specialist libraries existed within the four Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Learning and Engagement Centres to assist teachers’ access to Indigenous resources. In the Northern Territory, issues of sensitivity, awareness of the need for proper attribution and acknowledgement of Indigenous-owned knowledge, and consultation with Indigenous staff were largely standard practice in the schools we visited, even where a school was unaware of the existence of the Protocols.. ”

The way forward

- Strategies developed by the sector need to have:
 - legitimacy with the Indigenous community
 - relevance to Indigenous interests
 - currency in terms of Indigenous needs and issues
- Peak LIS organisations have a legislative mandate to preserve the documentary heritage of the nation and to provide LIS services for all Australians
 - CASL has taken taken steps toward a national policy framework

The way forward

- ATSI LIRN provides a forum for dialogue with Indigenous people and professionals and the sharing of practice across the profession
 - It is being revitalised
- Professional engagement
 - Libraries, archives and information services serving Indigenous people or holding Indigenous resources need to review their policies and procedures
 - Each of us should review and renew our practice

What can I do?

- Consider my practice especially in relation to the 'professional practice' areas:
 1. Content and perspectives
 2. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander intellectual property issues
 3. Accessibility and use
 4. Description and classification of materials
 5. Secret or sacred materials
 6. Offensive materials

What can I do?

- Look at my organisation's policies and procedures in regard to 'professional practice', 'organisational strategy' and 'community engagement' areas, adding:

7. Governance and management

8. Staffing

9. Education and training for professional practice

10. Awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Islander peoples and issues

11. Copying and repatriation of records to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

What can I do?

- Encourage ALIA and LIS education and training providers to engage with the issues in entry, advanced and professional development programs
- Explore ways of working with Indigenous groups and communities
- Contribute to the promotion and implementation of the Protocols

Some discussion questions

- How can I improve the content and perspectives reflected in my collections?
- What are the factors that might encourage or deter Indigenous people from using my library?
- How can I deal with offensive materials but still uphold the right to information?

Some discussion questions

- What are the issues relating to digitisation and access to electronic information?
- How can Indigenous peoples be involved in the governance of my library or archive?
- How could we dramatically increase the employment of Indigenous people in libraries, archives and information services?

Some discussion questions

- How do we manage the conflicts between institutional control, ownership of copyright and Indigenous rights?
- How can we create an effective implementation strategy for the Protocols?
- In what ways could I personally advance the Protocols?

Other issues?

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