



National position statement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander library services and collections

Preface

National and State Libraries Australasia (NSLA) acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as traditional owners and custodians of Australia. NSLA also acknowledges that dispossession of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples from their lands, the dispersal and relocation of communities, the erosion of traditional customs and languages, and the removal of children from their families, have resulted in the disconnection of generations of families from their traditional homelands, languages and culture. The library and information sector is a vital access point for Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders to access material reflecting their past as well as resources to strengthen their future.

National and State Libraries Australasia commits to nationally and internationally recognised protocols to ensure that collections and services are accessible, appropriate and responsive to the needs and perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

This position statement is intended to guide progressive action across National, State and Territory library institutions in their plans and approaches to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander library services and collections. It holds Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' interests, needs and perspectives as central to any development of policy or practice. The position statement encourages development in key areas to progress best practice standards in the delivery of services and maintenance of collections in accordance with recognised protocols.

Position statement

National and State Libraries Australasia endorse the following national and international protocols and policy frameworks:

- The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Library, Information and Resource Network (ATSILIRN): *Protocols for Libraries, Archives and Information Services*.ⁱ
- The United Nations *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.ⁱⁱ
- The National and State Libraries Australasia: *Guidelines for Working with Community*.ⁱⁱⁱ

NSLA will promote standards of excellence across the library and information sector, with a focus on the following key areas:

- The right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to be informed about collections that exist relating to them, their culture, language and heritage.'
- The right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to determine use and access provisions for heritage materials which reflect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, culture, language and perspectives.
- The inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in decision making processes, at all levels, to achieve informed and appropriate directions and agendas across the library and information sector.
- The development of strategies to increase employment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff within the library and information sector.
- The development of strategies to strengthen cultural competency across our workforce, including knowledge and awareness of issues for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander library users.
- The development of strategies to return usable copies of collection material to cultural owners to support cultural and language maintenance or revitalisation.

This position statement will be reviewed in July 2015.

ⁱ <http://aiatsis.gov.au/atsilirn/protocols.php>

ⁱⁱ http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.nsla.org.au/publication/working-community-guidelines-collaborative-practice-between-libraries-and-aboriginal-and>