Aboroginal and Torres Strait Islander Library and Information Resources Network Protocols

The Protocols are...

The Protocols are intended to guide libraries, archives and information services in appropriate ways to interact with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the communities which the organisations serve, and to handle materials with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content.

They are a guide to good practice which will need to be interpreted and applied in the context of each organisation's mission, collections and client community.
The protocols address:

- the recognition of the moral rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the owners of their knowledge;
- other important issues arising from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content and perspectives in documentary materials, media and traditional cultural property;
- issues in access to libraries, archives and information resources by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples;
- encouragement for both the involvement and the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the governance and operation of libraries, archives and information services; and,
- appropriate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their cultures in libraries, archives and information services.

The Protocols are not...

The Protocols are not prescriptive or definitive.

It is unlikely they will cover all the issues you might face in your professional practice. However, they should provide you with a starting point for solving problems, and put you in touch with other practitioners who are working through similar scenarios.

The Protocols do not promote censorship - materials now considered offensive or inappropriate still form part of the historical record.

The Protocols should enable you as an information professional to make sound judgments regarding appropriate responses to any issues, or provide you with some ideas about where to go to for assistance if more expertise is required.

Content & Perspective

It is my view that you need to look carefully at the way Aboriginal people are portrayed in libraries, and you need to reach out to Aboriginal people and show us that we are welcome to participate in an area which we were excluded from for a long time.

(Mick Dodson 1993)

Many of the records, books, images and other materials held by Australian libraries, archives and information services include depictions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, culture and experience presented from a variety of perspectives. Perspectives include those of the colonist, policeman and magistrate as well as those of the historian, anthropologist and social commentator. The voices of Australian Indigenous peoples are increasingly being heard in books, videotapes, oral history and through archival records.

'Both ways' or 'two ways' education responds to this need by calling for equal respect for both Indigenous and 'western' languages, knowledge and learning approaches:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples argue strongly that their culture, knowledge and values should be given equal respect and importance to those of non-indigenous Australia in our education systems. They recognise the importance of the skills and knowledge that non-Indigenous Australia has to offer but consider that without reciprocal recognition of indigenous skills and knowledge, the education being provided is incomplete and lacks cultural fairness and relevance (National Review of Education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, 1995:85)

More poetically, the National Review quotes Mandawuy Yunupingu:

We must connect with old people, we need to tap into their wisdom. The hearts of Aboriginal women are crying for their culture. (Review, 1995:5)

Major institutions have a responsibility to ensure that their collections are comprehensive, inclusive and reflective of all perspectives. These collections may include sensitive material which needs to be handled with special care. Smaller institutions may have a more specialised collecting focus. In developing and managing collections, organisations should follow good archival and/or library practice. In responding appropriately to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and issues, organisations can learn from the experience of others but, above all, must accept the crucial need to consult in an appropriate and ongoing manner with relevant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in regard to the development and management of their collections.

For libraries and private archives, it is important that there should be a serious effort to balance collections by acquiring material by as well as that about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. There should be a special focus on acquiring materials produced, written or directed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples: good information by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander writers, producers, artists, performers in all formats. This has become considerably easier in recent years with the growth in publishing of material by Indigenous peoples, particularly through Magabala Books (*www.magabala.com*) and University of Queensland Press (*http://www.uqp.uq.edu.au/*) and the publication of annotated bibliographies such as Black in Focus (Dunkle, Margaret 1994, ISBN: 1875589473), which have been produced to guide libraries and schools in the purchase of books and other materials.

Some useful starting points...
(writers – see *http://home.vicnet.net.au/~ozlit/aborigwr.html*)

(film - *http://www.filmaust.com.au/showcase/8478/default.asp?content=bios*)
(arts and performance - *http://www.ozco.gov.au/boards/atsia/*)

Some archives and libraries may be able to encourage this trend by sponsoring publications, promoting writing groups or offering to house records. A regional institution could make a very useful contribution by sponsoring an oral history program to record local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's experiences and views. Public or school libraries could user Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander storytellers or artists and discuss with them the possibility of recording their work.

It is important to collect material which is locally based. In many local libraries, readers cannot find material about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples from that local area. For example, a public library in western New South Wales might have material about Aboriginal peoples in South Australia or Tasmania but none from the Darling. Both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples need to be able to access their local histories and traditions.

Promotion of different perspectives may take many forms: those selected should be appropriate for the type of material and the type of library or archive. This might involve placing stickers on items which illustrate Indigenous experiences or views, or perhaps inviting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to annotate materials such as historical photographs (for example, the Koorie Heritage Trust project) with their memories or knowledge.

Government archives may perceive some difficulty with this recommendation since their mandate to collect is generally specified in legislation. However, there is the opportunity to consult through the government agencies from which records originate. Originating organisations should be advised to be aware of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content of materials and appropriate access policies. Raising awareness of different perspectives also involves the promotion of the existence and availability of a range of materials and of any conditions governing access.

Following the lead provided by some museums, archives and libraries might facilitate the development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community keeping places in which documentation of importance to a community, or copies of the documentation can be kept in appropriate environmental conditions and under appropriate control. Dialogue with communities may lead to the establishment of such keeping places in conjunction with a library or archive, or, perhaps, even as specially designated space within the library or archive.

Intellectual Property

We can and ought to demand restricted access to some records. But in respect of any particular item, it must be the indigenous people with authority in the particular group who own the information who advise on research and curatorial practices.

Marcia Langton

The interests of the authors and publishers of records, books and other documentary material are protected by copyright law but the interests of those whose culture is described are not. The primary rights of the owners of a culture must be recognised. Libraries, archives and information services will:

- Become aware of the issues surrounding cultural documentation and the need for cultural awareness training.
- Develop proper professional recognition of the primary cultural and intellectual property rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and consult with appropriate Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples on their application.
- Develop ways, including the recognition of moral rights, to protect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural and intellectual property.
- Share information on initiatives involving cultural documentation.

Henrietta Fourmile cogently noted that, *"The information collected about us is simply not owned by us"* (1989). This reflects the orientation of copyright law, which ensures that the interests of the authors and publishers of records, books and other documentary material are protected but the interests of those whose culture is described are not. Thus, photographs of a dance will be protecting the interests of the photographer but not those of the dancers; a record of a story will be protected for the recorder but not its source.

There is growing recognition of such moral rights to extend control over intellectual property. The discussion paper Proposed Moral Rights Legislation for Copyright Creators (1994:24) notes that copyright legislation does not recognise a number of significant issues specific to Aboriginal artists including:

- community ownership of works and management of rights according to Aboriginal tradition (eg, the clan or group elders, rather than the individual artist, may be regarded as owner of copyright in a work. Permission for use of the work should then be sought from the elders).
- community interests in the reproduction or public disclosure of sacred objects (eg, some works may only be viewed by men or those who have reached a designated level of initiation).
- protection of works such as rock art, which are too old to still have copyright protection (many of these works have existed for centuries and hold special significance for a specific clan or group).
- requirement that a work be original (many Aboriginal designs derived from traditional designs and may not be regarded as original by present law).
- protection of oral traditions, ie, in the absence of a work in a material form (eg, stories and dances that have never been written or recorded will not be protected, nor, in practice, will transient forms of art such as body painting).

The discussion paper suggests that these issues need to be examined further by all relevant parties but quotes Anderson's concern that:

 The law as it stands is simply not a sensitive enough instrument to deal effectively with the management of spiritually significant material, that often falls outside the time or definitional limits it

sets. The protection of the integrity of such works (often ancient in origin) and the provision of mechanisms that ensure control of their dissemination remains with their custodians, could be dealt with as a specifically Australian moral rights issue. (P Anderson, 'Artists' Rights and the Exploitation of Creativity: the introduction of moral rights protection for authors and artists', Arts and Entertainment Law Review June 1993).

In 1988, the Copyright Law Review Committee issued a majority report recommending against the introduction of moral rights. The grounds identified by the Committee to support non-introduction included the following:

- there was insufficient support within Australia for Australia to enhance its copyright law in this area;
- the theoretical basis for moral rights in a common law system had not been identified; and
- violation of moral rights in Australia were too infrequent to warrant legislative intervention.(2)

On 4 December 2000 the long-awaited Copyright Amendment (Moral Rights) Bill was passed by Parliament. Amendments proposed by Senator Aden Ridgeway for the protection of Indigenous cultural expression were unsuccessful.

The government indicated that it will *"consult with appropriate indigenous peak bodies as part of this process, and announce as soon as practicable a package of measures to protect indigenous arts and cultural expressions."*

In September 2003 the new Communications, IT & Arts Minister (and former Attorney-General), Daryl Williams, announced that it was heading towards stronger protection - apparently based on moral rights - for Indigenous cultural expression and knowledge.

The Caslon Analytics Intellectual Property Guide (*http://www.caslon.com.au/ipguide13.htm*) provides some useful information regarding Indigenous IP issues.

There are two key rights underpinning moral rights: the right of *attribution* and the right of *integrity*. The discussion paper defines the former as *"the right to be identified as the author of a work"* and the latter as *"the rights to object to distortion, mutilation or other modification of, or derogatory action in relation to, the work which is prejudicial to the author's honour or reputation",* and notes that *"there are two other less widely recognised rights, namely, the right to withdraw a work after its publication and the right to refuse publication of a work".*

Helen Daniels commented at a round table meeting on intellectual property issues in a networked environment (Sydney, 19-20 June 1995) that many aspects of moral rights are covered by existing legislation but coverage is fragmented and difficult to enforce. Legislation is in force in New Zealand, Canada and the United Kingdom. Australian legislation will cover the rights of attribution and integrity and will be achieved by amendment of the Copyright Act. They will subsist for the duration of copyright.

Thus, moral rights for Indigenous people's knowledge might comprise:

- The right to be identified as the source and owner of knowledge expressed in a tradition, story, dance, design etc.
- The right to object to distortion, mutilation or other modification of, or derogatory action in relation to that knowledge.
- The right to refuse publication of that knowledge and to withdraw permission for publication after publication.

It appears that the first two will be recognised and protected to some degree in Australian law but that the third will be achieved only through the adoption of good practice in recognising and respecting cultural ownership. The general condemnation of plagiarism, of appropriating ideas or expressions form another, is a good model for developing such recognition and respect.

The primary rights of the owners of a culture must be recognised. Libraries, archives and information services can play a part **by becoming aware of the issues** surrounding cultural documentation and the need for cultural awareness training. Simply being aware and understanding the issues can play a large part in actually making a difference.

Those working in larger organisations such as State, National and University Libraries can and should develop proper professional recognition of the primary cultural and intellectual property rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and consult with appropriate Indigenous peoples on their application to materials in the care of the organisation.

Organisations should develop and foster sensitivity to the issues involved in caring for documentation relating to the intellectual property of Indigenous peoples. In consultation with relevant Indigenous peoples, archivists and librarians can develop ways, including the recognition of moral rights, of protecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural and intellectual property. Through collaborative action initiatives involving cultural documentation can be shared.

Accessibility and Use

The second point is, once you've got librarians who are able to relate to Aboriginal people warmly, then you have to find a way in which you can strengthen your librarians to be strong enough to get out of their buildings and go into the community. The third point is that, once you've got out there into the community and the people like you, then is the time to invite them back into the library.

Maisie Wilson 1979

Aboriginal people who have written about libraries and other resource centres have invariably mentioned how important it is to feel comfortable in them. This includes having approachable staff members, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander faces amongst the staff, an easy atmosphere and pleasant surroundings. Friendly staff will mean that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples do not feel intimidated by an alien Anglo-American system or inadvertently made to feel inferior if they do not know how to find information. Libraries, archives and information services will:

- Develop and implement clear statements of the types of resources and services Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples want by initiating consultation to determine appropriate resources and services.
- Employ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in visible areas such as reference and other service points as well as in other public roles such as client liaison.
- Employ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as liaison officers to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and/or communities served by the organisation ensuring that the liaison is ongoing, responding to the changing interests and needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Ensure accessibility by encouraging and fostering positive relationships between staff members and clients including peoples from all backgrounds.
- Promote libraries, archives and information services in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- Encourage the use of the organisation's facilities as meeting places and resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the planning, design and layout of libraries, archives and information services to create welcoming and suitable environments.

The Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody highlighted the vital importance of access to information in its Recommendation 53:

That Commonwealth, State and Territory governments provide access to all government archival records pertaining to the family and community histories of Aboriginal people so as to assist with the process of enabling Aboriginal people to re-establish community and family links with those people from whom they were separated as a result of past policies of government. The Commonwealth recognises that questions to the rights of privacy and questions of confidentiality may arise and recommends that the principles and processes for access to such records should be negotiated between government and appropriate Aboriginal organisations, but such negotiations should proceed on the basis that as a general principle access to such documents should be permitted.

While this recommendation is specifically related to community and family histories, the general principle of the vital importance of access to information must be a key concern of information organisations. It is a question which underlies all of the Protocols.

Aboriginal peoples who have written about libraries and other resource centres have invariably mentioned how important it is to feel comfortable in them. Because of their institutional nature, many archives and libraries are intimidating. Large, formal buildings with ranks of shelving, tables and seats, brusque signs and specialised terminology project an image of professional activity in which the novice is not welcome. Many people can feel intimidated in such an environment but it can be particularly difficult for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples if they, and their families and friends, have little or no experience of using libraries and archives.

Organisations can be made more welcoming by attention to their design, presentation and staffing.

The last is most important: it is vital to have approachable staff who are sensitive to the anxieties of clients and to have Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander faces amongst the staff. Approachable and friendly staff will mean that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples do not feel intimidated in seeking assistance to use alien systems or inadvertently made to feel inferior or stupid if they do not know how to find information. Seeing Indigenous peoples working in the information organisation and particularly in visible areas such as reference and other service points, will reassure Indigenous clients that they are welcome to enter and use it. This requires not only the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members but also the encouragement and fostering of positive relationships between both staff members and clients of all backgrounds.

Extending beyond the walls of the organisation, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples can be employed as liaison officers to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples or communities served by the organisation, responding to the changing interests and needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This will serve to promote libraries, archives and information services in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and encourage their use of the organisation's facilities as a meeting place and resource for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Promotion can, of course, go much further by holding displays and advertising library, archives and information service holdings within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Mobile libraries should visit communities to provide a convenient service and to identify the communities' needs so that the library can respond.

Focused finding aids are especially useful because they help clients find materials of interest without confronting large catalogues and the mysteries of computers. The Charles Darwin University Library, for example, has a listing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander videos which has proved very popular. Flagging systems, such as Aboriginal flag labels on the spines of books, can be useful in smaller collections as has been demonstrated by successful use at a number of school and public libraries.

An easy atmosphere and pleasant surroundings will make the organisation more welcoming for all clients. Smaller, more intimate spaces will be less intimidating than large reading rooms and cavernous foyers. The Charles Darwin University's main library, for example, was consciously designed to have the tropical coastline and foliage visible from all the public areas of the building and to have a series of smaller study spaces interspersed among the blocks of shelving. Attention to detail will be repaid. Lincoln University, in Christchurch New Zealand, has signage in both Maori and English. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artworks can improve the visual presentation of the organisation and send messages of welcome to Indigenous peoples. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples can be involved in planning, design and layout of libraries, archives and information services to create welcoming and

suitable environments. At Moree, Aboriginal representatives on the committee had a lot of input into the refurbishment of the public library.

All these measures can be most valuable but most important is the need to develop and implement clear statements of the types of resources and services Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples want by initiating consultation with Indigenous clients and potential clients.

Description and Classification of Materials

We have been referred to and catalogued as 'savages' or 'primitive' while Western industrial peoples are referred to as advanced and complex.

(Mick Dodson, 1993)

Indexing terminology, subject headings and classification systems are designed to provide easy access to materials in libraries, archives and information services. However, the use of outdated, inaccurate or value laden terms actually obstructs access. There needs to be nothing less than a total paradigm shift away from Eurocentric approaches to categorisation and description. To improve access libraries, archives and information services will:

- Develop, implement and use a national thesaurus for describing documentation relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and issues.
- Develop and use subject headings and guidelines for archival description which are sensitive to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and which promote effective retrieval.
- Promote appropriate changes to Library of Congress Subject Headings with the aim of retrospectively re-cataloguing items recorded with unsuitable subject headings.
- Improve access by the introduction of classificatory systems which describe items by their geographic, language and cultural identifiers.
- Consult with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples at local, state/territory and national levels in relation to the description, cataloguing and classification of materials in libraries, archives and information services.

AIATSIS has developed a thesaurus which is publicly available on their website. Going to the Browse section of the library website, you can move alphabetically through language names, place names and subject headings from the AIATSIS Language Thesaurus. You can also browse through author or collector names, titles and serial titles.
http://unicorn.aiatsis.gov.au/uhtbin/cgisirsi/nyc8s4j6sw/32430276/1/1188/X/BLASTOFF

The descriptors or subject headings used in catalogues and listings of materials in libraries and archives are often inappropriate and sometimes offensive. They tend to use outdated terminology, sometimes incorporating the prejudices of other times.

Archives may be compelled to use the names appended in the past to files, records and series, but more sensitive terminology could be employed at the level of finding aids.

The key is to develop and use subject headings which are sensitive to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and which promote effective retrieval. Libraries have been well served by Library of Congress Subject Headings as a thesaurus for describing wide ranging general collections. However, their deficiencies have been apparent for a very long time, leading to the introduction of means of suggesting changes to them. These means must be employed in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander material because the North American bias and Eurocentric historical focus are particularly apparent and galling in this area. Consequently, it is most important that libraries should prompt appropriate changes to Library of Congress Subject Headings with the aim of retrospectively cataloguing items recorded with unsuitable subject headings.

Access to both library and archival material can be improved significantly by identifying items by their geographic, language and cultural identifiers (ie, things that individual groups of people use to describe themselves or their culture). Such identifiers not only provide greater

variety to access points and keys for selection, but can also permit the introduction of other types of search tools such as those based on maps or hypertext links.

Initiatives to promote changes to subject headings and classificatory practices on the national and international level should, of course, be pursued in close liaison with Indigenous groups. Archivists, librarians and other information professionals should consult with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples at both local and national levels in relation to the description, cataloguing and classification of materials in libraries, archives and information services.

Secret or Sacred Materials

There is information that is restricted, that our children cannot learn about, there is information that is restricted even to adults, there is information that is of a secret or sacred nature, that many people have no knowledge of or access to. That knowledge is only there for certain people to have access to.

(Galarrwuy Yunupingu, 1986)

Some of the materials in libraries, archives and information services are of a confidential or sensitive nature which may require certain restrictions on access for regulatory, commercial, security or community reasons. In relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content, these sensitivities have greatest force when the materials include records and/or depictions of secret and/or sacred information which may have been recorded with or without permission.

There are both published and archival materials which contain secret or sacred information which should have not be made generally available. An item need not be on open access to everyone just because it has been published: some Aboriginal peoples have given secret information to respected researchers, not realising that the information would be published and made available to the general public.

Secret or sacred/sensitive indigenous information should not be confused with material that may be considered offensive to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. See Offensive Material for more information.

A working definition of secret or sacred material must include consultation ie an item is secret or sacred if it contains information which is considered to be secret or sacred by the community to which it pertains. Suitable management practices will depend on both the materials and the communities served by the organisations.

In implementing the processes through which such materials are managed, libraries, archives and information services will:

- Consult in the identification of such materials and the development of suitable management practices with the most appropriate representatives of the particular Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities involved.
- Facilitate the process of consultation and implementation by developing effective mechanisms including liaison with reference groups at local, state and national levels.
- Participate in the establishment of reference groups consisting of senior library and archival services staff and Aboriginal representatives.
- Seek actively to identify the existence of secret or sacred and sensitive materials by retrospectively surveying holdings and by monitoring current materials.
- Each appoint specific, designated Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander liaison officer/s to serve as the specific point/s of contact between their institution and the relevant reference group/s.
- Provide suitable storage and viewing facilities with limited access as may be required.
- Ensure that any conditions on access are understood by staff and users and are fully implemented.
- Support the establishment of a national database for the identification of publications with secret or sacred content and of suitable management practices.

Some of the materials in libraries, archives and information services are of a confidential or sensitive nature, which may require certain restrictions on access for regulatory, commercial, security or community reasons.

In relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content, these sensitivities have greatest force when the materials include records and/or depictions of secret and/or sacred information which may have been recorded with or without permission. There are both published and archival materials which contain secret or sacred information which should not be made generally available. An item need not be on open access to everyone just because it has been published: some Aboriginal people have given secret information to respected researchers, not realising that the information would be published and made available to the general public.

There have been examples of mishandling of materials which have caused great distress to Indigenous people. For example, the Arrernte people of Hermannsburg were outraged when a copy of Spencer and Gillen (The Northern Tribes of Central Australia, Macmillan, 1904) fell into the hands of uninitiated youths and children because it includes photographs and descriptions of artefacts and ceremonies of a sacred nature. A community library in that environment, or indeed in Alice Springs where there are many Arrernte people, would be justified in restricting access to that work and might consider it inappropriate to even hold it.

Appropriate handling will normally mean making potential users aware of the contents before they open them. It might involve labels, notes in the catalogue indicating that the contents are 'For initiated males only' or include 'Women's business'. For ease of management in libraries open to the public, it might be wise to shelve such materials in a restricted area, and if they should be of particular sensitivity, to box them, with descriptions of the nature of any restrictions on the outside of the boxes.

A working definition of secret or sacred material must include consultation, ie an item is secret or sacred if it contains information which is considered to be secret or sacred by the community to which it pertains. Suitable management practices will depend on both the materials and the communities served by the organisations.

Secret, sacred or sensitive Indigenous information should not be confused with material that may be considered offensive to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Guidance on the handling of potentially offensive material is provided in Protocol 6.

There are 3 key steps in handling of secret, sacred or sensitive material by libraries, archives and information services. They are:

- The identification of such material in collections;
- The determination of appropriate policies for the handling of this material once it is identified;
- The strict implementation and observance of those policies in the day to day operation of the holding institution.

While it is always desirable for libraries and archives to consult with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities involved, it is absolutely essential that there be full consultation with the most appropriate representatives of the particular communities during the first two steps of this process. It may be useful to contact other organisations who are experienced in this regard, such as AIATSIS, for advice before proceeding.

To facilitate the process of consultation and implementation, libraries and archives need to establish reference groups at both state and national levels. These groups then:

- Assist with the identification of both published and unpublished materials which are secret, sacred or sensitive;
- Consult with nominated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander spokespeople to determine suitable conditions for access, storage and handling of identified material;
- Coordinate, for published material, the addition of access, storage and handling notes to the corresponding catalogue records on the Australian Bibliographic Network.

To be effective, the reference groups must consist of senior staff and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander representatives of the library and archival communities in each state (especially representatives from the State Libraries and State Archives), in addition to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community representatives who can facilitate contact with communities across the state. Reference groups should publicise their existence throughout the library and archival communities within their own states, and maintain contact with corresponding reference groups in other states and at the national level.

The groups should serve as the first point of contact for libraries and archives seeking advice on the handling of secret or sacred and sensitive materials in their collections. Where reference groups are unable to give immediate advice, they will undertake to carry out appropriate consultations on behalf of the requesting library or archive. They should maintain up to date lists of Aboriginal contacts and authorities throughout the states to ensure that the right people are consulted. This is a crucial point. Some starting points for consultation may be the local Lands Council, Community or Cultural Centre or other representative board. Again, it may be useful to start with an organisation like AIATSIS who will be able to provide advice on who to contact in your area.

It should be the responsibility of each library or archive which seeks guidance to maintain documentation on the source of their authority for particular recommendations on access, handling and storage. Simple 'permissions' templates can be developed detailing who was consulted, what access was granted, who should be contacted for further information etc. AIATSIS access records for example might state: Open access – reading; Closed copying & quotation Principal and/or Depositor's permission; Not for Inter-Library Loan.

In addition to providing a reactive service to libraries and archives seeking assistance, reference groups should proactively seek to identify the existence of secret, sacred or sensitive content in both records and published works. This will not only involve the retrospective surveying of records and publications, but also the monitoring of current published output. Collecting institutions which hold unpublished material should be encouraged to survey their own holdings to identify material which may potentially be secret, sacred or sensitive.

The establishment of a national secret or sacred database to assist libraries in identifying sensitive items in their collections is being investigated. If established, the database would collate information from various libraries, archives and reference groups. It would require the wholehearted support of both institutions and reference groups.

In implementing these policies and procedures it would be useful for each information organisation, or a consortium of organisations, to employ specific, designated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander liaison officer/s to serve as the specific point/s of contact between the organisation or organisations and the relevant reference group/s and community or communities.

The provision of suitable storage facilities with limited access can be established. A glass fronted locked bookshelf may be sufficient in smaller organisations. Separate rooms may be necessary in larger organisations. Limited access storage facilities will help ensure that unauthorised people do not inadvertently view or handle secret and sacred materials.

An appropriate response to this may be the development of keeping places within the information organisation or within the community. The Australian Museum has an international reputation for its sensitivity in regard to the repatriation of Aboriginal material. Its collection of secret and sacred materials includes documents, artefacts and skeletal remains. The policy is that where repatriation can take place it will be done but only after consultation with the community and with all the community members involved. Often, the result is that they remain in the Museum. The Museum does not claim ownership: the materials are owned by the community but held by the Museum in proper conditions. If the community wants skeletal remains or artefacts to be repatriated they will be but only when there is a proper place and a respectful plan, in which they can be kept. Community members can visit and see materials in the Museum, or materials can be located on 'indefinite loan' in the communities with the Museum continuing to maintain them. Armidale, Moree and other centres in New South Wales have a great deal of material from the Australian Museum with curators and conservators visiting to maintain them.

Effective implementation will, of course, require a commitment from the organisations and their staff members. Any conditions on access must be observed by both staff members and clients.

Remember at all times, limiting access is not intended to be a censoring exercise, but simply a means of respecting the use of information that belongs to or pertains to a particular group of people.

Offensive Material

No person is likely to willingly go to a place which portrays or displays them in a way that is alien and degrading.

(Mick Dodson, 1993)

Libraries, archives and information services need to recognise that their collections may contain materials that are offensive to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Such materials may be racist, sexist, derogatory, abusive or offensively wrong. Many examples are of a historical nature but some are contemporary. Libraries, archives and information services have a responsibility to preserve and make accessible the documentary record but must also respond appropriately to the existence of offensive materials. Within the context of their missions and the communities they serve, organisations will:

- Develop an awareness of the extent to which their collections may contain materials which will be offensive to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Take advice from and develop effective consultation strategies with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in relation to sensitive materials including materials which are offensive.
- Develop strategies to deal appropriately with offensive materials in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Libraries, archives and information services need to recognise that their collections may contain materials that are offensive to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Such materials may be racist, sexist, derogatory, abusive or offensively wrong. Libraries, archives and information services have a responsibility to preserve and make accessible the documentary record but must also respond appropriately to the existence of offensive materials.

This issue immediately raises concerns about censorship. Libraries have a proud record of resisting censorship and are very sensitive to any suggestion that materials should be suppressed. The rewriting of history portrayed in Orwell's 1984 is an immediate and legitimate concern. Archives similarly have a strong commitment to maintaining the historical record without fear or favour and, indeed, are legislatively required to preserve the records of the institutions within their responsibility. Both recognise that the disparaging remarks of bigots demean the bigoted not the disparaged.

Appropriate handling does not mean censorship. It means a sensitivity to the context in which information organisations operate, the scope of their services and the nature of the communities they serve. This is standard practice in libraries and archives. Some material in archives is routinely restricted or subject to review by the originating organisation, often on national security grounds. School libraries may not hold material which is considered to be inappropriate for the children they serve. Public libraries may not select material which is considered dangerous (eg detailed instructions on making bombs) or grossly offensive (eg pornography) within their communities. Academic and research libraries, however, might hold both if they should be appropriate to the work of their clients but would ensure that such materials were available only within strict controls.

Some school and public libraries may have retained older material relating to Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders believing it is better to have 'something' rather than nothing. Bear in mind that these may have been written at a time when the language within it was not considered offensive but is now. Do not be reluctant to cull offensive or misrepresentative material in an effort to maintain a collection. It is far preferable to have a few quality resources rather than a number of poor or offensive items.

It may be necessary in some cases to retain offensive material. Even in a teaching context, there can be value in demonstrating how things were done previously and why they are now considered offensive. If doing so, retain only example texts, don't distribute a whole reading set.

Appropriate handling will normally mean making potential users aware of the contents of materials before they open them. Similarly to secret and sacred materials, it might be useful to apply labels or notes in the catalogue indicating that the contents may cause offence: this would echo the warnings about language, violence etc, that are given for films shown on television. For ease of management in some libraries which are open to the public, it might be convenient to shelve such materials in a restricted area. It would be useful to investigate the establishment of a national database to assist libraries to identify books and other materials which may include offensive contents and consequently require special handling.

To give practical effect to this concern, information organisations should, within the context of their goals and responsibilities and the communities they serve, develop an awareness of the extent to which their collections may contain materials which will be offensive to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. They should take advice from and develop effective means of consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to develop strategies to deal appropriately with offensive materials.

Governance and Management

There is no requirement for Aborigines to be members of the governing boards or councils, no provisions for some form of Aboriginal or advisory committee...

(Henrietta Fourrnile, 1989)

Libraries, archives and information services which serve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and/or hold materials with Aboriginal and Torres Strait content or perspectives should ensure the involvement and participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in governance, management and operation. Such agencies will:

- Ensure appropriate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander membership of governing and advisory bodies including boards, councils and committees
- Ensure meaningful Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in effective development, adoption and implementation of relevant policies.
- Develop mechanisms to ensure effective monitoring and review of policy implementation.
- Facilitate organisational change to accommodate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives

At Walungurru the yanangu people now know about schools – they are going to control their own school, With yanangu people in charge the children will be able to come to school and learn properly, learn both walypala language and culture, and yanangu culture and tradition. If the walypala remain solely in charge, our children will not learn property at all. (National Review of Education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples: final report, 1995:130)

It is now widely accepted that all organisations, and particularly service organisations, should adopt a client focus. They should genuinely respect and solicit the views of their clients. Organisations have particular responsibilities to the communities and nations they serve which make it imperative that the communities' interests are reflected in both their governance and management to ensure that all policies and practices serve the interests of the communities without discrimination, even inadvertent discrimination, between members of the communities.

Thus libraries, archives and information services which serve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and/or hold materials with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content or perspectives should ensure the involvement and participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in governance, management and operation.

For larger organisations, this can be achieved by inviting or appointing appropriate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members to governing and advisory bodies including boards, councils and committees so that they are able to contribute to the development of institutional policies.

Smaller organisations should be able to turn to these organisations for guidance. For example, a local public library may look to their State Library for advice. Smaller organisations can also involve local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community groups in consultative processes where possible and appropriate.

At an operational level, the appointment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to management positions will permit meaningful participation in effective development, adoption and implementation of relevant policies. However, suitable appointees may not be available immediately, until the strategies discussed under Protocol 8 have taken effect, so it is important to develop mechanisms to ensure effective monitoring and review of policy implementation. A recent example was

the inclusion of Ms Isobel Tarago on the committee which talked to people in remote Queensland communities about ways of improving public library service to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

To avoid tokenism, libraries and archives need to accept fully the value of including Indigenous peoples and their concerns in the focus of the organisation. This implies a need to facilitate organisational change to accommodate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and peoples.

Staffing

Because this is what we have got to get, Aboriginal staff in libraries, if we are going to have Aborigines in libraries.

(Maisie Wilson, 1979)

The inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within organisations can change organisational culture for the benefit of all. Libraries, archives and information services will:

- Aim to reflect the composition of the client/community population in each organisation's staffing profile.
- Take affirmative action to recruit and promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This responsibility will require employers, educational institutions and professional bodies to be proactive in developing employment and promotional pathways.
- Recognise the value and/or relevance of prior learning and/or qualifications in other fields when appointing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Involve members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in the selection of staff when it is appropriate.
- Ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members are suitably trained and supported.

Some 2% of Australians are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander but, the proportion varies across regions and states. The Northern Territory has the highest proportion of any State or Territory, nearly 25% Indigenous population, but even there, the proportion varies from nearly 100% in Aboriginal communities to some 10% in the urban area of Darwin. It would be reasonable to expect that, overall, the proportion of Indigenous peoples in Australia should be paralleled in the total workforce of libraries, archives and information services and that each organisation's staffing profile should reflect the composition of its client population.

This is a matter of equity but is also a policy direction from which the organisations, their other staff members and their clients can benefit. The inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within organisations can change organisational culture for the benefit of all, not just for Indigenous clients, although that aspect is most important. In a pluralist society, we all benefit from coming to know, understand and respect each other's beliefs, customs and traditions. As information organisations, archives, libraries and other information services bear a particular responsibility for the transmission of recorded culture and should therefore show a lead in the ways in which they handle cultural documentation, and the staff they employ to handle it.

However, we are a long way short of this ideal. Although there has been no census of Indigenous employees, it is clear that no information organisations employ large numbers and that to date, the best endeavours of libraries and archives have been little more than tokenism with Indigenous employees clustered in lower level positions and on short term contract or trainee terms of employment. Many occupy specialist 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander' positions with limited career opportunities and a considerable burden of being the 'instant expert' on anything Indigenous. It is thus vitally important to take affirmative action to recruit and promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This responsibility will require employers, educational institutions and professional bodies to be proactive in developing employment and promotional pathways.

As has been observed with women in Australia, and with other groups in other countries, waiting for applicants to enter a field of employment, obtain training and work their way up the ladder, is unlikely to redress the situation. Save the exceptional few, most people will not enter a field in which they feel

out of place and, if they should enter, would be unlikely to withstand the considerable pressures of being different. People need role models, mentoring, accelerated pathways, strong support and, above all, understanding.

Rather than insist on formal archives or library qualifications, information organisations should recognise the value and relevance of prior learning and/or qualifications in other fields when appointing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. For example, what prior experience or community knowledge does a candidate have that may be of benefit to the organisation? Sometimes having an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person in the organisation can encourage others from the community to use the facilities. Again, it is recognised that there will be different opportunities for organisations, depending on their size and resources.

The selection process may be rendered a little less daunting, and more suitable candidates may be selected by the involvement of members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community when it is appropriate.

Once appointed, it is essential that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members should be suitably trained and supported to undertake their duties and to face the challenges of entering a new field. Opportunities for advancement should be open to those who wish to specialise or to take on managerial responsibilities. The entry of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members into management positions can be facilitated through support strategies such as mentoring and training.

Mentors can be selected from inside or outside the organisation. The person being mentored should have a say in who the mentor is and this should be negotiated with the supervisor. And it is important to remember that not everybody wants to advance up 'corporate ladders'. Allowances must be made for individual's goals and ambitions.

A consequence of endeavouring to understand, appreciate and respect other cultures is that information organisations should develop and implement cross cultural awareness programs which ensure that all staff are both approachable and sensitive to cultural diversity. For example, staff and management should be aware of the obligations that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will have to their communities – they will have roles in their communities that they must fulfil. Flexibility and understanding in these circumstances are vital. Both the organisation and its employees are then able to recognise and respond to the cultural needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members.

Education and Training for Professional Practice

I strongly urge that we ensure that cross-cultural training is a requirement of library training by ensuring that it is on the library education agenda. Ideally these skills should be taught early in learning institutions and continually maintained in work places so that we can provide an equal service to all people.

(Phyllis Williams, 1993)

Libraries, archives and information services must ensure their staff are appropriately prepared to deal with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander materials, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients and staff. Libraries, archives and information services, educational institutions and professional bodies will:

- Ensure that library and archive education and training courses at all levels adequately cover issues relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander materials, clients and staff.
- Provide indigenous cultural awareness training for every staff member and particularly all who deal with the public.
- Provide appropriate models for professional practice in cataloguing, acquisition, collection management and other areas on matters of concern to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Ensure that education and training programs involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in both design and delivery.
- Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in archive and library education and training through such means as positive encouragement, mentoring and study leave.

Archives, information services, and libraries must ensure their staff members are appropriately prepared to deal with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander materials, and both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients and colleagues. As an industry, libraries, archives and information services, educational institutions and professional bodies should ensure that library and archive education and training courses at all levels adequately cover issues relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander materials, clients and staff. All graduates of Australian education and training programs for information work should have gained an appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and culture and of the issues relating to the documentation which they will handle in their future careers in information organisations. Interaction with organisations such as AIATSIS can prove an invaluable resource under these circumstances.

As for Indigenous employees, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in archive and library education and training have a particular need for strong support through such means as positive encouragement, mentoring and study leave. Facilitating mutual support for each other is particularly effective.

There is also a need to expand the knowledge and understanding of those already employed in information organisations. As a minimum, each organisation should provide Indigenous cultural awareness training for every staff member, emphasising of course, those who deal with the public. It is, however, desirable for those organisations with substantial holdings of Indigenous material or significant numbers of people among their actual or potential client populations to go further. Such organisations should consider supporting study of Indigenous culture and issues by their staff members. The 'study circles' (SEE BELOW) promoted and supported by the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation might provide an appropriate model.

In all cases, it is essential that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples should be involved in both the design and the delivery of relevant courses. In consultation with appropriate Indigenous people, organisations, academics and practitioners should develop and implement appropriate models for professional practice in cataloguing, acquisition, collection management and information access which accommodate the concerns of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

http://www.reconciliationaustralia.org/docs/community_learning/ModuleIntroduction.pdf
http://www.reconciliationaustralia.org/docs/community_learning/Module_1.pdf
http://www.reconciliationaustralia.org/docs/community_learning/Module_2.pdf
http://www.reconciliationaustralia.org/docs/community_learning/Module_3.pdf
http://www.reconciliationaustralia.org/docs/community_learning/Module_4.pdf
http://www.reconciliationaustralia.org/docs/community_learning/Module_5.pdf
http://www.reconciliationaustralia.org/docs/community_learning/Module_6.pdf
http://www.reconciliationaustralia.org/docs/community_learning/Module_7.pdf
http://www.reconciliationaustralia.org/docs/community_learning/Module_8.pdf
http://www.reconciliationaustralia.org/docs/community_learning/ModuleResources.pdf
http://www.reconciliationaustralia.org/docs/community_learning/ModuleTimeline.pdf
http://www.reconciliationaustralia.org/docs/community_learning/ModuleAcknowledgement.pdf

Also at this website:

- Local Reconciliation Toolkit
- Local Symbols of Reconciliation Toolkit
- Partnerships in Reconciliation
- Sustaining the Reconciliation Process
- Update Letter, December 2003

And projects:

- Indigenous community governance
- Rights
- Good indigenous governance
- Improving access to banking and financial services
- Indigenous family violence
- Indigenous employment strategies
- Education and young Australians

Awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and Issues

Ignorance and fear on the part of the dominant communities often influences the way those societies deal with indigenous communities. Libraries have a duty to dispel that ignorance.

(Wharehuia Hemara, 1992)

Libraries, archives and information services can contribute to greater understanding between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-indigenous peoples. In pursuing this national aim, information agencies will:

- Be proactive in the role of educator, promoting awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures and issues among non-indigenous people.
- Be proactive in acquiring materials produced by Aboriginal and Islander peoples and organisations.
- Highlight Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content and perspectives through such means as oral history and indexing and record copying projects.
- Promote awareness and use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander related holdings, by such means as targeted guides, finding aids, tours and exhibitions.

Increasing awareness of Indigenous cultures and issues were highlighted in many comments from the consultations recorded in *Towards Social Justice?* (1994:22):

The European system of education was imposed on Indigenous peoples, but there has been little education and cultural awareness in reverse. How about these people learning about us? (Emerald)

Knowledge that Aboriginal Australia is not homogenous might help non-indigenous peoples better understand the situation. (Darwin)

The Torres Strait is an integral part of Australia, with unique cultures and features within Australian society. The Torres Strait has to be considered separately. (Getana Lui Jnr, Thursday Island)

We, as Noongars, do not call for one word 'Koori' to identify/cover all Aboriginal peoples in Australia. (Perth)

Let the people know what we are rather than what we want. (Marjorie Thorpe, Melbourne)

Information services, libraries and archives not only preserve and provide access to the recorded memories of our communities but can, through their selection and handling of documentation, shape the understanding of our past and therefore our future. They thus have considerable scope to contribute to greater understanding between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous peoples in Australia. It is important to understand the history and consequences of invasion, deprivation, neglect and marginalisation recorded by the Royal Commission into Black Deaths in Custody and in the works of Professor Henry Reynolds , Dr Deborah Bird Rose and many other writers. But it should be remembered that they are not just shadowy figures in histories or the objects of anthropological inquiry but real, living people with a diversity of experiences and views, and much to contribute.

Information organisations can act proactively as educators, promoting awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures and issues among non-Indigenous peoples. They can help promote the vitality of Indigenous peoples and cultures.

Archives and libraries can mount displays, host guest speakers, hold community nights, compile publications. Displays should involve, or be undertaken by, Indigenous peoples. Information organisations can develop a rapprochement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities by jointly preparing displays or other activities.

Other activities might include inviting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as guest speakers or to tell stories or present cultural performances in a library. A jointly promoted community art project or a scheme to place Indigenous art works in an archive will lead to mutual understanding as well as promoting awareness of Indigenous culture. An especially significant gesture would be to celebrate NAIDOC week .

As publishers, information organisations can help Indigenous peoples to make available their histories and perspectives. Oral history projects can result in the publication of tapes, videos or books. Examples include the "Finding Your Story" (*http://www.prov.vic.gov.au/findingyourstory/*) project by the Public Records Office of Victoria; and "Finding Your Own Way (*http://www.salinkup.com.au/content.php?page_id=4*) in South Australia.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content in existing records or publications can be highlighted by developing useful guides. Similarly, in fulfilling the responsibility to preserve documentary records of our communities, archives and libraries should be proactive in acquiring materials produced by Indigenous and in highlighting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content and perspectives through collection development including the pursuit of oral history and indexing and record copying projects. To assist such proactive ventures, organisations can make submissions in collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for monies to undertake specific projects.

Copying and Repatriation of Records

Copying and Repatriation of Records.

Archives and libraries often hold original records which were created by, about or with the input of particular Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. A community may place tremendous importance on particular records and request copies for use and retention within the community. Some records may have been taken from the control of the community or created by theft or deception. In addressing this issue, libraries and archives will:

- Respond sympathetically and cooperatively to any request from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community for copies of records of specific relevance to the community for its use and retention.
- Agree to the repatriation of original records to Aboriginal and Islander communities when it can be established that the records have been taken from the control of the community or created by theft or deception.
- Seek permission to hold copies of repatriated records but refrain from copying such records should permission be denied.
- Assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in planning, providing and maintaining suitable keeping places for repatriated records.

Ready access to the records can be vital for the community's knowledge of itself: records held in distant, often unapproachable, institutions can be effectively alienated from the people to whom they are most relevant. There is an opportunity for dialogue between communities and institutions to consider the appropriate location for records with possible cooperation in the development of community keeping places.

The need for keeping places was noted by people throughout Australia in comments recorded in *Towards Social Justice* (1994:13). Although focusing on museums, the comments could be related to document keeping places;

Each local community organisation should have its own special place in which to promote and celebrate cultural ritual. (Sydney)

Each discrete indigenous culture should have its own keeping place or cultural centre. (Dubbo)

Suitable keeping places should be located and designed appropriately for the cultural needs of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to ensure the long term preservation of any records, or copies of records, held in them, such as the Djomi Museum in Maningrida, Arnhem Land. Keeping Places should maintain materials in appropriate storage, ensuring sustainability and ongoing access.

Some records may have been taken from the control of a community or created by theft or deception. Libraries and archives should agree to the repatriation of original records to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities when it can be established that the records have been taken from the control of the community or created by theft or deception. They should seek permission to hold copies of repatriated records but refrain from copying records should permission be denied. There should be appropriate planning and provision of suitable keeping places for the repatriated records.

Above all, it is crucial that libraries and archives should respond sympathetically and cooperatively to requests from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities for copies of records of specific relevance to the communities for their use and retention.

Digitisation and the Internet

Digitisation provides opportunities to improve Indigenous Australians' access to historical and contemporary cultural and Indigenous knowledge materials which are currently dispersed in institutional collections across the nation.

Easier access provided by digital technologies also increases the risk of breaching Indigenous cultural protocols for the management of Indigenous knowledge and cultural materials.
Intellectual property and technology issues also introduce levels of complexity for the sustainable management of Indigenous materials in the digital domain that pose challenges for both the library and information services profession and for Indigenous communities.

Developments in both the digital context and in the Indigenous information context indicate the need for a coordinated policy and planning approach to deal with the issues.

The development of accessible guidelines and protocols for library and information services and Indigenous communities and organisations involved in documentation and the provision of access to Indigenous materials is also indicated.

Work in both policy and protocols areas is ongoing in the Australian library and information services sector and in the international arena and relevant documents will be added to this site in the near future.