

Aboriginal consultation a success

Parliament House in Canberra was the scene for a national consultation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues for libraries, archives and information services on 14 September 1994. Equal numbers of archivists, librarians and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people came together to discuss a set of draft protocols. ALIA, the Australian Copyright Agency, the Australian Society of Archivists, the Council of University Librarians, the National Library, Australian Archives, State Archives, and State public, school and community libraries were represented.

The consultation represents a step in developing greater understanding and collaboration between libraries, archives and information services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. It built on the establishment of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Resource Network in late-1993, recommendations of the Towards Federation 2001 review meeting, the recent Australian Society of Archivists Conference in Townsville (which had discussion on *Friends or enemies? Collecting archives and the management of archival materials relating to Aboriginal Australians*), the National Aboriginal reconciliation process, the focus on indigenous issues at the NZLIA/ALIA joint conference and the development of the Information Facility for Indigenous Resources of Australia (IFIRA). The consultation was convened by IFIRA, a joint initiative of the Centre for Aboriginal and Islander Studies and the University Library at the University of South Australia, in association with the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS). Alana Garwood, an Aboriginal librarian at AIATSIS opened the consultation by thanking the Parliamentary Library for their help. Alex Byrne, NTU Chief Librarian, introduced the issues and proposed a set of eight draft protocols which had previously been circulated. Small groups considered the individual protocols and reported back to the whole group.

The consultation endorsed the approach and the eight draft protocols, with additions and amendments, and also identified the need for two additional protocols. The ten protocols now address: content and perspectives; intellectual property; community awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

'Re-presenting' Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander information resources

ALIA has joined with the National Library of Australia, University of South Australia and the Northern Territory University in collaboration with the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Library Resource Network in a submission for funding to support a project to develop better ways of handling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander materials.

This will build on the protocols and the Information Facility for Indigenous Resources of Australia (IFIRA) which is a joint project by the libraries and Aboriginal Studies areas at the University of South Australia and the Northern Territory University with financial support from the Australian Research Council in 1993 and 1994.

Project tasks will include: establishment of a national framework for consultation; finalisation and publication of the Aboriginal thesaurus; adoption of improved subject headings; development of a database of secret/sacred materials; promotion of the implementation of the protocols; and curriculum development and the creation of training and professional development materials.

Alex Byrne

culture and issues; accessibility and use; subject headings and classification; secret and sacred material; offensive material; education and training; staffing; and governance and management.

It was also noted that the repatriation of cultural property should be addressed. The protocols will be redrafted, circulated to participants, institutions and professional associations prior to consideration at the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Library Resource Network Conference in December. They will be published together with guidelines which illustrate their application in different types of archives, information services and libraries. They are intended as a guide to good practice, since all services develop their own policies suitable to the context in which they operate; they are intended, rather, as a guide to good practice.

ALIA took advantage of the consultation to seek input for an ALIA statement on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and libraries and information services. Jennefer Nicholson presented the background to ALIA statements and led a discussion which indicated that the statement should encourage adoption of the protocols. ■



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