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Independent Reviewer  
c/o Tune Review Secretariat  
National Archives of Australia  
Queen Victoria Terrace  
Parkes ACT 2600  
E: [review@naa.gov.au](mailto:review@naa.gov.au)

18 June 2019

Dear Mr Tune

**JUMBUNNA INSTITUTE FOR INDIGENOUS EDUCATION AND RESEARCH  
SUBMISSION TO THE TUNE REVIEW**

The Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research, University of Technology Sydney are pleased to provide a submission to the National Archives of Australia Tune Review.

Our submission has a particular focus on supporting the interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-determination in archives and records.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kirsten Thorpe'.

Kirsten Thorpe

# **National Archives of Australia Tune Review, June 2019**

Submission on behalf of the Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education & Research, University of Technology Sydney

## **About the Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education & Research, University of Technology Sydney**

The Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research aims to produce the highest quality research on Indigenous legal and policy issues and to develop highly skilled Indigenous researchers. The Jumbunna Institute of Indigenous Education and Research is unique in Australia. Our Indigenous led Research team operates throughout Australia, with staff working in communities in Victoria, South Australia, Northern Territory, Queensland and New South Wales, and collaborators in all States and Territories. Operating in the domestic and international spheres, the team prides itself on frank and fearless research and advocacy driven by the Indigenous communities it serves.

Our vision is to promote, support and embody the exercise and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sovereignty and Self-Determination. To this end, we seek to:

- Promote innovation and undertake best practice research and disseminate the outcomes of that Research widely
- Respond to and empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Develop Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers, Indigenous Research and the reputation of the Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research and through it, the University of Technology Sydney (UTS).

We do this through taking integrated and innovative approaches to Indigenous community empowerment. The Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research also supports the academic, social, cultural and emotional well being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at UTS. Our vision is to create a place where all Indigenous Australians can access education and be supported to succeed. For more information see: <https://www.uts.edu.au/future-students/indigenous-australians>

## **Our position on Indigenous Archiving**

The Jumbunna Research team are committed to research that supports Indigenous self-determination in libraries and archives. Our goal is to empower and build capacity for communities to care for and manage archival materials on Country and in digital spaces, to ensure their long-term preservation and use. We also aim to ensure that Indigenous peoples voices are included in any decision making regarding the management of data, records and collections.

Key focus areas of our work include:

- Advocating for the digital repatriation and return of records to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, as well as a right of reply to collections that are biased or incomplete
- Ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander collections are discoverable to the communities to which they relate
- Encouraging proactive return and management of records
- Identifying digital tools and systems that aid the return and management of historic records and collections

- Advocating for the support of Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property Rights (ICIP) in archives and libraries
- Bringing visibility to emerging issues in the sector including incorporation of Indigenous worldviews into education and training, and further support for Indigenous employment
- Contributing to the advancement of Indigenous research in relation to the archives and information sectors.

One of the ways that we are progressing conversations in this area is through the launch of the NSW Australian Mukurtu Hub, the first international partner to the project based at Washington State University, USA. The NSW Australian Mukurtu Hub has been developed through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Jumbunna Research at UTS, the State Library of New South Wales (NSW) and the Center of Digital Scholarship and Curation, Washington State University. The Hub will connect with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities to share resources that assist with digital curation and stewardship of data, records and collections.

### **Comments on the NAA Tune Review Terms of Reference in relation to Indigenous Australian Archiving**

#### ***Efficiency and effectiveness of the National Archives' operations, programmes, administration, governance and authorising environment***

The Australian Law Reform Commission Report (1998) clearly summarises the relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with archives when it noted:

*Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have had a significant but troubled relationship with recordkeeping by governments, churches and other organisations and individuals... At best, many of these records now seem intrusive and patronising. At worst, they can be cruel, malicious and misleading... yet the records created by Europeans are also of great importance to Indigenous people... [They] provide vital evidence on issues such as land rights and the reunification of families from whom children were removed forcibly (Australian Law Reform Commission Report, No 85, 1998, Australia's Federal Record A review of the Archives Act 1983 cited, at Commonwealth of Australia, 1998).*

Despite a significant investment in indexing and resource development, much of which was a response to the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families and the Report *Bringing Them Home* (1997), we are yet to see any major transformations in relation to self-determination and Indigenous Archiving.

Current models of engagement focus primarily on questions of access to records, rather than taking a more holistic view of the management of records.

For example, in relation to:

- Recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as co-owners of records that relate to themselves, their families and communities
- Proactively returning digital records to the communities of which they relate to in updating access directions or protocols for access according to the wishes of communities
- Ensuring appropriate rights management and respect for Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property Rights (ICIP)
- Ensuring that descriptive metadata relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander records is not offensive or racist whether in online catalogues or finding aids

- Enabling highly visible digital curation and storytelling through the National Archives of Australia online or social media platforms.

Another priority area that requires attention is the role of the National Archives in managing current government records relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This relates to both the administration of Aboriginal Affairs at a Federal level and the allocation of funds for programs that impact Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The NAA should commit to increasing Aboriginal voice in relation to determining future recordkeeping priorities. The funding of grants for Aboriginal language maintenance and revitalisation and associated recordkeeping is clearly an area of urgent attention.

A review of disposal authorities that relate to Indigenous policy and priorities needs to be undertaken. We congratulate the NAA on their efforts to ensure that records which may relate to Indigenous priorities are not destroyed under the following disposal freezes:

- Records related to the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory
- Institutional responses to child sexual abuse
- The rights and entitlements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and
- Atomic testing conducted in Australian territories, including test sites and personnel associated with the testing.

We encourage the National Archives to be engaged strategically with other agencies such as the Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) and the National Library of Australia to ensure that other significant records are not been inadvertently destroyed through a lack of awareness of the grass-roots or ongoing recordkeeping needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.

### **The functions performed by the National Archives in discharging its role, and any functions it should cease, continue, transfer or commence in relation to Indigenous Archiving**

Increased attention should be given to:

- Developing expertise and engagement on current Indigenous recordkeeping needs with Federal Government agencies, including a review of disposal authorities that relate to Indigenous functions
- Resourcing community engagement and outreach activities that seek to digitally repatriate historic National Archives collections, with a particular focus on supporting the curation of Aboriginal stories and truth-telling about our nations diverse histories as they relate to Federal Government interactions
- Developing an Indigenous employment program to increase the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in a variety of roles in the organisation, the National Archives as the largest national archive should model efforts of redress, employment and reconciliation across the Australian archival sector.

Submission prepared by:

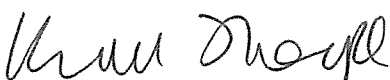
**Kirsten Thorpe**

Senior Researcher, Jumbunna Inst for Indigenous Education & Research

Core Member, SIC - Strengthening Indigenous Communities

Member, Australian Society of Archivists Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Special Interest Group

Member, International Council on Archives Indigenous Matters Expert Group



Submission supported by:

**Professor Lindon Coombes**

Acting Director, Research and Academic Programs, Jumbunna Inst for Indigenous Education & Research, Core Member, SIC - Strengthening Indigenous Communities

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