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Activating and supporting the Tandanya Adelaide Declaration on Indigenous Archives

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses opportunities for activating and supporting the International Council on Archives *Tandanya – Adelaide Declaration on Indigenous Archives*. It discusses the background and context of the Declaration and reflects on pathways for it to be enacted. This article draws from a panel discussion ‘Supporting and Activating the Adelaide Tandanya Declaration on Indigenous Archives’ hosted by the Australian Society of Archivists (ASA) in September 2020. It explores questions of mobilising action to support the Declaration in an Indigenous Australian context. It examines key themes and issues relating to the importance of ongoing dialogue and Indigenous leadership in actioning and expanding the five key themes of the statement of 1) Knowledge authorities 2) Property and ownership 3) Recognition and identity 4) Research and access, and 5) Self-determination. It concludes with a discussion and recommendations for further action to support the activation of the Tandanya – Adelaide Declaration.

KEYWORDS

Indigenous archives; Indigenous protocols and archives; Indigenous-led archival practice; Tandanya Declaration

Terminology

We acknowledge Kurna people in recognition of the use of the word Tandanya. Tandanya draws its meaning from Kurna people’s culturally significant sites marking the Red Kangaroo Dreaming.¹ We use the terms Indigenous, First Nations and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people interchangeably in this paper. In doing so, we acknowledge the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities. We share reflections in this paper from our own research, and lived experiences as connected to these topics.

Futures

The places/where different worlds meet/can be places of connection/enrichment and transformation

What is to come/all the things that are next/lives within/the hearts/minds/hopes/of Indigenous peoples/and of Settlers/who are committed/to justice

Decolonised futures/are what we create/together

Ambelin Kwaymullina’s *Futures*²

Introduction

In October 2019, the International Council on Archives (ICA) publicly launched the *Tandanya – Adelaide Declaration* (hereafter referred to as the Tandanya Declaration) as a public statement on the importance of Indigenous priorities in the international archives sector. The Tandanya Declaration was launched as part of an ICA and National Archives of Australia (NAA) Indigenous Matters Summit under the theme ‘Challenging and Decolonising the Archive – See Us – Hear Us – Walk with Us’ held on the lands of the Kurna people of the Adelaide plains of South Australia. As the peak international organisation concerned with archival and documentary heritage, this marked the ICA’s first formal declaration on Indigenous matters that seeks to respond to Indigenous people’s rights and concerns as outlined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).³ Developed through the leadership of the newly formed ICA Expert Group on Indigenous Matters (EGIM), the Tandanya Declaration identifies five areas of immediate action for archives to acknowledge Indigenous concerns in archives, under the themes of 1) Knowledge authorities 2) Property and ownership 3) Recognition and identity 4) Research and access, and 5) Self-determination. The text with the call for immediate action notes that:

The ICA recognizes its responsibility to re-imagine the meaning of archives as an engaging model of social memory; to embrace Indigenous worldviews and methods of creating, sharing and preserving valued knowledge. To decolonize our archival principles with Indigenous knowledge methods, to open the meaning of public archives to Indigenous interpretations, is to bring new dynamics of spirituality, ecology and Indigenous philosophy into the European traditions of archival memory. It will also support a fair and healing remembrance of the colonial encounter. The ICA supports the remodelling of traditional archival principles. To challenge colonial ideologies in the archival setting is an endeavour of generations, like the colonial program itself. The result will be a new model of public archives as an ethical space of encounter, respect, negotiation and collaboration without the dominance or judgment of distant and enveloping authority.⁴

This article discusses themes relating to the Tandanya Declaration’s implementation and activation, drawn from a panel discussion on ‘Supporting and Activating the Adelaide Tandanya Declaration on Indigenous Archives’ hosted by the Australian Society of Archivists (ASA) on 11 September 2020. The panel looked explicitly at questions of mobilising action to support the Tandanya Declaration in an Indigenous Australian context. This article consolidates and expands the authors’ contribution to the panel and discusses key themes and issues relating to the importance of ongoing dialogue and Indigenous leadership in actioning and expanding the five key themes identified in the statement. Finally, we conclude with some recommended priority areas of engagement with the Tandanya Declaration to realise a more dynamic and enriched archival landscape for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia.

Moving beyond symbolism to develop an Indigenous-led activation of the Declaration (Kirsten Thorpe)

There is a great desire of institutions and professional associations to develop statements of intent. Much like a government strategic plan, it enables a course of action to move people towards particular goals. The ICA’s Tandanya Declaration is a welcome addition to the

existing protocols and position statements that acknowledge the importance of archives for Indigenous peoples and the competing and complex issues that arise in relation to the management of archives that have supported efforts of imperialism and colonialism.

In an Australian context, the mid-1990s saw the development of two key documents that acknowledged the need for further support to be given to questions of Indigenous engagement and control of archives. Firstly, the ATSILIRN (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Library, Information and Resource Network) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Protocols for Libraries, Archives and Information Services* surfaced issues of governance and management, employment, and representation of Indigenous voice in collections, and discussed strategies relating to the care and management of offensive and derogatory materials.⁵ The ATSILIRN Protocols provided a list of an initial eleven areas of concern in their 1995 and 2005 iterations, extended to twelve in 2012 to expand to Indigenous archives' digital management.⁶ In addition to calling attention to areas of concern, the ATSILIRN Protocols guided libraries, archives and information services to actively support their implementation. They were not a directive per se, but some suggested pathways for institutions to consider. Importantly, the ATSILIRN Protocols called on institutions to develop consultative mechanisms to seek advice from Indigenous people on the appropriate management of collection materials. Secondly, in 1996 the ASA released the *Policy Statement on Archival Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples*.⁷ The Policy Statement was developed in a period when many recordkeeping and collecting institutions were forced to respond to governmental inquiries into the importance of records for Indigenous people who were removed or incarcerated as part of government-sanctioned racist policies. The ASA Policy Statement endorses the principles and guidelines outlined in the ATSILIRN Protocols and encourages ASA members to support their implementation in the archives they work. In their time, both the ATSILIRN Protocols and the Policy Statement served as tools for prioritising efforts towards increasing Indigenous employment, indexing and better descriptions of records, and developing programming and exhibitions to support a more culturally appropriate representation of Indigenous cultures and experiences.

I can personally attest to the importance of the ATSILIRN Protocols and the ASA Policy Statement on influencing practice. In my professional experiences of working as an Indigenous archivist in the late 1990s, I used them as a guiding light to bring awareness of the areas of change needed to support better access to historical records held in government archives and public libraries. They were a source of validation in that it was not you, as a sole practitioner saying, 'this is incredibly culturally unsafe' or 'this is culturally offensive to portray this collection item' to have a framework to discuss competing interests and priorities. Although both the Protocols and the Statement require updating and re-contextualising they remain significant guiding documents, and ones that have had influence internationally, for example, as can be seen in the advocacy work undertaken in the United States with the First Archivists Circle developing *Protocols for Native American Archival Materials*.⁸

Over two decades later, the Tandanya Declaration brings an international focus by calling for new models and approaches of public archiving that respect Indigenous knowledge systems and provide a space for healing and remembrance for Indigenous peoples concerning the ongoing impacts of colonialism. The Tandanya Declaration calls on archives and archivists to support the remodelling of traditional archival principles to

build ethical spaces of encounter and recognition without dominance, judgment and enveloping authority.⁹ Like the ATSLIRN Protocols and the ASA Policy Statement, the Tandanya Declaration gives us a framework and vision to act. In an Australian context, it provides us with a new moment for transformation, a possibility to reframe archival approaches to privilege Indigenous people's worldviews, priorities and aspirations.

That said, we as a sector must ask some critical questions about approaching the action and work associated with the Tandanya Declaration. My reaction to engaging with the Tandanya Declaration has been to move between spaces of excitement and possibilities, then a feeling of immense trepidation about the burden this work will place on Indigenous people now and into the future. In light of this, and to set the scene for the discussions that follow, I have three key questions relating to activating the Tandanya Declaration:

(1) What kind of leadership will be required to build dialogue and support to activate the Tandanya Declaration?

Whose energy will be drawn upon to drive this work?

Who are the people that are going to be a part of the conversation to generate the ideas to support this potentially transformative work?

(2) How do we centre Indigenous communities in the Tandanya Declaration?

If the Tandanya Declaration is truly about self-determination, then it cannot be the institutions setting the priorities. How can we achieve this?

What are the measures we will have to take to lift Indigenous voices in this process so that people can truly be heard?

(3) What kind of resources will this work require for the Tandanya Declaration to enable transformation?

Whose labour contributes to these changes, what kind of research and development work is needed?

What kind of employment is required to commit to a reimagining of the sector fully?

What kind of handover or realignment of resources and funding will be needed?

The Tandanya Declaration provides a moment for us to look for an agenda of profound and transformational change. However, to bring this change, we have to modify our approaches, and we have to change the way we engage in processes and develop appropriate methods for ongoing discussion.¹⁰ We need to commit to an agenda of difficult dialogue and purposeful action to bring the Tandanya Declaration to life. Some of this means pulling it apart and bringing people together to critique it and to turn it around on its head. A major gap for me in the Tandanya Declaration is the lack of focus on supporting the care and protection of archives and management of cultural heritage on Country. We cannot lose sight of this work to ensure that archival pursuits are not extractive but instead support community sustainability. This is expansive and complex work that is going to require new leadership and new

methods of working. In Australia, I hope that we can invest the time and build the relationships required to commit to a paradigm shift that is truly Indigenous-led and community driven. Without this commitment, I fear that the Tandanya Declaration will be more about our major collecting institutions, than about Indigenous peoples and communities' needs.

The Australian context and the Tandanya Declaration (Sue McKemmish)

A number of questions arise when exploring the Tandanya Declaration in an Australian context, including its scope, how well it addresses Australian guidelines and research findings relating to the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People¹¹ and its relevance to the First Nations sovereignty movement which calls for a Voice in the constitution, treaty making and truth telling.

Scope of the Tandanya Declaration

The Tandanya Declaration relates only to records in the custody of State archives – not to the broader archival community and profession, other types of archives and archival education and training programs. It is also narrower in scope than Australian government recordkeeping and archival laws, policies and practice which specify regulatory, standard setting and advisory roles for the archival authority in relation to current records in government agencies, Records Continuum-style. Records Continuum theory frames recordkeeping and archiving in Australia. It offers a transformative definition of records and recordkeeping that encompasses the multiple forms records take, the integration of recordkeeping and archiving processes throughout a record's lifespan, and the concept of archival autonomy (linked to self-determination) – the ability for individuals and communities to participate in societal memory, to find their own voice, and to become participatory agents in recordkeeping and archiving for identity, memory and accountability purposes.¹²

There appears to have been limited consultation in developing the Declaration. It is not clear how extensive the consultation and negotiation was beyond the ICA's Expert Group on Indigenous Matters, and whether further rounds of consultation and negotiation are planned. For the moment this seems to be very much in the hands of the federal and state archives.

The Declaration and rights of Indigenous people

The Community Guideline to UNDRIP developed by the Australian Human Rights Commission and the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples states that the foundation right of self-determination includes:¹³

- **Participation** in all decisions that affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lives
- **Control** over their lives and future including their economic, social and cultural development.

Self-determination is supported by the right of free, prior and informed consent, including the right to:

be consulted and participate in an honest and open process of negotiation that ensures that all parties to the negotiation are equal.

The Guideline states that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples should be involved in the design, development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all programs, policies and legislation that affects them – a guideline that encompasses the recordkeeping and archival sector. In this context, in 2010, then Australian Indigenous Social Justice Commissioner Mick Gooda stated that Indigenous human rights need to be embedded in archival practice by repositioning Indigenous peoples from passive, disempowered subjects of the record (in Henrietta Fourmile's words 'captives of the archive') to become active participating agents in recordkeeping and archiving.¹⁴

Contemporaneously with the release of UNDRIP and the development of the AHRC Community Guideline, Professor Lynette Russell led the Australian Research Council funded Trust and Technology project.¹⁵ It was a pioneering research collaboration between Koorie communities and 100 individual participants in Victoria, the Koorie Heritage Trust Inc., the Koorie Records Task Force, the Public Record Office of Victoria, the Indigenous Special Interest Group of the ASA and Monash University researchers. The research found that an extensive suite of rights in records were essential to support the exercise of human rights and self-determination. A set of principles was developed, the most relevant to the Tandanya Declaration being:

- Indigenous people have rights to make decisions about all aspects of the management of records about them in public archival institutions, including records created by governments and other non-Indigenous organisations.
- Indigenous people have a right to set the record straight.
- Rights in records should be recognised in Australian legal, recordkeeping and archival frameworks.¹⁶

The Trust and Technology project findings provide the foundation for ongoing research on a Charter of Indigenous Rights in Records to support self-determination and archival autonomy including and extending rights referenced in the Tandanya Declaration.

The Tandanya Declaration strongly endorses rights in records relating to ownership and control of traditional knowledge and intangible cultural heritage. It also supports limited engagement in arrangement and description of records concerning Indigenous identity, collaborative descriptive representation, and 'a degree of control' over access to records concerning Indigenous people. Given the Declaration's commitment to UNDRIP and self-determination in Section 5, it should recognise a broader suite of rights, including participation in setting frameworks, and developing policies and practice for appraisal, description, disclosure and access, and culturally safe recordkeeping.

Voice, Treaty and Truth Telling

In 2017, the ULURU Statement from the Heart to the people of Australia was released, enshrining a First Nations Voice in the Constitution; establishing a Makarrata Commission to supervise treaty making processes; and embracing truth-telling about First Nations history:

Conceived from collective experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples from all points of the southern sky and an unprecedented process of dialogue and consensus building.

It states:

Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tribes were the first sovereign Nations of the Australian Continent . . . and possessed it under our own laws and customs . . .

This sovereignty is a spiritual notion – the ancestral tie between the land or mother nature and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples . . .

It has never been ceded or extinguished and co-exists with the sovereignty of the Crown . . .

With substantive constitutional change and structural reform, we believe this ancient sovereignty can shine through as a fuller expression of Australia’s nationhood.¹⁷

A related document, the Indigenous Data Sovereignty Communique,¹⁸ addressed to all individuals and entities involved in the creation, collection, access, analysis, interpretation, management, dissemination and reuse of data and data infrastructure in Australia. The Communique states:

- (1) ‘*Indigenous Data*’ refers to information or knowledge, in any format or medium, which is about and may affect Indigenous peoples both collectively and individually (note: inclusive of records and archives).
- (2) ‘*Indigenous Data Sovereignty*’ is the right of Indigenous peoples to exercise ownership over Indigenous Data.
- (3) ‘*Indigenous Data Governance*’ refers is the right of Indigenous peoples to autonomously decide what, how and why Indigenous Data are collected, accessed and used.

The Tandanya Declaration does not speak directly to First Nations Sovereignty and Indigenous data sovereignty except for the reference in Section 4(b) to the need for advocacy for Indigenous data sovereignty to be included in nation-state recordkeeping legislation. While this is a significant provision, in this momentous time, and given the deep history of ‘ancient sovereignty’ in this continent, the Tandanya Declaration’s limited commitment to structural reform in the archival sector is at odds with strongly supporting First Nations sovereignty in the spirit of the Uluru Statement.

Shifting the power dynamics in the archives sector (Lauren Booker)

When the Tandanya Declaration was launched, on the last day of the ICA’s Indigenous Matters Summit in 2019 on Kurna Country, the handover was witnessed by Indigenous

peoples from nations globally that work with or in the archives sector. What was striking about that day was the diversity of experiences in the archives sector across the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, First Nations and Indigenous colleagues. However, in that diversity there was an interconnection of staunch commitment and the weight of working in a sector that was built upon the dispossession of Indigenous peoples and lands. There were shared stories of working past 5pm for their stories, communities, lands and Ancestors without consistent sector support, policies and legislation to depend on or trust. The Tandanya Declaration, in that moment in 2019 and into the future, has the possibility to be a tool used in support of that endless work.

Declarations and statements, such as the Tandanya Declaration, arrive to make turning points visible. In and of itself, a declaration does not expose 250 years or 400 years of archival practice complicit in destructive colonial regimes; nothing is done by statement alone. Rather, a formal declaration can be seen as specifically marking the day it is issued, it is the follow up to that declaration that produces action. The Tandanya Declaration has the possibility to not just be in recognition of the rights and concerns of Indigenous peoples in regards to archives and archiving, but also affirm responsibility, solidarity and to make the sector publically accountable. The Tandanya Declaration was a moment for the archive sector to offer formal commitment to shoulder this work alongside those people and Ancestors, Indigenous and non-Indigenous allies, that have been doing that work for generations. However, a declaration can stand on the precipice of being useful and being inert, particularly as so much strategic future planning in colonial states is merely a continuation of the status quo dressed up as something new and different. Declarations are foundations that must be formulated and maintained daily, not just printed out to be put up on a wall, from which we can walk away. It is the responses to declarations that do something.

The Tandanya Declaration provides a good foundation for the archive sector to speak back and springboard from; for example, all the discussions that have happened subsequently, which the ASA webinar is a part of. I see tensions arising around the Tandanya Declaration's implementation and accountability. As with many declarations, in and of itself, it is inert, a vehicle that we need to operate for it to go. To continue with this metaphor, we first need to understand whether or not it is roadworthy; this is where the preamble of a declaration functions. A declaration's preamble can give us insight into its efficacy through what it does and does not include as reasoning and purpose. A preamble is understood as an introduction and overview, so everyone is on the same page going into what is declared after, so it can be an important place to find layers of scope and responsibility. The preamble of the Tandanya Declaration situates itself as a tributary of UNDRIP and signals a rights-based approach to the reformulation of archives and archival practice regarding Indigenous materials and stakeholders for consideration effective immediately. For a rights-based approach, the key is accountability around implementation. If we, as a sector, want to deliver on what the Tandanya Declaration declares, we must be engaging in ways of working in the archives sector that are not so much new but instead drastically different to how the profession has built itself upon. This cannot be just another race run on the spot as we call the same processes by another name or engage with the Tandanya Declaration by reference alone.

The preamble of the Tandanya Declaration establishes the context of imperial and colonial regimes of global expansion that archives and archiving are mechanisms of and for. It situates itself (where applicable) in ‘colonial settler states’,¹⁹ which is the case for Australia. The preamble also states the unreconciled nature of the relationship between many Indigenous nations globally and their associated settler authorities. This preamble brings us to see that there is no change in the destructive colonial power dynamic that aims to dispossess Indigenous peoples globally from past to present; this remains *unreconciled*. Therefore, the Tandanya Declaration takes on a responsibility – that the status quo is dispossessive and deeply damaging for Indigenous peoples and that the archives sector will work to extricate itself from the status quo. Importantly, the preamble also includes an aspiration for the decolonisation of the archives sector. This is where I see particular tensions arise for the efficacy of the Tandanya Declaration. There are tensions particularly in the Australian context, where many archival institutions and organisations are, or are linked to, state authorities. This is an unreconciled relationship for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nations.

To decolonize our archival principles with Indigenous knowledge methods, to open the meaning of public archives to Indigenous interpretations, is to bring new dynamics of spirituality, ecology and Indigenous philosophy into the European traditions of archival memory.²⁰

From my perspective, there are tensions in this statement regarding accumulating more Indigenous knowledges, Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property, into institutional structures that are designed to re-categorise and assimilate that which falls outside of their framework. Collecting, categorising and archiving centres around power, and collecting institutions are *in power*,²¹ so we have to be mindful as we go ahead into aspirational spaces of change that the sector does not just continue to do that which we are critiquing. As Duff, Flinn, Suurtamm and Wallace state:

First and foremost we place power and its distribution front and center as the most significant consideration for understanding social justice and injustice. We argue that archives can both produce and reproduce justice and injustice in the decisions they make on how they shape the past and engage the present.²²

The power dynamics involved in re-orientating an entire sector towards proactively upholding and advocating for Indigenous rights and social justice praxis need to be discussed transparently. There must be consideration and strategic planning around aspirations that require divestment from state authorities and obligations. It is never going to be perfect from every perspective, but engaging in active conversations, like this paper, is one way to work deeper into the structural blocks and most importantly the rights, concerns and goals of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities being recognised in the Tandanya Declaration. I find it really difficult to imagine the decolonisation of euro-centric structures in a colonial state. It is difficult to imagine a colonial state, like Australia, sanctioning the decolonisation of its institutions and organisations. That does not mean we should not aspire to those ideals, but when we do talk about decolonising – pushing back against the state – we need to talk about how that operates off the page, as actions. How do these actions operate for state institutions

and the private sector, for international and cross-sector negotiations, and what are the contingency plans for if there is resistance and repercussions for these actions? I say this not to snuff out the fire, but I say it to light a bigger fire. These colonial structures that we witness in the collecting institution sector do not end at the perimeters of our sector. A key concern is the siloed nature of the archive sector; for the program of imperial and colonial expansion, dispossession and supremacy is not siloed. The Tandanya Declaration discusses public state-sanctioned archives, however, this is not the only archival and stakeholder locale.

The Tandanya Declaration through a local lens (Rose Barowcliffe)

The Tandanya Declaration is the latest in a long list of protocols, policy documents and declarations that attempt to bring social justice to the core of archival practice. The evolution of the representation and involvement of Indigenous peoples in archives has been shaped by documents ranging from ATILIRN and UNDRIP as has already been discussed in this paper, but also by the Bringing Them Home Report²³ and the Janke's Roadmap²⁴ in Australia and the Canadian Framework²⁵ in Canada. The Tandanya Declaration is unique in that it is the first to be crafted by a group of Indigenous archivists from around the world and that it is intended to be applicable to all Indigenous peoples globally.²⁶ The Declaration is also noteworthy as the first such policy statement to be released by the ICA specifically in relation to Indigenous peoples.

From this beginning, the Tandanya Declaration is necessarily broad in its language so as to be inclusive of the experiences of Indigenous peoples from around the world. Within this wide scope, it has three key functions: to establish a base of common understanding about the relationship between First Nations peoples and archives through the preamble, to act as a framework for archives to set goals in collaboration with Indigenous peoples to improve their practice, and lastly as a tool for archivists and communities to hold their institutions to account when they deviate from those goals.

The Tandanya Declaration refers repeatedly to 'common humanity' and 'collective humanity'. The challenge of applying the Tandanya Declaration is to recognise the commonality of colonial oppression that Indigenous Nations have suffered but to then use the Declaration in a way that addresses the individual experiences of each First Nation. When considering how to take the global scope of the Tandanya Declaration and apply it locally, we must read the words of the Declaration through a local lens.

The preamble is a statement of what should be a minimum standard of common understanding before beginning a conversation. In Australia, disparate narratives about racism, frontier violence and Stolen Generations indicates that we do not have a common understanding of history. Attempts by historians such as Henry Reynolds, Bain Attwood, and Lyndal Ryan, amongst others, to bring multiple perspectives to a predominantly colonist Australian history have remained largely within academia and have not changed national historical narratives. Like other colonised lands our history is a colonial history, and attempts to achieve a national understanding of a more equitable history have been met with resistance at every turn. This is not just during the so called 'History Wars',²⁷ but is evident in everyday discussions relating to race and racism.

In 2020, Prime Minister Scott Morrison publicly stated that Australia wasn't founded with the intention of having slavery.²⁸ Whether it was intended or not, the reality is that

slavery was fundamental to the development of this country, as much as it was in the US. The wealth from slavery in other colonies was used to establish colonists in Australia²⁹ and slavery was used extensively across agriculture³⁰ and domestic services industries.³¹ The intention becomes irrelevant, what is important is the outcome. In Australia, the outcome was that slavery was widespread over multiple generations and was a key factor in the development of Australia. In another incident, a non-Indigenous Australian journalist covering the Black Lives Matter protest in Los Angeles for a major Australian news network thanked an American Black Lives Matter protester for explaining why Black people had taken to the streets to protest police violence,³² because she, as a non-Indigenous Australian, believed that Australians do not already have a first-hand understanding of what that was like.

What is evident from these two examples is that discussions about the lived experience of Indigenous peoples in Australia are not starting from a common understanding. The preamble for life comes from our memory institutions, historians, media and educators. Archives are the bedrock that these institutions rely on to do their work. Therefore it is imperative that archives support Indigenous peoples by helping non-Indigenous peoples to know of and understand the lived experience of Indigenous peoples in colonised nations.

The breadth of lived experiences of archives and records is not just varied between Indigenous and non-Indigenous. It also varies between First Nations and within the many identity groups within Nations. For this reason it is vital that archives first engage with Indigenous communities to understand their interpretations of the Tandanya Declaration. The language and framework is broad which means the nuance will come from localised interpretation at a community level. Most importantly, this process of partnering with Indigenous communities to activate the Tandanya Declaration will allow each community to set goals and measurable outcomes that are significant to them. The power of the Tandanya Declaration, once it has been activated through engagement with Indigenous communities, is that it then becomes something of a contract between the institution and the community. The Tandanya Declaration becomes a tool that can be used to hold institutions to account. The Declaration states its themes for immediate action are that 'The ICA recognizes its responsibility to re-imagine the meaning of archives as an engaging model of social memory' and asserts that: 'It will also support a fair and healing remembrance of the colonial encounter'. The ICA and its member institutions and professionals recognise that they all have an active part to play in these 're-imaginings of social memory' and 'fair and healing remembrance'.³³ Colonial archives, by which I mean all state and national archives, hold many of the records that can lead to a re-imagining of memory and hopefully from that a healing process can begin. The first steps in that process are for archives around the world to take the Declaration to the First Nations in their jurisdiction and ask them what the themes of this Declaration mean to them.

Recommendations for the Tandanya Declaration and collective action (What's next for the Tandanya Declaration)

The Declaration is not a silver bullet and each First Nation will most likely have a different way of interpreting and valuing this document. The truest words in the

Declaration are that this work will be ‘an endeavour of generations’.³⁴ A key concern raised in the ASA panel discussion was the lack of proactive initiative around the implementation of the Tandanya Declaration after it was published. A stark reminder of a lack of broader dialogue was that, in Australia, the ASA panel that resulted in this article was the first public conversation on implementing the Tandanya Declaration since its launch in October 2019. Both in the panel and within this article, we have noted that multiple needs were left unaddressed in the Tandanya Declaration, including employment of Indigenous people and intersections with other key policies, protocols and mandates. Another critical issue is the extension of the reach of the Tandanya Declaration across the public and private sectors, and to current recordkeeping as well as archiving. The activation and implementation of the Tandanya Declaration requires not only a national initiative but also localised state and community based engagement; requiring dialogue, strategies and resources supported by the ICA.

Professional recordkeeping and archival associations need to commit to addressing these critical issues while the Declaration is fresh, to translate what is a universal symbolic document into transformed local practice. Otherwise, the Declaration risks being an example of performative allyship. In this section, we reflect on points that we feel are missing from the Tandanya Declaration. We then share some examples of good practice by discussing the strengths of the reconciliation framework for Canadian archives and the leading work of the State Records of South Australia in engaging community stakeholders to activate the Tandanya Declaration. We conclude the section with a set of further examples of frameworks and models that we could look to, to guide the sector towards transformative change and structural reform.

Cross sectoral approach

In practice, the Tandanya Declaration must be considered across all sectors that are in partnership with and relate to the recordkeeping and archives sector. Therefore, advocating for implementation of the Declaration needs to happen not only across the GLAM sector but all professions engaging with recordkeeping and archives, with particular focus on the private sector who often go unmentioned in public sector discourse. We must consider the intersection of international and domestic rights, legislation and institutional policies – not only in the recordkeeping and archives sector but also in adjacent disciplines and sectors with whom collaboration and negotiation is paramount to move forward into a rights-based approach.

Indigenous-led action in the context of Voice, Treaty, and Truth Telling

When focusing on the core reason for the Tandanya Declaration in Australia, the key focus should be on proactively seeking Indigenous self-determination off the page. We must look towards both Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) rights³⁵ and Indigenous Data Sovereignty³⁶ for our operating guidelines. Furthermore, we need to explore the intersections of the Tandanya Declaration, the Uluru Statement from the Heart, and the ongoing discussions across many nations regarding Treaty which are a major focus for many First Nations. What should the recordkeeping and archiving response to the Uluru

Statement be and how relevant is the Tandanya Declaration to that response? What is the role of recordkeeping and the archival institutions in Voice, Treaty, and Truth Telling? How can archival institutions and the recordkeeping profession become involved in treaty making and truth telling in proactive roles rather than reactive ones?

Employing First Nations archivists and recordkeeping professionals

A key area needing recognition and commitment from the ICA and the archives and recordkeeping sector more broadly relates to employment resourcing and Indigenous employment pathways. There needs to be an acknowledgement of the knowledge, experience and skillsets required for working with archives, Indigenous knowledges, communities and cultures. By recognising the skills necessary and the levels of responsibility involved, the ICA and the sector need to commit to further resourcing and support for First Nations archivists and recordkeeping workers, specifically:

- A commitment to the increased employment of more First Nation's archivists – through internships, scholarships, and the establishment of career paths for Indigenous archivists, specifically that there be no positions created without an agreement in place regarding support and career development. The employment of First Nations archivists needs to be a priority at all appointment levels to ensure that Indigenous perspectives are included in all decision making processes.
- Implementation of professional development and classification levels that adequately address levels of responsibility and the pioneering nature of the positions needed for working with Indigenous archives and recordkeeping. People in these roles cannot be expected to work in multiple complex roles simultaneously. The institutions need to create fully funded and supported positions for Indigenous archivists and recordkeeping professionals as an act of reparation.
- Recognising the complex structural reforms and workplace cultural transformation needed to embed 'cultural safety' for Indigenous archivists, recordkeeping professionals and 'users' in workplaces.³⁷
- Addressing the synergies between past reports and recommendations relevant to the archives and recordkeeping sector, for example, the Bringing Them Home Report, as well as other protocols and policy statements to map the linkages between them and to tackle the unfinished work.

Towards ownership and sovereignty over records: reconciliation framework for Canadian archives

During and following the ASA Panel Discussion we have received requests for advice about how to activate the Tandanya Declaration in Australia. The Reconciliation Framework for Canadian Archives provides a possible model for working together towards 'decolonised futures' in the whole of the archival sector in Australia, thereby extending the scope of the Declaration beyond government archival institutions.

The Framework is a response to a call to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada in 2015 and federal government funding for the Canadian Association of Archivists to undertake a national review of archival policies and best

practices (Call to Action #70). The Canadian Council of Archives, the Association of Canadian Archivists, Library and Archives Canada, the Association des archivistes du Québec, and the Council of Provincial and Territorial Archivists came together in the Response to the Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Taskforce (TRC-TF) to conduct a four-year review of archival policies and best practices and identify potential barriers to reconciliation. Working in collaboration with Indigenous communities, heritage professionals and organisations across Canada, they produced the Reconciliation Framework for Canadian Archives.³⁸ It applies to the Canadian archival community and profession, all types of archives and archival education and training programs, but not to current recordkeeping.

The Canadian Framework's Vision translates the Tandanya Declaration's support for Indigenous Peoples' sovereignty and self-determination in the archival sector into an acknowledgement of 'their inherent and inalienable right not just to traditional knowledge but to ownership and sovereignty over their records, recorded memory, knowledge and information'.³⁹ Its 6 principles, 7 objectives and 33 implementation strategies provide a practical framework supporting the Canadian archival community as it begins to redress its colonial legacy. The Framework's principles commit the whole Canadian archival community to respectful, proactive engagement with Indigenous communities, shifting institutional priorities in response to priorities and needs identified by Indigenous communities, and working collaboratively with Elders and Youth in the revitalisation of Indigenous memory, knowledge, governance and legal systems. Principle 2 is particularly significant as it recognises that investment in and sharing of resources is essential to achieving the Framework's vision and goals:

The Canadian archival community acknowledges that this work requires sustained investments in human and financial resources. The equitable sharing of such resources is essential to building capacity in Indigenous and archival communities.⁴⁰

Leading the way in activating the Declaration

One of the early adoptees of the Declaration, the State Records of South Australia (SRSA), has demonstrated how the Declaration could be activated. Shortly after the launch of the Declaration, the SRSA conducted a forum to gather community perspectives on how the Declaration's aims could be achieved within their local setting. Forum attendees included Elders from South Australian Aboriginal communities as well as support organisations that work with Aboriginal communities, such as the Healing Foundation, LinkUp SA, Reconciliation SA, Anglicare, Relationships Australia, the Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement, and various South Australian memory and education institutions including the State Library of South Australia, the National Archives, the University of Adelaide, Flinders University, and the South Australian Museum. The result of the forum is a detailed response of how the SRSA intend to implement the framework of the Declaration into their archival practice with tangible short and long term goals based around the five themes of the Declaration.⁴¹

The SRSA's response to the Tandanya Declaration is a carefully considered action plan with clear goals in accordance with the Tandanya Declaration's themes, but most importantly it was derived from community consultation between various South

Australian archives and Indigenous community leaders from the First Nations of the region.⁴² This initial step of the SRSA is the key to activating the Tandanya Declaration.

To ensure the Tandanya Declaration is sustainably activated and implemented, the ICA and the local archival and recordkeeping community will need to provide support for localised forums and workshops, following the SRSA model, and focus on understanding the local needs and aspirations of Indigenous communities. Discussions and planning at local and state levels will enable clear recognition of the parameters of the Tandanya Declaration, increase transparency around the challenges and barriers faced by the local, national and international sector in implementing transformative change, and plot an Indigenous-led way forward.

Possible frameworks and models of structural reform to guide the sector

There are several frameworks and models currently guiding the archives and recordkeeping sector, as well as GLAM more broadly, towards culturally appropriate and rights-based approaches to sector practice. Some examples that could assist further action and sector reform as aspired to in the Tandanya Declaration include:

- Holistic models of Indigenous Living Archives on country supported and resourced from national and state budgets and involving redistribution of funding for the public archival sector to include community-led recordkeeping and archiving, and repatriation rights.
- The model provided by Bunjilaka in the Melbourne Museum: the Bunjilaka Aboriginal Cultural Centre was developed in partnership with Victorian Aboriginal communities and the Centre is uniquely placed as the only living Aboriginal Cultural Centre within a state institution in the country.
- Frameworks, protocols and processes that support transformative action, including the Canadian and South Australian initiatives discussed above, the new Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) ethical research principles,⁴³ and *First Peoples: A Roadmap for enhancing Indigenous engagement in museums and galleries*.⁴⁴
- Rights-based approaches, for example the Charter of Lifelong Rights in Childhood Recordkeeping developed for the Out-of-Home Care sector in Australia, including rights for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in Care today and the Stolen Generations.⁴⁵

Conclusion

In translating the Declaration into transformative practice, the archives and recordkeeping sector will need to address difficult questions, including how the settler-colonial status quo is too often buried under the rhetoric of decolonisation and reconciliation. It will need to move beyond the sentiments expressed in the preamble of the Tandanya Declaration to focus on Indigenous-led transformative action and structural reform. Recognising that the answers to the difficult questions raised by the Tandanya Declaration may not be found inside our current institutions – that they may be the problem rather than the solution – will be critical. Bringing Indigenous knowledge and

expertise into the institution to help fix their settler-colonial recordkeeping and archival systems, as envisaged by the Declaration, may not be the answer. Current systems cannot be fixed if they are broken because they have structural racism embedded in their design. Finally, as expressed in Ambelin Kwaymullina's lyrical words, the role of non-Indigenous members of the recordkeeping and archival community is to focus on 'walking humbly'⁴⁶ with Indigenous colleagues, working together for First Nations recordkeeping and archival self-determination and data sovereignty. This involves finding the 'places where different worlds meet', the places of 'connection, enrichment and transformation', a commitment to justice, and the creation of 'decolonised futures'⁴⁷ for:

Change-makers understand
that colonisers occupy space
and decolonisers yield space.⁴⁸

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Kirsten Thorpe (Worimi, Port Stephens) has broad interests in research and engagement with Indigenous protocols and decolonising practices in the library and archive field. Kirsten is an advocate for the right of reply to records and capacity building and support for the development of local Indigenous digital keeping places. Kirsten has contributed to numerous projects that have involved the return of historical collections to Indigenous peoples and communities and advocates for Indigenous control of the management of data, records, and collections.

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