

Comma

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Comma – the pause

in the continuum,

the realization of change

ARCHIVES AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

In 2003 an issue of the International Council on Archives journal *Comma* will be devoted to the theme of "Archives and Indigenous Peoples". The concept of the "indigenous" is complex and contested (as is, of course, the concept of "archives"). For the purposes of the *Comma* issue, the term "indigenous peoples" will be taken to refer to collectivities (communities, clans, societies, etc) who define themselves in this way and who are dealing with, or have dealt with, dispossession and marginalisation by forces, structures and people from outside.

Issues and dimensions that the editorial collective would like to cover include the following:

- Indigenous ways of understanding "archive"
- The problematic relationships between oral cultures and Eurocentric notions of the archive, which privilege written pasts
- Notions of who owns the past and the roles that documentary forms of memory and evidence play in these notions
- The role archives can play in helping to redress injustices suffered by indigenous peoples
- The nature of evidence in indigenous systems of law, and the implications of this for archives and recordkeeping
- Intellectual and cultural property rights
- Archival strategies for engaging indigenous ideas of storytelling, secrecy, cultural property and access control in such a way that we can eliminate or minimise the barriers presented by Eurocentric regimes of law and professional ethics
- Strategies for how archives can reinvent themselves to be hospitable to indigenous concerns, values and perspectives
- The documenting of indigenous peoples, both by indigenous peoples themselves and by "outsiders"
- Strategies for increasing indigenous involvement in the governance, staffing, policy and procedure making of archival institutions
- Archives as mediated sites of power, struggle and resistance for indigenous peoples
- The opportunities and obligations of archives in relation to the theft and/or recovery/reconstruction of indigenous identity.

The editorial collective is seeking contributions from anyone with expertise in the areas outlined above, in particular from persons who identify themselves as indigenous. In addition to full-length (around 5 000 words) scholarly essays, the editorial collective welcomes short pieces, personal stories, and other contributions. Contributors are encouraged to use or include non-textual materials. Interested persons in the Asia/Pacific region should contact Adrian Cunningham at email adrianc@naa.gov.au, or phone +61 2 6212-3988.

Deadline for expressions of interest: 31 May 2002

Deadline for contributions: 30 November 2002