

## ABBREVIATED TANDANYA – ADELAIDE DECLARATION

***This is an abbreviated version of the International Council on Archives<sup>1</sup> Tandanya<sup>2</sup>-Adelaide Declaration<sup>3</sup> which has been developed by the Council of Australasian Archives and Records Authorities.***

CAARA, and its member institutions, support the themes and commitments enshrined in the Declaration. Member institutions commit to improving services to Indigenous peoples, ensuring practices are inclusive and creating spaces that support ethical and respectful dialogue. These will be achieved through engagement, learning and collaboration.

### **Background**

The Tandanya-Adelaide Declaration was presented by the International Council on Archives (ICA) Expert Matters Indigenous Group at its first Indigenous Matters Summit in Adelaide, South Australia on Friday 25 October 2019.

The ICA is the chief international body on archives and its main aims are to understand and care for archival heritage.

The ICA recognises its responsibility to re-imagine the meaning of archives as an engaging model of social memory, and to embrace Indigenous worldviews and methods of creating, sharing and preserving valued knowledge.

### **What is the Tandanya-Adelaide Declaration?**

The Tandanya-Adelaide Declaration is the first international archives declaration on Indigenous people and archival matters. It calls on public archives<sup>4</sup> of the world to acknowledge and adopt the themes and commitments of the Declaration for immediate action, presented under the categories of Knowledge Authorities, Property and Ownership, Recognition and Identity, Research and Access, and Self Determination.

The Tandanya-Adelaide Declaration proposes a new model of public archives that encompasses an ethical space of meeting, respecting, negotiating and working together through meaningful dialogue, taking place within an agreed and shared understanding.

This means public archives should incorporate into their archival principles Indigenous knowledge methods, open the meaning of public archives to Indigenous interpretations and bring new dynamics of spirituality, ecology and Indigenous philosophy into the European traditions of archival memory.

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<sup>1</sup> International Council on Archives [www.ica.org.au](http://www.ica.org.au)

<sup>2</sup> Tandanya is a Kurna language word that means 'Red Kangaroo Place'. Kurna people are the Traditional Owners of the Adelaide Plains in South Australia. The Tandanya-Adelaide Declaration was presented at the Tandanya National Aboriginal Cultural Institute, Adelaide, South Australia.

<sup>3</sup> The full Tandanya Adelaide-Declaration <https://www.ica.org/en/search/site/tandanya>

<sup>4</sup> Public archives means Federal, state and territory government archives: from *Archives Matter!*

## The Tandanya – Adelaide Declaration Themes and Commitments for Immediate Action

**1. Knowledge Authorities:** Acknowledge there are Indigenous ways to understand ideas of history, memory, heritage and cultural identity:

- Promote a respectful ethical relationship between archives and Indigenous communities;
- Recognise and understand that successful cultural engagement requires safe and ethical environments; and
- Recognise that traditional Indigenous knowledge models are best understood through connected community representation.

**2. Property and Ownership:** Understand there is a need for public archives to recognise Indigenous ownership of Indigenous traditional knowledge, cultural expression, knowledge, and intellectual property:

- Recognise that Indigenous cultures and knowledge are lived through oral tradition, artwork and other forms of collective expression;
- Recognise that the process of protecting cultural heritage must be placed in the management and care of the Indigenous elders and knowledge keepers; and
- Recognise and defend Indigenous collective cultural expression and knowledge, in addition to existing intellectual property rights that acknowledge individual ownership.

**3. Recognition and Identity:** Understand that 500 years of colonial encounter worldwide has been an Indigenous struggle for recognition. Indigenous peoples have experienced forced assimilation and authorities sought to erase their culture and identity. Indigenous peoples have a right to have their voice heard in archives:

- Recognise that Indigenous languages of place, social and spiritual value must become a valued part of the process of records description;
- Recognise that Indigenous groups must participate as co-authors in the description of records about Indigenous peoples held in public archives;
- Recognise that records descriptions reflect changing relationships across creators, contexts and information systems, and that archival practice exists within these social and political dynamics over time; and
- Recognise that race, gender and governance may influence what records are created and preserved, and this be acknowledged in description. This includes the need for ongoing participatory collaboration in these decisions.

**4. Research and Access:** Understand that research and access to archival records is a possible site of conflict between Indigenous and non-Indigenous ways of knowing:

- Recognise and understand the rights of Indigenous peoples to access information about themselves, their culture and heritage held in public archives;
- Adapt and change archives and recordkeeping legislation and practice to acknowledge and address concerns for Indigenous data sovereignty, and respond to right of reply and redress; and
- Acknowledge that access to records containing traditional Indigenous cultural expression, sacred belief, social and legal knowledge should recognise and apply social, legal and cultural protocols of affiliated groups, in consultation with affiliated groups.

**5. Self -Determination:** As noted in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) 'Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination':

- Recognise that Indigenous peoples have a right to live as Indigenous peoples;
- Accept the need for balance by incorporating Indigenous historical experiences and views;
- Acknowledge that the evidence held in archives may create harm and cause concern to Indigenous individuals, groups and communities, and that public archives demonstrate this understanding by forming and facilitating new trusted relationships;
- Recognise that to keep safe and share the memories of Indigenous heritage and to promote its survival is a human right;
- The Tandanya-Adelaide Declaration recognises the articles contained within UNDRIP that acknowledge a direct relationship between archives and Indigenous cultural self- determination.
- Recognise that Indigenous cultures and knowledge are lived through oral tradition, artwork and other forms of collective expression;
- Recognise that the process of protecting cultural heritage must be placed in the management and care of the Indigenous elders and knowledge keepers; and
- Recognise and defend Indigenous collective cultural expression and knowledge, in addition to existing intellectual property rights that acknowledge individual ownership.