

Right of Reply – Issues Paper

INDIGENOUS RIGHTS IN DATA & COLLECTIONS

Prepared by members of the [Indigenous Archives Collective](#) for discussion at the Right of Reply Symposium, 18 October 2019.

Why a Right of Reply?

The Right of Reply is becoming increasingly important for collecting institutions that hold Indigenous cultural materials and records. To engage with the Right of Reply is to recognise the issues and inherent biases associated with colonial collecting paradigms.

It is important to consider how these issues are addressed in relation to trends in data and technology use. For example, in relation to:

- The digitisation of colonial collections to make accessible through library, archive and museum catalogues and websites
- Digital curation and other efforts to provide added context and utility to collections such as the transcription of Aboriginal language materials
- Artificial Intelligence and automation which have the potential to reaffirm the enduring prejudice of our data/collections, for example in reproducing racist and offensive content.

Australian Human Rights Commission Human Rights and Technology Project

The Australian Human Rights Commission [Human Rights and Technology project](#) has recently explored the impact and opportunities of new technologies to protect and promote our rights and freedoms. See the details here:

https://tech.humanrights.gov.au/?_ga=2.263651468.1866609055.1568071390-348627438.1565934854

The University of Technology Sydney has also made a submission to the Human Rights Commission here:

<https://tech.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/inline-files/103%20-%20University%20of%20Technology%20Sydney.pdf>

These issues focus on the importance of Indigenous rights in data and collections & the importance of the Right of Reply in relation to Indigenous self-determination and national truth-telling efforts.

FAIR Principles

The FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable) data principles are used nationally and internationally as a framework for thinking about data sharing in a way that will enable maximum use and reuse. A topic for discussion at the Symposium will be around the FAIR principles and their support for Indigenous rights. See the principles here: <https://www.ands.org.au/working-with-data/fairdata>

Questions for consideration:

- How are Indigenous Australian people impacted by programs for sharing data?
- Do the FAIR principles support a Right of Reply?
- What might be appropriate methods for screening collections for data bias to minimise harm to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people? For example, in relation to the digitisation of collections held in GLAM institutions or in addressing racist classifications and descriptions?
- What trends exist in relation to critiquing pre-digitised materials in relation to their systems of description and classification in order to minimise harm if they are digitised?
- How can the sector prioritise and resource efforts to engage in the Right of Reply?
- Do any other international models or programs that support the Right of Reply offer possibilities for Australia in this area?
- How can people effectively 'Set the Record Straight'? Is it through oral testimonies, or using other processes which enable Indigenous replies to be recorded?
- How do we move the agenda within GLAM to support Indigenous Right of Reply?
- As the field of artificial intelligence and automation begins to examine its own accountability and ethics, is the demand for a right of reply being addressed?
- Do we need a clearinghouse or national approach to facilitate and enable a right of reply?
- Will funding assist the process of recording Indigenous stories to sit alongside these historic archives?

Who are the stakeholders to this process, and who leads the research and advocacy?

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- GLAM institutions and/or peak professional bodies
- Government / Research