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NEWSLETTER

FROM THE CHAIR

Funding for the Truth Telling project *Tragedy and Triumph: Looking Back - Looking Forward Part 1* is due for acquittal shortly and we thank Nungalinya for their support in assisting with the financial aspects of the grant.

The support, goodwill and cooperation of staff in places like the State Library of NSW, University of Sydney, State Library of South Australia, the National Film and Sound Archive, has enabled the digitisation of many of these collections.

The project culminated in a trip to Sydney to visit various collecting institutions, to meet staff and to see collections first hand.



State Library of NSW Staff with Linda Rainwood, David Berry, Melissa Raymond, Netta Hunter and Don Christophersen (on the right)
Photo: Don Christophersen

This undertaking has provided significant opportunities for learning, sharing, and we are committed to continuing this important work.

PROJECT UPDATES

Truth Telling Project

The Truth Telling Project has identified thousands of images and other material held in state, university and community libraries, archives and other keeping places.

Collections have come from as far away as the University of Birmingham and we are in negotiations for a collection from the University of Ohio. In addition, Library and Archives NT has allowed our volunteers to digitise over 5 000 images held in various collections.

Each collection has its own copyright and use permissions and needs careful consideration and respect. Collections may or may not have additional information such as where or when an individual image was taken or who took the actual photograph. And different collections may have some of the same images with different copyright and use permissions!

While all of these are provided as part of the project, not all are relevant. Each item needs to be assessed individually. Many remain restricted (unpublished) and are yet to be returned, as we work through a range of considerations.

Staff at the Northern Territory Stolen Generations Aboriginal Corporation and Library & Archives NT have created a number of events which have showcased and shared collections. Over a cup of tea, event participants have worked with the images to share stories, and identify people.



Group looking at images and naming people
Source: Don Christophersen

Groote Eylandt Community Making

Late in 2026, NTEM, in collaboration with the Anindilyakwa Land Council and NTEM members was successful in gaining a Northern Territory Government History Grant. The intent is to produce bilingual digital multimedia to tell the early history of the Groote Eylandt communities, potentially leading to a physical exhibition.

In part, this builds on the content of and collections from the Truth Telling Project.

Community Building on Groote

We have been successful in gaining a small Northern Territory Government History Grant. Our submission was based around building on some of the amazing images and stories arising out of working with material from Emerald River.

While it is early days and there is much research to be done, we have established a Reference Group of stakeholders.

Important dates

Last year the committee agreed we should promote dates important to Aboriginal education in the Northern Territory. So far we have researched and written the text for four dates. We are locating the text on our website. Where we can, linking them to resources within the Digital Keeping Place. We would welcome suggestions of dates to acknowledge as well as edits to existing posts.



Emerald River School, c1929
Source: Library & Archives NT Wynne Evans Collection PH0063/0016

NEW COLLECTIONS

We have received substantial collections of documents from former educators Margaret Dean and Pam Harris. Both at one stage in their career were Teacher Linguists.

Often people do not realise how much has been lost over time and how important these contributions are. Both Margaret and Pam are donating the hard copies to Library & Archives NT so they will not be lost. They have also written various stories of their time living and working in remote communities.

Former teacher Jim Clark is also donating photos from his time teaching in various communities. We have returned the first album of images to Milingimbi and look forward to receiving more.



Cultural afternoon Milingimbi 1978
Source: Jim and Lorraine Clark

Many will remember the former Aboriginal Child at School magazine which operated from 1973 – 1995. Northern Territory educators regularly contributed articles to the magazine. The magazine continues as the Australian Journal of Indigenous Education. It remains a wonderful source of ideas and suggestions for teaching practice, pedagogy and policy in Aboriginal education in Australia. It is freely available through the University of Queensland.

Derrick Scanlan used to work for the YMCA (worked with schools and their sports programs). His 45 albums represent his work and travels spanning over 30 years. We are only digitising his NT images and have completed about 1 900 so far. We are adding them to the Digital Keeping Place as restricted so we can work on the metadata (who, what, when, and where), get them back to Derrick and where we know, back to communities they are relevant to. We are also putting them on Social Media, album by album. They are very popular!

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

We have put in a submission to run four events which will highlight some of the material held in the Digital Keeping Place. We are open to suggestions about days, time and content. Our current thinking is to have an introductory session, possibly one session on bilingual resources and one on the work we are undertaking on Stolen Generations.

SUBMISSION

In February we forwarded a submission to the First Nations Education Policy Consultation. This work was led by Committee member Kathy McMahon.

In the submission we highlighted a central place for Aboriginal languages in education and the need for bilingual bicultural educators who best fit the work of educating an emergent bilingual student cohort.

The Appendix also speaks for itself. It is a three-page list of Aboriginal Education Policy and Curriculum Reviews and Reports relevant to the Northern Territory from 1964-2023. Please email if you would like a copy of the submission.