Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) submission to *Revive* First Nations First National Consultation

The Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) is the national organisation for the Australian library and information sector. ALIA thanks Creative Australia for the opportunity to make this short submission, and wishes to acknowledge the expertise and contribution of the members of the ALIA Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Expert Advisory Group who have approved the content of the submission.

Draft terms of reference

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people make a huge contribution to Australia's arts and cultural sector. While we understand that there may be various reasons for concentrating on certain art forms and cultural sectors, such as performing arts, as a start, we recognise the contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across all aspects of arts and culture. We would hope that First Nations practitioners in all art forms, including literature and poetry, and all sectors, such as galleries, libraries, archives and museums (GLAM) which are not specifically referenced in the terms of reference, will be equally recognised and supported through this new body within Creative Australia. We would support ensuring that First Nations voices from GLAM, literature and other creative and cultural sectors not explicitly referenced, are included in the new body from its inception. We also support including other ways to ensure that the diversity of experience of First Nations people in the cultural sector is reflected.

First Nations Employment

In 2021 Dr Kirsten Thorpe published the *National survey on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment in Australian libraries,*[1] through the Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research UTS, and funded by ALIA. This pilot study was the first First Nations led research to provide a snapshot of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people employed in Australian libraries, their insights into the range of roles and employment contexts of their employment, and their needs, concerns and aspirations.

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[1] Thorpe, K. (2021). *National survey on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment in Australian libraries.* Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA), (sponsoring body). University of Technology Sydney. Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research.

Ten key themes emerged from the research:

- Indigenous workers enable and support a vibrant Australian library sector
- Indigenous library workers are committed to driving change
- Indigenous library workers are concerned about cultural safety in Australian libraries
- Indigenous library workers are experiencing cultural load and identity strain
- Indigenous library workers shared their views on the importance of allies supporting Indigenous priorities in Australian libraries
- Indigenous library workers are concerned about the low levels of Indigenous employment in Australian libraries
- Indigenous library workers wanted to connect with other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the sector
- Indigenous library workers identified a lack of leadership roles in Australian libraries
- Indigenous library workers discussed the lack of pathways, including leadership pathways, for Indigenous people in Australian libraries
- Indigenous library workers called out issues of systemic and structural issues in Australian libraries that impact people's cultural safety

We draw Creative Australia's attention to the report, to its recommendations, and their importance to support ongoing work into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment in arts and culture. The full study is attached to this submission.

The report also identified the need for further research to build from the pilot study, including additional work gathering and examining data relating to employment pathways and career development in the wider GLAM sectors. This work is of high relevance across the arts and cultural sector, and ALIA would strongly support the First Nations body within Creative Australia undertaking further research to understand the current experience of First Nations people in libraries and the wider cultural sector. We would like to again draw attention to the strength of researchers at the Jumbunna Institute in this area of research.

First Nations Protocols

The use of First Nations protocols in the library and information services sector is well established, and knowledge and use of specific industry protocols is incorporated into the *ALIA Skills, Knowledge and Ethics Framework for the Library and Information Services Workforce*[2] and all ALIA accredited courses in library and information services.

However, there remains significant work to do in this area. The main standards for the sector, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Protocols for Libraries, Archives and Information Services[3] (the

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[2] Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA). (2023). *ALIA Skills, Knowledge and Ethics Framework for the Library and Information Services Workforce*. https://www.alia.org.au/Web/Web/Careers/LIS-Framework-Pathways-Project/LIS-Workforce-Framework.aspx

[3] Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Library, Information and Resources Network (ATSILIRN). (2010). *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Protocols for Libraries, Archives and Information Services.* https://atsilirn.aiatsis.gov.au/protocols.php

www.alia.org.au

9–11 Napier Close Deakin ACT 2600 | PO BOX 6335 Kingston ACT 2604 | ABN 40 090 953 236
phone 02 6215 8222 | freecall 1800 020 071 | enquiry@alia.org.au | ☐ ALIAnational | ☑ @ALIAnational

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'ATSILIRN Protocols'), first drafted in 1995 and most recently updated in 2010, need to be reviewed and updated to meet and reflect current standards, priorities and aspirations.

Greater resources are needed to support stretched organisations to embed more recent work such as the *Guidelines for First Nations Collection Description*[4] and the *Indigenous Referencing Guidance for Indigenous Knowledges*[5] and to address emerging areas such as generative AI and their interaction with Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Policy (ICIP), and Indigenous data sovereignty. ALIA would be very interested in projects or research that would support the better development and implementation of First Nations protocols in arts and culture.

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[4] Raven, T. (2023). *Guidelines for First Nations Collection Description.* Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS), the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA), the Council of Australian University Librarians (CAUL), CAVAL, National and State Libraries Australasia (NSLA). https://catalogue.nla.gov.au/catalog/10010699
[5] Indigenous Archives Collective; Faulkhead, S; Thorpe, K; Sentance, N; Booker, L; & R Barrowcliffe. (2023) *Indigenous Referencing Guidance for Indigenous Knowledges*. Indigenous Archives Collective and the UTS Jumbunna Institute of Indigenous Education and Research. https://members.caval.edu.au/media/images/Documents/CRIG/CACIK/CAVAL_Indigenous_Knowledges_Citation_Guide.pdf