

Words by Design

Challenging Archival Description

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Framing this session

How can organisations approach these issues?

Key change areas:

1. Institutional level: Examining power structures and governance and decision-making structures
2. Policy level: Protocols, guides, policies
3. Cataloguing and description level: Content warnings, changing descriptions, commentary within descriptions

Reference:

Kirsten Thorpe 'Transformative Praxis – Building spaces for Indigenous self-determination' *In the Library with the Lead Pipe*, January 2019

Content warnings



THE CARTOONS YOU ARE ABOUT TO SEE ARE PRODUCTS OF THEIR TIME. THEY MAY DEPICT SOME OF THE ETHNIC AND RACIAL PREJUDICES THAT WERE COMMONPLACE IN AMERICAN SOCIETY. THESE DEPICTIONS WERE WRONG THEN AND ARE WRONG TODAY. WHILE THE FOLLOWING DOES NOT REPRESENT THE WARNER BROS. VIEW OF TODAY'S SOCIETY, THESE CARTOONS ARE BEING PRESENTED AS THEY WERE ORIGINALLY CREATED, BECAUSE TO DO OTHERWISE WOULD BE THE SAME AS CLAIMING THESE PREJUDICES NEVER EXISTED.

About the
Project

About
Repatriation

Community
Stories

Resources

Welcome to our website

Nguldi Arndu, Maiem, Sew Ngapa, Ulyu Kumanta, Welcome

Taking care:

Repatriation is a story of Indigenous achievement and success. Please be aware that some of the information can be distressing and can cause sadness and anger. There are images and references to people who have passed away, both a long time ago and recently. The stories can be brutal, the speakers can be emotional, and some of the language of historical writers may be insulting. There are also many stories that are positive and uplifting.

Responsible use

<https://returnreconcilerenew.info/>

Group discussion: does your organisation use content warnings?

What do they say?

Where are they used?

Altering language in item title

Case study: an 'established' archive – Find and Connect
and archival items

Adding commentary in description

Case study: an 'established' archive – Find and Connect
changing description in response to query about 'facts'

Archival description as political commentary

Case study: a new archive - Aboriginal History Archive series
descriptions

Group discussion: have you implemented any of these methods?

Would you or your organisation consider doing these?

What are some barriers to implementation?

Description today:
receiving new materials

There may not be
one solution or one narrative
– and that's OK.

One take-away!!