



# Many Truths

Six Seasons Process for a guiding  
Truth Telling Framework





# CHURCHILL FELLOWSHIP

## TRUTH TELLING, HEALING AND SUSTAINABILITY

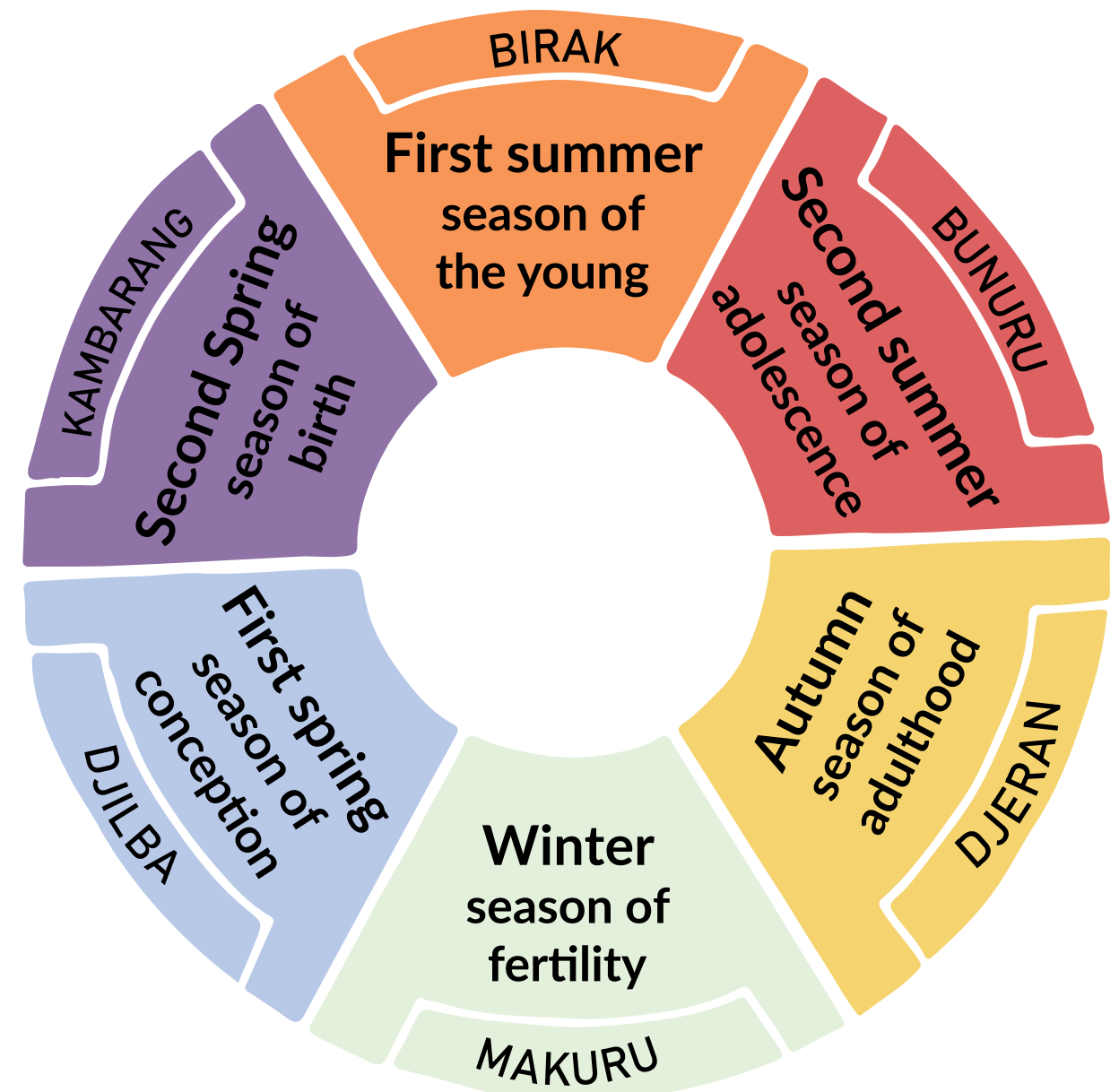
In 2022, Noongar Leader Robyn Smith Walley and Reconciliation ally Jody Nunn were awarded a Churchill Fellowship focusing on international models of Truth Telling, Healing and Sustainability, mainly focused on Indigenous peoples and places.

In 2023, they took a six week journey to deeply explore the experiences and outcomes of those who had walked this path before us and to bring the learnings back to Australia as we embark on formal truth programs.

The following 'Many Truths' framework provides a summary of learning and reflections that can be applied as people commence their truth telling journey.

This has been designed to be open source and accessible for all.

We thank all organisations who contributed knowledge to this framework.



**Birak**—season of the young. First summer - DOCUMENTATION NEW AND INFORMATIVE

**Bunuru**—season of adolescence. Second summer – TEACHING AND INFORMING FOR THE PAST, PRESENT AND PREPARING FOR FUTURE CHANGE

**Djeran**—season of adulthood. Autumn - TAKING FULL RESPONSIBILITY AND ENACTING

**Makuru**—season of fertility. Winter - IDEAS

**Djilba**—season of conception. First spring - PLANNING

**Kambarang**—season of birth. Second Spring – DELIVERY

## Key example organisations / locations

- National Archive of New Zealand
- Te Arawhiti, New Zealand
- Waitangi Tribunal, New Zealand
- House of Waitangi, New Zealand
- National Archive, New Zealand
- Te Papa, New Zealand
- NCTR – National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, Canada
- QTC - Qikiqtani Truth Commission, Canada
- Canadian Museum of Human Rights
- MOA – Museum of Anthropology, Canada
- Museum of Vancouver, Canada
- Indian Residential School Dialogue Centre, Canada
- Sami Parliament, Sweden
- Sami Truth Commission, Sweden
- Biology Race Institute, Sweden
- Ajjite Museum Jokkmokk, Sweden
- Robben Island, South Africa
- Nelson Mandela Foundation, South Africa
- Desmon and Leah Tutu Foundation, South Africa
- TRC – Truth and Reconciliation Commission, South Africa
- Amy Foundation, South Africa
- Apartheid Museum, South Africa

Full details of interviews can be found in our Churchill Fellowship Report



Six Seasons	Truth Telling	Healing	Sustainability
<p data-bbox="203 328 544 360"><b>Makaru – season of fertility</b></p> <p data-bbox="203 400 282 432"><b>IDEAS</b></p>	<p data-bbox="665 296 1108 432">-Ensure the <b>Truth Telling</b> process will leave the community ‘better off’ as a result of telling their truth (Te Arawhiti).</p> <p data-bbox="665 472 1108 647">-<b>Truth ‘speaking’ principles</b> should be prioritised - accessible, survivor centred, protected, create no harm, trauma informed, inclusive, respectful, and voluntary (NCTR).</p> <p data-bbox="665 687 1108 1038">-Acknowledge independence of parties involved through <b>principles and process</b> required particularly when funded by the Crown versus rules that can be perceived as broken (National Archive, Waitangi Tribunal). Where possible, funding a Truth Commission process must be independent from Government (Sami Truth Commission).</p> <p data-bbox="665 1078 1108 1294">-Truth Commissions should not create conflict within the community, rather acknowledge the <b>colonial impacts on Indigenous people</b> and work to remedy them (Sami Parliament).</p>	<p data-bbox="1131 296 1574 504">-Ensure truth telling takes place in a <b>culturally safe place</b> and preferably on <b>traditional lands</b> (Waitangi Tribunal, Marai Houses, NCTR 5-day long events in communities) (NCTR and Waitangi Tribunal)</p> <p data-bbox="1131 544 1574 823">- Truth Telling taking place <b>in community</b> and using their cultural practice throughout the process, surrounded by community and family provide support systems that act as an important component of the healing (Waitangi Tribunal, NCTR).</p> <p data-bbox="1131 863 1574 1110">-Ensure <b>language options</b> are available to those telling their truth and in collections and archives for ongoing learning and education (National Archive, Waitangi Tribunal, House of Waitangi, QIA, Sami Truth Commission)</p> <p data-bbox="1131 1150 1574 1327">-Explore <b>traditional and cultural healing</b> methods and how they may nurture people through trauma or re-traumatization (NCTR traditional Bent Wood Box, Walking Sticks,</p>	<p data-bbox="1594 296 2036 464">-Determine <b>20-year strategy</b> for impact of truth telling process and design <b>framework and archiving</b> approach accordingly (Mandela Foundation, NCTR).</p>

	<p>-<b>Early engagement</b> with communities and programs being culturally led is of vital importance to maximise engagement and success of truth processes.</p> <p>-Identify <b>Cultural Leadership / Authority</b> to lead / guide / advise respecting individual laws, customs, language and cultural obligations of tribes and regions (Waitangi Tribunal, NCTR, Te Papa Musuem).</p> <p>-Identify <b>Government Leadership Group</b> to carry the efforts forward over time so momentum and succession is managed (Te Arwhiti).</p> <p>-Scrutinize <b>scope and timelines</b> to ensure they are achievable and consider the demands on Cultural Leadership amongst their cultural obligations (Yoorook Commission, Marja Skum, Saami Truth Commission, Waitangi Tribunal)</p>	<p>Traditional Medicines).</p> <p>-<b>Honouring time in truth telling</b> is important to allow a cultural process to be fulfilled and time for meaningful preparation amongst representative leaders and groups. Cultural and environmental factors need to be considered and the intensity of work may require breaks for healing (Waitangi Tribunal, Sami Truth Telling Commission)</p>	
<p><b>Djilba – conception</b></p> <p><b>PLANNING</b></p>	<p>-Build <b>capacity</b> or identify members of the Leadership with strength in government relations and processes to be part of team (QTC)</p> <p>-Understand <b>cultural processes</b> of decision making and structure and</p>	<p>-Establish a longitudinal <b>healing program</b> that can be accessed over time to support individuals and families impacted by a truth telling process (NCTR, TRC)</p>	<p>-Ensure <b>Data Sovereignty</b> is established as part of the process where clear control and power must sit with the Survivor (NCTR).</p> <p>-The <b>Archiving Strategy</b> should be considered early in the process to</p>

	<p>respect this within the approach to truth telling (NCTR, QTC, Waitangi Tribunal).</p> <p>-The truth process must be seen as <b>independent</b> and <b>led or co-led by skilled Indigenous professionals</b>, supported by the Crown. The principled and robust process should be designed to withstand scrutiny (Waitangi Tribunal).</p> <p>-<b>Indigenous people</b> should lead the <b>truth statement gathering process</b> to build trust and respect. Resourcing the project for success is fundamental and may need to evolve as the process progresses (Sami Truth Commission).</p> <p>-<b>International collaboration</b> opportunities when doing truth telling, justice and reconciliation seeking best practice and varying views of the opportunity.</p>	<p>-<b>Cultural artefacts</b> support Truth Telling and healing, this can include traditional medicine and practice (NCTR, MOA).</p> <p>-<b>Self-healing</b> through reflection, research and expressions through various art forms support a journey of healing (Biology Race Institute)</p> <p>-After the truth telling process, what happens next in the <b>healing journey must be carefully defined</b> to ensure that re-traumatisation is minimalised as an outcome to the process. The process itself re-traumatizes so important healing supports are in place over the long term (NCTR).</p> <p>-Collections and museums are <b>training teams that interact with visitors to support people experiencing trauma</b>, that could be triggered through collections and exhibitions, ensuring <b>cultural safety</b> is offered to visitors (Museum of Vancouver).</p>	<p>ensure the recording of stories and their future use has been planned and considered (NCTR). Archiving should sit with <b>Indigenous led Institutions</b> and its use determined by the people impacted (Sami Truth Commission).</p> <p>-Understand the <b>mechanics of Government</b> through having expertise in the team to ensure outcomes can be progressed at a rate Governments' can accommodate. Aim to <b>minimise bureaucracy</b> as part of the process (QTC).</p> <p>-Government's must commit and honour the reparations <b>promised as part</b> of the truth process (TRC).</p> <p>-Building <b>informed 'bridges'</b> between Government and Indigenous community which incorporates cultural practices in the way they work (Te Arawhiti)</p> <p>-<b>Curation teams of exhibitions and collections</b> where the story is weighted from an Indigenous perspective, should be Indigenous-led (or co-led) (National Archive of NZ, Te Papa).</p>
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			<p><b>-Indigenous cultural and collection protocols</b> should be led by Indigenous people, including reclaiming coloniser collections that in previous generations, harmed or categorised people (Ajjite Sami Museum).</p> <p>-Leaders supporting truth and healing must remind themselves of their privilege and their responsibility – which is that a museum/archiving environment has traditionally been the gatekeeper / owner and is now evolving to <b>facilitator / enabler</b> (MOA)</p> <p><b>-Ownership and access to collections</b> focused on <b>culture and truth</b> provides a new relevance for museums to activate collections and become a living space. Understanding the cultural significance of collections as they activate continues to build the relevance of collections management (MOA)</p> <p>-Understanding that collections represent a completely different context for Indigenous people is</p>
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			<p>fundamental, including that <b>many items are still 'living'</b> (MOA)</p> <p><b>-Youth and grassroots movements</b> – in particular, the Sami Youth movement have been a powerful force for change and maintain political pressure.</p>
<p><b>Kambarang – Season of birth</b></p> <p><b>DELIVERY</b></p>	<p>-Leading Truth and Treaty work is challenging and complex. <b>Leadership succession and rotation</b> is important and models empowering leaders to re-calibrate between the intense cycles (Ti Arawhiti)</p> <p>-Choose you team to do the work with an <b>activist mentality</b>. They must demonstrate both resilience and determination for the work of liberation (NCTR, Mandela Foundation).</p> <p>-At the conclusion of the process, it's important to <b>return to community to fact check</b> accounts of truth to ensure the process is transparent and respectful (QTC)</p> <p>-There should be a capacity for <b>truth gathering to continue</b> when people are wanting and ready to do</p>	<p><b>-Broaden stakeholder access</b> to the truth process through public forums / broadcast mediums (NCTR – televised).</p> <p>-Make space and time in the community to <b>transition from darkness to light</b> will aid the healing process (NCTR).</p> <p>-Support for <b>vicarious trauma</b> for those who are indirectly impacted or support the truth gathering process, including Statement Gatherers.</p> <p><b>-Formal Government Apologies</b> are an important component of acknowledging past wrongs and start the healing journey (QTC).</p>	<p><b>-Build truth into ongoing engagement</b> by sharing truth as part of the experience, creating impact and reflection for the visitor by just entering the space (Apartheid Museum)</p> <p>-When people leave Truth sites, leave them <b>with deeper questions to consider</b> and their role in the future (Human Rights Museum Canada, Apartheid Museum)</p> <p>-Museums can act as <b>agency of change</b> rather than purely memorials to the past. Providing a <b>safe place</b> for the truth to be heard and revealed ensures healing can commence, no matter how hard those truths are to hear (Canadian Museum of Human Rights).</p> <p>-Institutions are maturing in their truth and reconciliation journey</p>



	<p>so, to ensure Commissions are responding to peoples readiness (TRC, Tutu Foundation).</p> <p>-In Truth Commission of scale and important, the importance of an <b>independent audit oversight</b> cannot be underestimated (TRC)).</p>		<p>prioritising <b>education and an active repatriation program</b> prioritising <b>decolonisation</b> of collections and practice (Museum of Vancouver, MOA).</p>
<p><b>Birak – season of the young</b></p> <p><b>DOCUMENTATION NEW AND INFORMATIVE</b></p>			<p><b>-Truth Telling Reports</b> are important documents for the next generation but also for the broader non-Indigenous population to learn of colonial impact. Their collation and curation is important as a source of truth (Waitangi Tribunal).</p>
<p><b>Bunuru – Adolescence</b></p> <p><b>TEACHING AND INFORMING FOR THE PAST, PRESENT AND PREPARING FOR FUTURE CHANGE</b></p>		<p>-Healing models should be <b>culturally and trauma informed</b> and well communicated to survivors. Acknowledgement that trauma can be delayed, therefore, healing provision needs to be planned over several years (NCTR).</p> <p>-For all Indigenous communities we interviewed, <b>decisions are framed around future generations</b>. The leaders seek for the process to support a return to de-colonise systems for their people, providing re-education and pride in identity</p>	<p>The Museum / Memorium environments plays a key role in <b>social justice</b> and continuing culture and language (Te Papa, Sami Museum, Jokkmokk, Race Biology Institute, Courtroom 600 Nuremburg).</p> <p>-Ensuring accessibility to these sites <b>through minimising</b> fees or having free access is key to ensuring access is open to all to understand truth and history (Flossenburg, Germany)</p> <p>-Think sustainably as to <b>the future use</b> of the truth process so the</p>

		<p>and care for the environment (Waitangi Tribunal).</p>	<p>framework can be designed accordingly (Mandela Foundation, Indian Residential School Dialogue Centre),</p> <p><b>-Elder in residence and Elder Circles</b> are important structural models in museum environments to ensure a First Nations lens and narrative is shared. Without those voices the Truth can become sanitised and colonised (Canadian Museum of Human Rights).</p>
<p><b>Djeran – season of Adulthood</b></p> <p><b>TAKING FULL RESPONSIBILITY AND ENACTING</b></p>	<p>-An important component of the Truth process is an <b>apology from the Crown</b>, which acknowledges the most serious impacts of colonisation on Indigenous people (Waitangi Tribunal, QIT)</p> <p>-The truth telling process should not be cross examined as it's <b>not a legal process, rather, a healing one</b> and should not be adversary in nature (Tutu Foundation, South Africa).</p> <p>-Presenting the truth <b>in dual language</b> builds knowledge, education and social skills (National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation Canada, QIT, Sami Truth Commission ).</p>	<p>-Truth Telling creates <b>societal level healing</b> for those hearing others' experiences. Through the act of truth telling, stories of people who have connection are heard and shared, often supporting the healing of people intergenerationally.</p> <p><b>-Acknowledging history</b> provides important context for people and communities impacted and provides a pathway forward.</p> <p>-Truth without justice, where perpetrators are protected within a process should not be allowed. <b>Justice is fundamental</b> to the truth and healing process (National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation</p>	<p>-The <b>ground must be well prepared</b> for what's to come in a post truth telling environment to ensure there the change Indigenous people are seeking can be supported.</p> <p>-Deeply learning through each Truth and Treaty making process and are encouraging of <b>innovative practice</b> with the recent example being the <i>Te Urewera Act</i> (Ti Arawhiti, New Zealand).</p> <p>-Embedding <b>into national curriculum and Education frameworks</b> to ensure the truth is sustained for future generations (Te Papa, Nuremburg Trials, Flossenburg Concentration Camp, Truth and</p>

	<p>-The importance the report being <b>accessible</b> to the people and community who shared and in addition, an <b>Implementation Plan</b> to guide outcomes (QTC).</p>	<p>Canada, Truth Reconciliation Commission, South Africa).</p> <p>-By <b>holding perpetrators to account</b> a community / country can move forward and define its future vision (Nuremburg is now the <i>City of Human Rights and Peace</i>).</p> <p>Providing <b>care, training, and economic opportunities</b> for those impacted by being a disadvantaged minority, or suffering poverty, aides the healing journey. Economic empowerment is a fundamental driver in reconciliation (Amy Foundation).</p>	<p>Reconciliation Commission, South Africa).</p> <p><b>Days of celebration, commemoration and remembrance</b> engage the community in the history and re-engage in the truth (Waitangi Day, Reconciliation Day Canada).</p> <p><b>Access to digital tools</b> prioritises truth telling and access for future generations through interactive tools capturing truth stories in Canada’s truth commission (Indian Residential School Dialogue Centre, Canada Museum of Human Rights).</p>
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