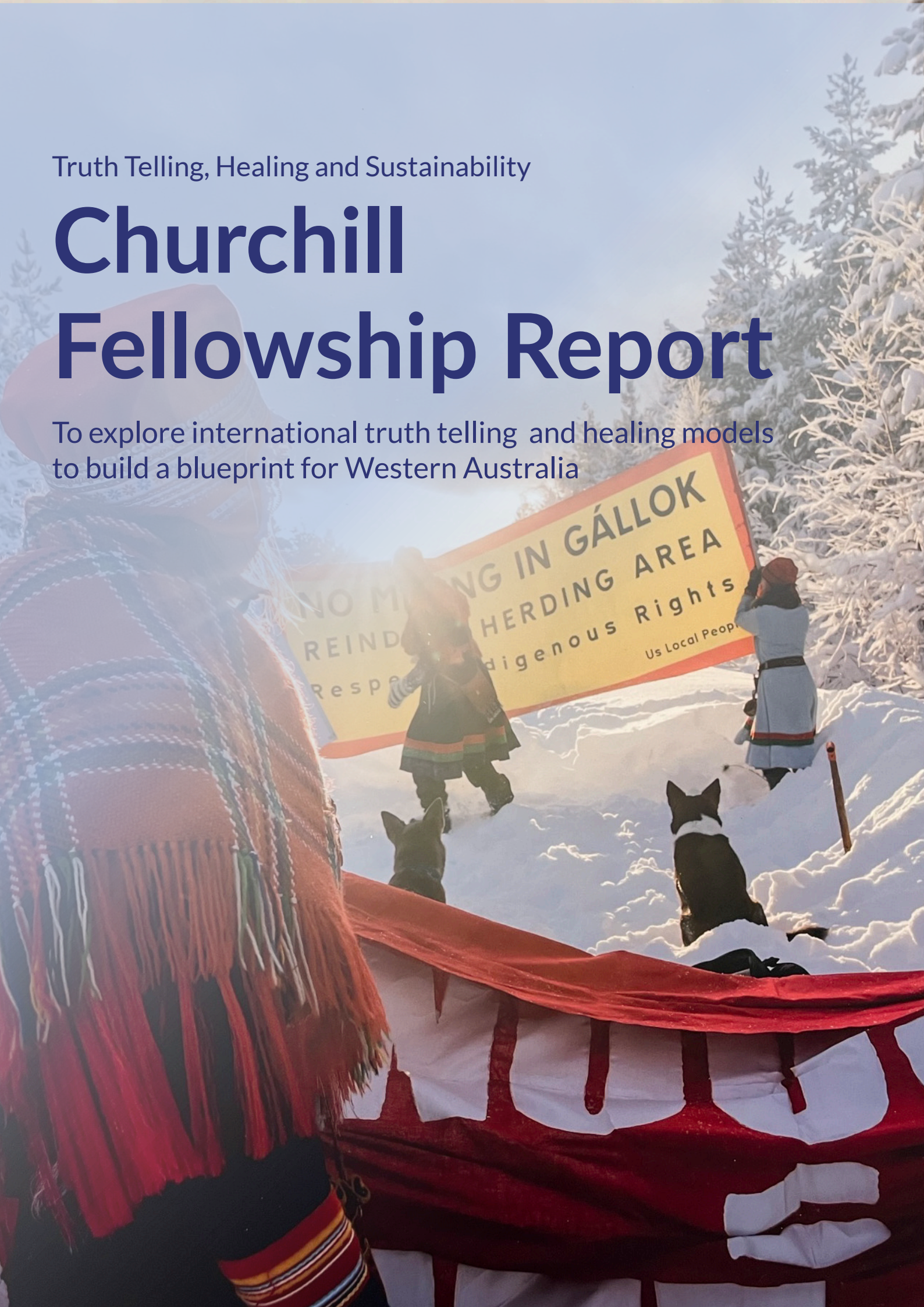


Truth Telling, Healing and Sustainability

# Churchill Fellowship Report

To explore international truth telling and healing models  
to build a blueprint for Western Australia





**Winston  
Churchill Trust**

*Learn globally, inspire locally.*

## Indemnity Clause

### The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust

**Explore international truth telling and healing models to build a blueprint for Western Australia  
Report by Robyn Smith Walley and Jody Nunn, Churchill Fellows 2022 Churchill Fellowship to explore  
international models of truth telling, healing and sustainability.**

We understand that the Churchill Trust may publish this Report, either in hard copy or on the internet or both, and consent to such publication. We indemnify the Churchill Trust against any loss, costs or damages it may suffer arising out of any claim or proceedings made against the Trust in respect of or arising out of the publication of any Report Submitted to the Trust and which the Trust places on a website for access over the internet. We also warrant that our Final Report is original and does not infringe the copyright of any person, or contain anything which is, or the incorporation of which into the Final Report is, actionable for defamation, a breach of any privacy law or obligation, breach of confidence, contempt of court, passing-off or contravention of any other private right or of any law.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'RS Walley'.

Robyn Smith-Walley

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Nunn'.

Jody Nunn

## **Report by**

Robyn Smith Walley (Noongar Community Person)  
and Jody Nunn (CEO, Reconciliation WA)

Churchill Fellows 2022  
Travelled in July & August 2023

Awarded by The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust

### **Warning**

*Indigenous people are advised that there is some culturally sensitive information and references in this report that some may find difficult and challenging. We acknowledge intergenerational trauma and the impacts of colonisation on Indigenous people globally and hope this report goes some way to take learnings from truth processes around the world to advance reconciliation and healing.*

# CONTENTS

|                                     |    |
|-------------------------------------|----|
| Indemnity Clause                    | 02 |
| Acknowledgments                     | 05 |
| Introduction                        | 06 |
| Contact Details                     | 06 |
| Key Words                           | 08 |
| Report overview / Executive Summary | 10 |
| Itinerary                           | 19 |
| Research                            | 20 |
| New Zealand                         | 21 |
| Canada                              | 30 |
| Germany                             | 41 |
| Sweden                              | 45 |
| South Africa                        | 51 |
| Australia                           | 61 |
| Conclusions and recommendations     | 62 |

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Thank you to the Winston Churchill Trust for supporting both of us to undertake this important research together. It was a new approach to support an Indigenous and Non-Indigenous partnership – but the importance of this work viewed through a dual lens was incredibly powerful and cannot be understated. We thank the Trust for being brave and supporting us both and we hope this lays the foundation for other culturally beneficial partnerships into the future.

We thank all those who supported our journey through meeting with us in all corners of the world – the generosity of culture, knowledge sharing, and kindness shown was deeply appreciated.

We treasured the heartfelt stories and your trust in us to responsibly carry your truth forward. We respect in many cases the stories are still impacting people and communities and the trauma lives on in the next generation. Thus, why intergenerational healing is so important.

We are also very clear that data sovereignty and ownership of stories belongs to Indigenous People, so we have been very considered as to what is included in our report. To Aboriginal Productions and Promotions and Reconciliation WA, our day jobs, who supported our time in releasing us to do this research, we are sincerely thankful. To our families that loved and supported us on this journey and ‘picked up the slack’ in our homes – we love and appreciate you deeply.

Giving us this time was a rare gift and a life changing experience.

We pay our final acknowledgement to Indigenous communities worldwide who continue to fight for truth and justice. Some are more advanced on that journey, and some face challenges that continue to oppress, but united, we will pursue the journey towards truth, healing, and reconciliation.

We hope this report and supporting framework that is gifted to you all – will provide momentum in communities worldwide for people to move from intergenerational trauma to intergenerational healing. That is our heartfelt wish.

Robyn Smith Walley and Jody Nunn

# INTRODUCTION

This Co-Fellowship seeks to understand the intricacies and instruments of successful Indigenous truth telling and healing through observing and analysing successful practice, understanding the environment where reconciliation outcomes have been achieved, listening to the lived experience of those who participated, and modelling how outcomes can be sustained over the longer term.

The Fellowship has been established as a reconciliation partnership between Noongar community Leader Robyn Smith Walley and Non-Aboriginal Leader Jody Nunn, who is the CEO of Reconciliation Western Australia. We seek to ensure that this important research and knowledge, conducted through a dual lens, creates a blueprint for Western Australia's truth telling approach and beyond.

We acknowledge and thank the Churchill Fellowship for supporting both an Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal partnership to complete this research. It was an important element of its success.

# CONTACT DETAILS

This report was prepared by Robyn Smith Walley and Jody Nunn.

For further information these Fellows can be contacted via their page on the Churchill trust website here:

<https://www.churchilltrust.com.au/fellow/jody-nunn-wa-2022/>

<https://www.churchilltrust.com.au/fellow/robyn-smith-walley-wa-2022/>





# KEYWORDS

**Boodja: (Australia)** – Noongar word for country / land.

**First Nations: (Australia)** – collective term for people from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background/ heritage.

**Iwi: (Māori, New Zealand)** – Tribal Group.

**Noongar (Australia)** – Aboriginal people of south west Western Australia, made up of 13 nations.

**Noongar Six Seasons: (Noongar, Western Australia)** - have always been a part of Aboriginal life and like time itself, the Six Noongar Seasons represent a predictable timetable of foreseeable events. Acknowledgement that nothing is unconnected, and each change is being influenced by the last.

Animals, insects and Noongar people have always relied on this process, moving across the land directed by the weather and location of available foods. Plants flower at the same times of year, bearing fruit and reproducing according to this endless cycle.

**The six seasons include:**

- Birak (December - January)
- Bunuru (February - March)
- Djeran (April - May)
- Makuru (June - July)
- Djilba (August - September)
- Kambarang (October - November)

**Pākehā: (Māori, New Zealand) – Colonisers / Non-Māori people**

**Ubuntu: (South Africa) (Zulu pronunciation: [ùbùnt'ù])** is a Bantu term meaning 'humanity'.

It's sometimes translated as "I am because we are" (also "I am because you are"), or "humanity towards others"

Wadjela: (Noongar, Western Australia) word for 'white person'





# REPORT OVERVIEW/ EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Churchill Fellowship Report was compiled by Robyn Smith Walley, a Wilmen, Kaneang Noongar women from the Southwest of Western Australia and Jody Nunn, a settler wadjela (white person) who is first generation Australian, as a partnership. Robyn and Jody were awarded a joint Churchill Fellowship in 2022 and travelled in July and August 2023. The theme of the research was to explore international truth telling and healing models to build a blueprint for Western Australia. The focus was to look at truth telling, healing and sustainability models through our Fellowship and build an open-source 'Many Truths' framework for reference. We have requested permission to use the Noongar Six Seasons which represent the Indigenous lifecycle of Indigenous people in Noongar Boodja (country) in Western Australia that can be applied to many processes. This provides a frame of reference as organisations and communities mature through their truth telling journey; it should be applied relative to the local circumstances.

The Fellowship sought to understand the intricacies and instruments of Indigenous truth telling and healing through observing successful practice, understanding the environment where reconciliation outcomes have been achieved, listening to lived experience of those who participated, and modelling how outcomes can be sustained for the longer term.

In 2023, the State Government of Western Australia funded a significant commitment towards truth telling, ceremony and memorialising the confronting history of incarceration and death of thousands, mainly men on Wadjemup (Rottneest Island) off the coast of Walyalup (Fremantle) in Western Australia. The men came from the far reaches of the State, often on foot or by boats following the rugged Western Australian coastline to face slavery, disease and often death on the island. Wadjemup is now known as the largest Aboriginal Deaths in custody site in the Southern Hemisphere and is unfinished business for local Aboriginal people. Now

a holiday island, the dark history of the Wadjemup has not been fully understood or told. Through significant funding from the Western Australian Government, a powerful truth and memorialisation process is underway.

For over thirty years, the Aboriginal community has fought for recognition and truth. The State's first funded truth process is now commencing and will look to educate and engage the community broadly. The lessons to be learned through the Wadjemup process will form a blueprint for truth telling, healing and sustainability for Western Australia.

But are there other inspiring ways? Our research took us to New Zealand, Canada, Germany, Sweden, and South Africa to look at large truth telling processes. In four out of five of those locations, we looked at major Indigenous Truth Commissions and in Germany we examined the non-Indigenous process that occurred post-World War Two after the Nuremberg Trials. In New Zealand we looked at the Waitangi Tribunal which, while it is a Treaty process, is rooted in a powerful truth telling model. In Canada we focused on the National Truth Commission into Residential School survivors, and a smaller regional Qikiqtani Truth Commission. The latter investigated the slaughter of thousands of dogs by the Canadian Government, an act that impacted on and impoverished Arctic Inuit communities. In Sweden we looked at the Saami Parliament and Swedish Truth Commission process, which is underway. Finally, in South Africa we looked at the outcomes of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In all countries we spent time in archives, museums, prison islands, and places of memory as well as foundations that were continuing important work. To focus our efforts, our research sought out international truth telling processes, healing and places of memory and archive, so we could bring those learnings back to Western Australia.

We hope the impact of this research may be far reaching and prove useful to Indigenous people and organisations who generously shared their knowledge, specifically on Noongar Boodja in Western Australia. The paper and framework have been written to support governments, organisations and individuals, offer examples of best practice and learnings from those who have complete or are progressing current Truth Commissions.



*Pictured: Jody Nunn and Robyn Smith-Walley*

# TRUTH TELLING

The fundamentals of best practice in Truth Telling include the following:

**An absolute fundamental is to ensure Truth Telling processes will leave the individual and community ‘better off’ as a result of sharing their truth.**

Genuine truth-telling can be derailed by colonial barriers, government bureaucracy, time pressure, budget constraints and lack of justice. The result can mean Indigenous people are not left better off, and may even retraumatise people by asking them to share their truth. It is fundamental that a truth telling process uplifts, heals, and provides justice for people through the mechanisms below:

- Early engagement with communities and programs being culturally led is of vital importance.
- Truth ‘speaking’ principles should be prioritised as an agreed approach – for example, they must be accessible, survivor centred, protected, create no harm, trauma informed, inclusive, respectful, and voluntary.
- Scrutinize scope and timelines to ensure they are achievable and consider the demands on Cultural Leaders who may have many cultural obligations.
- Identify Cultural Leadership / Authority to lead / guide / advise about laws, customs, language and cultural obligations of their tribes and regions.
- Understand cultural processes of decision making and structure and respect this within the approach to truth telling.
- Truth telling work is challenging and complex and requires a process of Leadership succession and rotation to ensure leaders can deal with the intensity of this work.
- Build capacity by identifying members of the Leadership with strong government connections and an understanding of their processes.
- The truth process must be seen as independent and led or co-led by skilled Indigenous professionals, supported by Government. The principles should be designed to withstand scrutiny.
- Indigenous people should lead the truth statement gathering process to build trust and respect. Resourcing the project for success is fundamental and may need to evolve as the program progresses.

# HEALING

Healing requires an aligned process to Truth Telling and is often inextricably linked:

**Make space and time in the community to transition from darkness to hope to aid the healing process.**

We observed that supporting individuals and families sharing their truth was essential and led to an arc of recovery. The best processes involved the correct cultural supports in place, longitudinal care for those who were re-traumatised, sharing their truth for the first time or, as family members, hearing their truths for the first time. The healing models established through truth commissions globally included:

- A commitment to truth telling taking place in a culturally safe place and preferably on traditional lands or on country / in community.
- Acknowledgement that trauma can be delayed, requiring longitudinal healing provision ie counselling in community that spans several years (many healing programs were 5+ years).
- Ensure language options are available to those telling their truth. Their testimony may – with permission- be stored in language collections and archives for ongoing learning and education. Language translated live provides a powerful unity among the survivors and communities observing the process.
- The use of traditional and cultural healing methods may nurture people through trauma or re-traumatization.
- Honouring time in truth telling is important. Cultural processes require time for meaningful preparation amongst representative leaders and groups. Cultural and environmental factors need to be considered; the emotional intensity of work may also require breaks for healing..
- Formal government apologies are an important component of acknowledging past wrongs and may contribute toward the healing journey.
- Among all Indigenous communities we interviewed, decisions are framed around future generations. Truth-

telling encompassed larger goals – like decolonising systems that affect their people, increasing pride in identity and care for the environment.

- Justice is fundamental to the truth, healing and reconciliation process. Truth without justice, where perpetrators are protected from any consequence, is hollow.
- The healing journey should include care, training, and economic opportunities for those impacted by disadvantage or poverty. Economic empowerment is a fundamental driver in reconciliation.

For the broader community, truth telling and healing offer the following benefits:

- Acknowledging history provides important context for people and communities and encourages a pathway forward.
- Broadening stakeholder access to the truth through public forums, formal and accessible documentation, and broadcast media.
- Truth telling creates societal healing for those hearing other people's experiences. Through the act of truth telling, stories of people who have connection are heard and shared and can often supporting the healing of people intergenerationally.

Truth telling is fundamentally as a record of a nation's history; it serves as a reminder of lessons that should not be repeated. However, a fundamental part of the process is justice, without which true reconciling within society cannot occur. Truth without justice makes it fundamentally difficult to reconcile. occur.

We witnessed multiple examples of this requirement for justice. The most powerful example was our revisiting of the Nuremburg Trials in Germany, which led condemnation of the atrocities of the Nazi regime, and the trials of its leaders. Within a generation, the City of Nuremburg established itself as a City of Peace and Human Rights.

Ongoing commitment to historical acceptance of past wrongs that has powerfully changed the nation's narrative. In Australia's case, that includes a different element of colonial oppression, but the important principle of historic acceptance applies to us.



# SUSTAINABILITY

How to make a truth telling process that is lasting and long term? We looked at a range of sustainability opportunities that could deepen the impact of a formal truth process.

- Determine a 20-year strategy for the truth telling process and design a framework and archiving approach
- Require governments to commit to the full process, including reparations promised as part of the truth process.
- Ensure Data Sovereignty is established, whereby clear control and power over content sits with the Survivor / Indigenous community.
- Archiving, Cultural and Collection Strategy and Protocols should ensure the recording of stories and their future use has been planned and considered. Archiving should sit with Indigenous led Institutions and its use determined by survivors.
- Create protocols so that truth telling material is added to national curriculum and education frameworks to ensure the truth is sustained for future generations.
- Support youth and grassroots movements –the Sami Youth movement in Sweden is a powerful force for change and it maintains political pressure for continued change.
- Curation teams of exhibitions and collections should be Indigenous led (or co-led) where the story is presented from an Indigenous perspective).
- Leaders supporting truth and healing must remind themselves of their privilege and their responsibility to be a facilitator / enabler for other voices, not a gatekeeper of history.
- Leaders supporting truth and healing must remind themselves of their privilege and their responsibility to be a facilitator / enabler for other voices, not a gatekeeper of history.
- Understanding that collections hold a completely different meaning for Indigenous people is fundamental, as many items are considered 'living' and carry cultural responsibilities.
- Ownership and access to collections focused on culture and truth provide a new relevance for museums to activate collections and become a living space.

The collection, memorialisation and display of truth perspectives must have the following elements:

- Museums can act as agencies of change rather than purely memorials to the past. They can provide a safe place for the truth to be heard and revealed.
- Access to these sites must be secured through minimising fees or having free access.
- Elder in residence and Elder Circles are important structural models in museum settings, to ensure a First Nations lens and narrative is shared.
- Build the museum / activation experience by sharing truth as part of the experience, creating impact and reflection for the visitor by just entering the space. A notable example was the Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg, where on entry you entered on a 'white' or black' ticket through different turnstiles to commence your museum experience.
- Truth Telling Reports are important documents for the next generation but also for the broader non-Indigenous population to learn of colonial impact. Their collation and curation are important as a source of truth for future generations.
- Access to digital tools prioritises truth telling through interactive tools capturing stories in Truth Commissions.

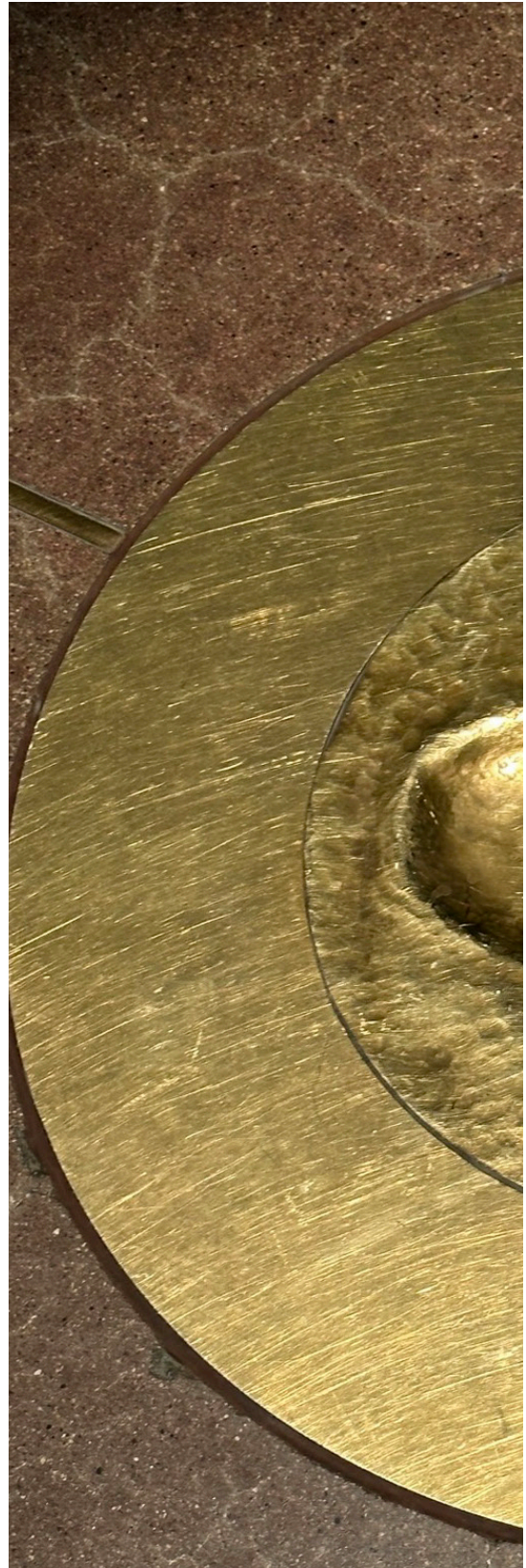
School Dialogue Centre in Vancouver, where families and schools' interactive histories were digitised for broad access and are constantly being added to as new information becomes publicly available.

- When people leave Truth sites or Museums, they should leave them with deeper questions to consider and their role in sharing truth.
- Days of celebration, commemoration and remembrance engage the community in the history and re-engage in the truth with examples being Waitangi Day New Zealand and Truth and Reconciliation Day in Canada.
- We have created a 'Many Truths' Framework from our learnings about truth commissions globally to support Indigenous people, communities, organisations and governments. This framework is open source and provides a guide in planning and implementation. It is aimed to draw on the wisdom of those who have walked the truth telling, healing and sustainability journey. Most importantly, it aims to ensure learnings from history can be carried forward so we build a civil society that honours truth.

**For further information, please contact**

**Jody Nunn [jody@recwa.org.au](mailto:jody@recwa.org.au)**

**[jodyennun@gmail.com](mailto:jodyennun@gmail.com) or +61 408979319)**





# ITINERARY

Our Churchill Fellowship Journey enabled us to meet the following leaders and organisations which we would like to acknowledge their contribution to our research.

| Date   | Country     | City                    | Who                               | Position   | Organisation  |
|--------|-------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| 4-Jul  | Australia   | Melbourne               | Jidah Clark                       | Director, Yoorook Justice Commission Response and Engagement       | Department of Premier and Cabinet, Victorian Government |
| 4-Jul  | Australia   | Melbourne               | Andrew Gunstone                   | Director / Associate Deputy Vice Chancellor                        | Centre for Truth, Justice and Reconciliation            |
| 5-Jul  | New Zealand | Wellington              | Zoe Roland and Team               | Manager, Public Experience   | National Library Museum - He Tohu Exhibition            |
| 5-Jul  | New Zealand | Wellington              | Lillian Anderson                  | Chief Executive Officer and Executive Team                         | Waitangi Tribunal                                       |
| 6-Jul  | New Zealand | Wellington              | Wainright and Māori Land Court    | Judges   | Māori Land Court  |
| 7-Jul  | New Zealand | Wellington              | Thomas                            | Judges   | Te Papa Tongarewa (Museum)                              |
| 8-Jul  | New Zealand | Waitangi Treaty Grounds | Courtney Johnston                 | Tumu Whakarae, Chief Executive                                     | Waitangi Treaty Grounds                                 |
| 10-Jul | Canada      | Winnipeg                | Jennifer Wood                     | Survivor, NCTR Government Relations / Community Engagement Liaison | National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation            |
| 11-Jul | Canada      | Winnipeg                | Trina McKellep & Pemala Nornose   | Statement Gatherers / Education Officer                            | National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation            |
| 11-Jul | Canada      | Winnipeg                | Logan Nadeau                      | Museum Tour  | National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation            |
| 12-Jul | Canada      | Winnipeg                | Robert Greene & Angeliki Aksalnik | Interpretive Program Developer                                     | Museum for Human Rights                                 |

|        |              |              |                               |  |  |
|--------|--------------|--------------|-------------------------------|--|--|
| 13-Jul | Canada       | Vancouver    | Hagar Idlout-Sudlovenick      | Manager,   | Qikiqtani Truth Commission                             |
| 17-Jul | Canada       | Vancouver    | Michelle Bryant-Gravelle      | Senior Director, Indigenous Relations              | City of Vancouver                                      |
| 19-Jul | Canada       | Vancouver    | Susan Roley and Team          | Director   | Museum of Anthropology, University of British Columbia |
| 19-Jul | Canada       | Vancouver    | Mauro Vescera & Jess Boon     | CEO / Community Outreach Coordinator               | Museum of Vancouver                                    |
| 24-Jul | Germany      | Nuremburg    | Axel Fischer                  | Research Associate                                 | Museums of Nuremberg Memorium                          |
| 24-Jul | Germany      | Nuremburg    | Martina Mittenhuber           | Manager, Human Rights & Equal Opportunities Office | City of Nuremberg                                      |
| 25-Jul | Germany      | Nuremburg    | Dennis Forster                | Scientific Assistant                               | Flossenburg Concentration Camp                         |
| 31-Jul | Sweden       | Kiruna       | Stefan Mikaelsson             | Museum Visit                                       | Sami Parliament  |
| 1-Aug  | Sweden       | Kiruna       | Fredrik Österling             | CEO  | Samediggi - Sami Parliament                            |
| 2-Aug  | Sweden       | Jokkmokk     | Katarina Pirak Sikku          | Artist / Researcher                                | Samediggi - Sami Parliament                            |
| 6-Aug  | South Africa | Cape Town    | Kevin Chaplin                 | CEO  | Amy Foundation   |
| 8-Aug  | South Africa | Cape Town    | Janet Jobson and Phumi Nhlapo | CEO / COO  | Tutu Foundation  |
| 11-Aug | South Africa | Johannesburg | Verne Harris                  | Acting CEO   | Nelson Mandela Foundation                              |

# RESEARCH

This Fellowship seeks to understand the intricacies and instruments of successful Indigenous truth telling through observing and analysing successful practice, understanding the environment where reconciliation outcomes have been achieved, listen to the lived experience of those who participated, and model how outcomes can be sustained for the longer term.

The Fellowship has been established as a reconciliation partnership between Noongar community woman Robyn Smith Walley and Non-Aboriginal leader Jody Nunn, who is the CEO of Reconciliation WA, to ensure a dual lens enables this important research and knowledge for Western Australia's truth telling approach.

Robyn and Jody travelled to five countries (New Zealand, Canada, Germany, Sweden, and South Africa) to explore those who have led significant truth telling processes to learn from their context and outcomes.

Their experience and findings below provide insights into background, reflections, impact, and findings to provide context for a truth telling framework.



# AOTEAROA / NEW ZEALAND

## National Library, National Archive, National Film and Television Archive

Zoe Roland, Manager, Public Experience and colleagues

<https://natlib.govt.nz/he-tohu>

### Background

The National Archive hosts the He Tohu which is a permanent exhibition of three iconic constitutional documents that shape Aotearoa New Zealand.

- 1835 He Whakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Nu Tirenī – Declaration of Independence of the United Tribes of New Zealand
- 1840 Te Tiriti o Waitangi – Treaty of Waitangi
- 1893 Women’s Suffrage Petition – Te Petihana Whakamana Pōti Wahine

These fragile and priceless documents are stored in the document room, which is inspired by the form and function of a waka huia – a treasure container. This state-of-the-art conservation space is designed to preserve the documents for generations to come in an exhibition called He Tohu.

We met with the curatorial and education team that worked with Māori leaders to ensure these key national documents / treasures were preserved for future generations. The importance of this work in our research context, focuses on process and sustainability.

### Reflections

Māori Leadership was fundamental in the approach to build the He Tohu exhibition. One of the first priorities by the exhibition Project Manager was to appoint Hinerangi Himiona as a Principal Advisor, Māori, responsible for the mauri (life force, special nature, source of emotions – the essential quality and vitality of a being or entity [Te Aka Māori Dictionary]) of the exhibition.

This did two things: recognised the taonga (treasures – the documents in the exhibition) as living things to be cared for accordingly and gave the exhibition project team the

mandate and requirement to engage with Treaty partners in te ao Māori (the Māori world).

Hinerangi convened an advisory group, the Māori Technical Advisory Group. There were ten members representing different Iwi (tribes) and locations around the country, an equal blend of men and women, each with special expertise in areas relevant to the exhibition. These included historians both academic and public, education specialists, cultural and storytelling experts, academics in other fields, and language experts. This group pushed for truthful narratives to be created particularly about the Treaty and He Whakaputanga (the Declaration of Independence) because the team creating the exhibition worked for the Crown, the other half of the Treaty partnership. Hinerangi, as the Principal Advisor Māori, helped develop the concept and steer the creation of the content for the exhibition, and more importantly the relationships required to make that flourish, through to completion.

The Crown regularly engages with the Iwi Leaders’ Group, a group of elected and appointed tribal leaders who meet regularly on pan-Māori matters. This group sent an esteemed legal expert, historian, thinker and national treasure, the late Moana Jackson, to ‘investigate’ the exhibition in its early planning stages to advise whether the Iwi Leaders’ Group should engage with this kaupapa (topic, issue).

Narratives about the Treaty have traditionally been skewed towards perpetuating the Crown view. Mātua (elder, sir) Moana spent time and advised the Iwi Leaders’ Group that they could proceed on working with this group. This set the tone between the Crown and Iwi at the highest level, filtering downwards, a spirit of cooperation and mutual expectation.

The Crown and Māori have a long history of miscommunication and have difficulty finding common ground. Māori society is arranged differently, and some Māori methods of decision-making would have been appropriate and excellent for He Tohu, but it is difficult to do

this within the public service/Crown culture. The importance of establishing the appropriate cultural authority to oversee process was fundamental to its success. Particularly if direction and funding is coming from Government or a non-Indigenous entity.

The Pākehā (white) curator believed the lead curator for such an exhibition should have been Māori and the development approach to the exhibition should have been Māori-led (or co-led). This enables a smoother process, where relationships can be established more easily and deeply, and the Crown would have demonstrated a real commitment to truth-telling and championing an Indigenous expert – handing over some power.

Te Reo Māori (the Māori language) experts were appointed to tell the Māori story of the documents in the exhibition in their own way. The English exhibition text and the Māori text are not translations of each other. Writers in each language were given the same key messages and each could make their own way through those stories, highlighting the important content.

In this way Indigenous truth-telling was able to be autonomously managed in the Māori language, and many times covers different elements to the English text.

There has been significant learning historically in Aotearoa / New Zealand in relation to the Treaty of Waitangi and the translation to English which has been contested during Treaty negotiations in relation to the interpretation of sovereignty.

A key tension within the exhibition is that opinions about the Treaty vary widely and emotions about colonisation, breaches of the Treaty, equity of participation for Māori and broken promises by the Crown still run very high. The exhibition was developed in-house by a team of subject matter experts who are also public servants, agents of the Crown, and part of the public sector's code of conduct requires them to be 'politically neutral'.

A key element of He Tohu was to include film interviews showing perspectives of a very wide range of people. This also let participants, including many Indigenous experts, entertainers, activists, academics, 'ordinary' people, tell their truth and perspective.

All data is kept in Aotearoa / New Zealand, but there is currently no plan for generational transfer of ownership and clear data sovereignty. The key government information agencies including the National Archive have signed

agreements to promise to work together on data sovereignty issues with Māori in good faith.

## Experience and Findings

- Curation teams where the story is weighted from an Indigenous perspective, should be Māori-led (or co-led). This enables a smoother process, where relationships can be established more easily and deeply, and the Crown would have demonstrated a real commitment to truth-telling and championing an Indigenous expert – handing over some power.
- Honour language and consider the impact of dual interpretation of key themes approach versus a direct translation for those audiences engaging with the exhibition.
- Acknowledge independence of principles and process required when funded by the Crown / Government and enable this through clear principles.
- The importance of establishing the appropriate cultural authority to oversee the data sovereignty process is fundamental. Particularly if direction and funding is coming from Government or a non-Indigenous entity. This should be established before the program commences to ensure they provide guidance to the establishment of the project and its approach, structure, and documentation.

## Te Arawhiti - The Office for Māori Crown Relations

Lil Anderson, CEO and members of her Executive Team

<https://tearawhiti.govt.nz/>

## Background

Te Arawhiti is a Crown agency dedicated to fostering strong, ongoing, and effective relationships with Māori across Government. Te Arawhiti, means 'the bridge'. The name symbolises the bridge between Māori and the Crown, the past and the future, and the journey from grievance to partnership.

Te Arawhiti works to make the Crown a better Treaty partner, enabling effective engagement with Māori people on a range of issues, providing support and guidance for relationships between Māori and the Crown which are not focused on grievance, but which through effective partnership realise the true promise of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Te Arawhiti focuses on continuing the existing work of Te Kāhui Whakatau (Treaty Settlements), Te Kāhui Whakamana (Settlement Commitments), and Te Kāhui Takutai Moana (Marine and Coastal Areas) to complete historical Treaty settlements, ensure the commitments made in Treaty settlements endure and process applications under the Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act 2011.

### Reflections

Te Arawhiti, as stated, means ‘the bridge’. The great challenge of many governments supported Truth Telling processes is the lack of cultural context where chasms emerge between cultural protocols and the bureaucratic and colonised government structures. Te Arawhiti is a Crown agency but is positioned as the Māori Cultural Leaders for the public service through empowerment and the creation of opportunities. Most importantly, their partnership approach ensures they don’t become the oppressors they previously experienced.

CEO Lil Anderson spoke to the challenges of leading such work where there are significant partnerships to build and maintain across Crown and Māori relations. Her Executive Colleague is focused on educating Crown departments on the ‘Māori way’ and finding constructive and informed partnership approaches.

She spoke of two Māori cultural states where we find the balance between relationships and restoration and how important these are to work symbiotically.

- Tapu – a formal process where there is a state of intensity.
- Noa – a restoring phase which involves just being and relaxing.

We focused significantly on leadership, and the challenges of such intense work. They spoke of Kuaka which interprets to the flock of leadership. Te Arawhiti has a CEO and four Deputy CEOs that manage the flow of the agency and aim to sustain leadership for the important relationship-based work they complete.

As they build a bridge into the New Zealand public sector there is a base line of cultural knowledge that is expected. For example, the public sector was, prior to the change in Government, expected to learn the Māori language with the importance of place name pronunciation being vitally important in building respectful partnerships.

Whilst reconciliation is Te Arawhiti’s primary priority, often in other agencies it’s a low priority and the agency works across Crown departments to elevate this work as a priority.

Annual Reporting requirements across agencies require transparency in settlement commitments, cultural capability of leadership and capacity to continue the reconciliation journey.

In relation to their truth and treaty work, settlements can be channelled through the formal Tribunal process or directly to the Crown, through Te Arawhiti. Whilst the detail of the Treaty process is explored in more detail under the Waitangi Tribunal engagement below, each treaty includes an apology, cultural land settlement and financial settlement. In relation to the delivery of Treaty commitments there is a three-way database which includes accountabilities for Government, Iwi and Te Arawhiti (Agency). The Agency always seeks 100% compliance to demonstrate best practice of continuing Treaty delivery. Consistency in compliance across agencies is a challenge.

CEO Lil Anderson shared her appreciation of the continued graciousness extended by Māori leadership with the challenges of Treaty implementation. But it appears that impatience is creeping into Government and there is an urgency to complete the Treaty work. Success will be determined by the Treaty implementation being leader-led (both political and agency), genuine shared accountability between Crown and Iwi, and Crown cross-agency relationships and cultural learning.

Whilst challenging, there have been many examples of immense success with Māori now leading major organisations in their respective communities.

### Case Study: Te Urewera Act

The power of truth telling and treaty making, highlighting the connection to land and ancestors has been bought to light in the Te Urewera Act which as part of the Settlement with Tūhoe (Iwi) provided a path in both negotiations because it was able to neutralise the issue of land ownership.

The model accommodates both the economic view of land and resources as property and the cultural view of land and resources as being inseparable from people who have responsibilities for its care, protection, and management. The focus was on achieving redress that recognised the spiritual connection between the people and the landforms respectively, rather than solely the protection of nature itself. A key driver of the settlement was to change the lens through which these landforms are seen by people, that is, to change the way people interact and make decisions about them.

The purpose of the Act is to establish and preserve in perpetuity a legal identity and protected status for Te Urewera (mountain range and lakes) for its intrinsic worth, its distinctive natural and cultural values, the integrity of those values, and for its national importance, and in particular to:

a) Strengthen and maintain the connection between Tūhoe (Iwi) and Te Urewera;

b) Preserve as far as possible the natural features and beauty of Te Urewera, the integrity of its Indigenous ecological systems and biodiversity, its historical and cultural heritage; and

c) To provide for Te Urewera as a place for public use and enjoyment, for recreation, learning and spiritual reflection, and as an inspiration for all.

Keeping this purpose at the forefront of their minds was critical as attention turned to the development of the management plan for Te Urewera. The Te Urewera Act which reconnects Tūhoe with Te Urewera by giving Te Urewera its own legal identity and putting Tūhoe at the centre of the future government and management of their homelands. This shift has also been referred to as 'Me' Ownership.

c) To provide for Te Urewera as a place for public use and enjoyment, for recreation, learning and spiritual reflection, and as an inspiration for all.

Keeping this purpose at the forefront of their minds was critical as attention turned to the development of the management plan for Te Urewera. The Te Urewera Act which reconnects Tūhoe with Te Urewera by giving Te Urewera its own legal identity and putting Tūhoe at the centre of the future government and management of their homelands. This shift has also been referred to as 'Me' Ownership.

### Experience and Findings

- The work of Truth Telling and Treaty Making is an intense

process. Te Arawhiti was focused on leadership support and succession. Cross agency leadership is key to building continuity on this important work that requires deep partnerships with community. Te Arawhiti has a CEO and four Deputy CEOs who manage the flow of the agency and allows time for leaders to step in and out of the space based on cultural obligations and work, whilst managing continuity. Leading Truth and Treaty work is challenging and complex. Leadership succession and rotation is important and models empowering leaders to re-calibrate between the intense cycles of Truth and Treaty Making.

- Te Arawhiti prioritises building informed 'bridges' between the Crown and the Māori community which incorporates cultural practices in the way they work. They allocate a senior Māori resource who invests significant time in Crown agencies to build their cultural competency and stronger relationships.
- New Zealand Government officials were expected to have a competency in Māori language which strengthens the relationship and understanding between Māori and the Crown, although this has shifted post the recent election.
- Te Arawhiti prioritise that Truth Telling, and in turn Treaty making must leave Indigenous peoples better off through the process. In many examples internationally, this has not been the case, and this important question must be considered as part of any scoping process.
- Te Arawhiti are deeply learning through each Truth and Treaty making process and encourage innovative practice with the recent example being the Te Urewera Act as an example of the increased sophistication and understanding of Treaty making and ancestral and land connections.

### Waitangi Tribunal

Judge Danien Stone, Judge Kerry Wainwright,

Judge Alana Thomas

<https://www.waitangitribunal.govt.nz/>

### Background

Set up by the Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975, the Waitangi Tribunal is a permanent commission of inquiry that makes recommendations on claims brought by Māori relating to Crown Actions which breach the promises made in the Treaty of Waitangi, established in 1835.



The Treaty of Waitangi/Te Tiriti o Waitangi is central to everything that the Waitangi Tribunal does. As a standing commission of inquiry, the Waitangi Tribunal is tasked with determining whether Crown Actions or Omissions are in breach of Treaty principles. In addition, they now consider contemporary government applications of health, housing, education and justice systems and review whether those government systems are not continuing to oppress Māori people.

The Waitangi Tribunal has maintained 40 years of bipartisan support from the New Zealand Government and when interviewed, had completed 98 settlements with Iwi, the first being completed in 1995, with 38 settlements still to be completed (at the time of preparing this report). To date, the Waitangi Tribunal has heard and considered over 2,000 claims. The Tribunal anticipate the historical process will be completed within ten years, however with a recent change to a conservative Government, there is discussion to review and expediate the process.

### Reflections

Whilst The Waitangi Tribunal was a Crown initiated process, it is a powerful example of an independent body with a Māori led approach. For over forty years, the Tribunal has focused on prioritising independence, a culturally accessible and evolving practice with each settlement, and robust enough to withstand scrutiny.

The Tribunal process is led by the principles of working in partnership, working together in good faith, actively protecting Māori interests, redress, reciprocity, and equity.

To manage the breadth of history and potential claims, the Tribunal have sectioned the process into two clear time horizons:

- 1840-1992 – window for claim
- 1992 to present day – captured as nationally significant issue that look to change policy and outcomes for Māori people.

Each settlement process is completed on country and in the

traditional Marai Houses of the Māori people of that Iwi. Each Iwi's cultural processes and laws are unique, and the Tribunal Process respects, adapts and continues to respond to changes over time. The Iwi determine who are their representative speakers and knowledge holders, usually the Chiefs, and the right process to be followed.

The process itself is robust with several stages including

a claim process, research phase, which in the case of the tribunal looks back over 160 years, community hearings and then a tribunal report, which is gifted to the Iwi as a record of their truth. This process on average can take 3-4 years and, in some instances, up to ten. The Tribunal Judges reinforced that the process is as important as the outcome, and they honour each Iwi and its unique status and governance as part of this.

The Tribunal Report is incredibly detailed and provides a Truth document that is owned by the Iwi. However, the Tribunal Judges did lament that the rich history captured as part of the Tribunal hearings is often only observed and heard by the Māori people, whereas there are important learnings about the country's history that would be valuable to be heard by the Pākehā (non-Māori people) and the broader community.

The Waitangi Tribunal Reports have re-written New Zealand's history. The outcome of the Tribunal process is an apology from the Crown, a land settlement, and a financial settlement. The land settlement typically represents approximately 5% of the land that was originally lost through colonisation.

The current process has been focused on history, and now the Tribunal is turning their attention to Co-Papa – contemporary Truth Telling which investigates government systems that continue to oppress Māori people including health, housing and the justice system.

### Experience and Findings

- Each Tribunal process happens on traditional lands and houses with the Tribunal Team travelling to the respective Iwi to understand the stories and context of colonisation in that place. Local protocols, traditional practices and governance are observed and are adapted for each Iwi. The Tribunal stated when they come on country, it's a big deal for the Iwi.
- Being on traditional lands and with the knowledge holders provides broad access to stories and truth.
- The Tribunal process follows a 'principles' versus 'rules' approach. This allows the Tribunal to respect local customs and traditions and be adaptive in their approach.

- The Tribunal is seen as independent and led by Māori professionals, supported by the Crown. Their principled and robust process has been designed to withstand scrutiny.
- An important component of the Truth and Treaty process is an Apology from the Crown, which acknowledges the most serious impacts of colonisation. Apologies become a foundational part in the formal Truth Telling process.
- The Truth / Treaty making process should be cathartic and healing in its own right. The generous timelines which average between 4-10 years for each Iwi, ensures a thorough process is completed.

### Te Papa Tongarewa (Museum)

Courtney Johnston, Tumu Whakarae,

Chief Executive Officer

<https://www.tepapa.govt.nz/>

#### Background

The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa is New Zealand's National Museum and located in Wellington. Usually known as Te Papa, it opened in 1998 after the merging of the National Museum of New Zealand and the National Art Gallery.

Te Papa is a bi-cultural Institution. They work with Iwi in various ways to focus upon:

- National Services Te Paerangi aims to strengthen the museum sector by providing practical and strategic help to museums, galleries, and Iwi. This is done through training, resources, funding grants, advice, and collaborative opportunities including hui (gatherings).
- Iwi Exhibition Programs give tribes the chance to present their Taronga (treasures) and stories in a national forum. The program is an important expression of mana taonga – the role of communities in the understanding and care of collections. The concept underpins Te Papa's guardianship of all taonga.
- Karanga Aotearoa Repatriation Program – returning Māori and Moriori skeletal remains from overseas institution to relevant New Zealand Iwi, on behalf of the New Zealand Government.

[Source: <https://www.tepapa.govt.nz/>]

#### Reflections

Te Papa Co-CEO Courtney Johnston spoke about the significant shifts taking place in the museum sector responding to societal disruption which has led to an authority sharing model, cultural partnerships and a focus on stories and Truth Telling. She explored that overheard voices were being dialled down and unheard voices, dialled up. Te Papa has a strong basis in social justice and seeks to create a spiritually and mentally healthy museum environment. They advocate that what is good for the Māori community is good for everyone and brings the community together.

There was a shift away from one-off expensive touring exhibitions in favour of consistency and continuity. Their cultural programs are powerful, bringing forth living / live collections, with a focus on intergenerational programs to aid the transfer of knowledge, with a focus on re-vitalising Māori community.

#### Experience and Findings

- Te Papa have dual leadership with a Co-CEO structure to ensure a bi-cultural approach to their practice. The co-leadership model creates an environment to speak and curate with Māori authority supported by Western scholarship.
- The Museum plays a role in social justice and continuing Māori culture and language. This is prioritised through a living intergenerational collections program and annual Iwi exhibitions which builds a cadence of activity and engagement.
- living intergenerational collections program and annual Iwi exhibitions which builds a cadence of activity and engagement.
- Te Papa extends beyond its physical environment to work with and build capacity in Iwis to ensure both physical and living collections can continue to be supported.
- Te Papa's approach creates a living and evolving centre of Truth Telling for both Māori and Pakeha education.

## The House of Waitangi (Museum) / Waitangi Tribunal

Pita Tipene, Chairman of the Waitangi National Trust

Noel and Tania Prichard

<https://www.waitangi.org.nz/>

### Background

The vision of the House of Waitangi is to illustrate the ongoing promise of Waitangi to the world – a powerful place of truth and reconciliation.

Often called the 'Birthplace of the Nation', Waitangi weaves together the strands and stories of many people, events and places to reveal the rich cultural history of Aotearoa New Zealand, offering an inspiring and meaningful experience for those who visit.

Based in the North Island, this was the location of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi when the colonisers arrived in Aotearoa New Zealand. Impeccably restored with daily tours and cultural performances, this is a powerful site of truth, acknowledging the country's dual history.

Source: <https://www.waitangi.org.nz/>

The Waitangi Iwi are currently negotiating their Treaty and we met with representatives to understand the process on the site of the birthplace of the nation, in particular, Pita Tipene, Chairman of the Waitangi National Trust and Waitangi Iwi Leader.

### Reflections

Te Arawhata established a meeting with a live tribunal process to understand the experience of an Iwi journeying through the lengthy negotiation. The Waitangi Iwi are situated on the birthplace of the nation and have been preparing for many years with over 300 speakers consolidating to just five voices for the Tribunal hearings. The Māori present a very deliberate method of preparation as they are aware of the importance of the Treaty negotiations. Pita Tipene spoke to the importance of people needing time to tell their stories and the approach being intergenerational. The importance of letting people speak and feel heard cannot be understated.

In preparation for these important discussions and as a foundation for treaty negotiations, the Māori use their Marai Houses, found in the majority of Māori communities. A Marae is a fenced-in complex of carved buildings and grounds that belongs to a particular Iwi (tribe), Hapū (sub-

tribe) or Whānau (family). Māori see their marae as their tūrangawaewae - their place to stand and belong. Marae are used for hui (meetings), āhuareka (celebrations), tangi (funerals), educational workshops and other important tribal events Reference: <https://www.newzealand.com/au/feature/marae-maori-meeting-grounds/>.

Along with the physical presence of the buildings, are the protocols that guide the discussions that take place. There are disciplined processes followed around Agreement Making and then consensus amongst the Iwi. The weaving on the walls of the Marae details the protocols of decision making. These structures provide a sophisticated governance model for each Iwi, which is respected by the Waitangi Tribunal process.

A major point of discussion for the Waitangi Iwi is the founding documents – the Treaty of Waitangi -which are being contested around the issue of sovereignty with the original documents translated from English into Māori for co-signing being challenged in its interpretation. This point of debate will form an important component in future deliberations.

Pita Tipene spoke of the opportunity for the Tribunal process to decolonise Māori people and re-educate so they can be proud and support identity and the environment.

### Experience and Findings

#### *Waitangi Treaty Grounds*

- Honouring the first contact point of colonisation provides a powerful national reference point for Aotearoa / New Zealand of their shared history.
- The Treaty of Waitangi was prepared in two versions, an English and Māori version. Dual language interpreted documents, such as the treaty present a challenge in future Treaty negotiations as their interpretation has been challenged, particularly around sovereignty and its interpretation between the documents.
- The preservation of both colonial and Māori historical buildings and history side by side presents a powerful demonstration of reconciliation.
- Annual Waitangi Day provides a cultural celebration to maintain an important demonstration of resilience of Māori culture that continues to survive and strengthen. A Day of Reconciliation for countries with Indigenous

populations is an important recognition of the pathway of truth, unity and understanding.

### *Waitangi Treaty negotiations*

Honouring time in truth the treaty making is important to allow cultural processes to be fulfilled and time for meaningful preparation amongst Iwi (tribe) or Hapū (sub-tribe).

Pita Tipene also spoke of the importance of people needing to take breaks within the intensive Tribunal process and cycles of truth telling, due to the impact and intensity of this work.

Preparations for the Waitangi Tribunal coming to community is extensive. The Māori have a disciplined process of decision making within their marae houses and community, which provides a cultural process that is ratified by the Iwi, including an agreement once the decision is made, that the decision is final. Identifying appropriate speakers and honouring process has meant the Tribunal process is robust and leaves the Iwi with a document of truth for future generations.

All decisions are framed around future generations. The leaders seek for the process to support a return to Māori culture and to decolonise their people, providing re-education and pride in identity and care for the environment. The receipt of the final Tribunal Report is also important and provides a truth for all New Zealanders but most importantly for the next generation or Māori people.

In relation to healing, with the Tribunal process taking place in community and adapting to local governance and protocols, means Iwi were / are together and using their cultural practice throughout the process, surrounded by community and family. These support systems act as an important component of healing.

Of all international examples observed, the Waitangi Tribunal process was the most rigorous and disciplined approach and the outcome for Māori people prioritised around truth, culture, land and economic prosperity.



Meeting with Lil Anderson, Chief Executive of the Office for Māori Crown Relations – Te Arawhiti (Te Arawhiti)



# CANADA

## National Truth and Reconciliation Commission

<https://nctr.ca/>

- Brenda Gunn, Academic and Research Director
- Shelby Thomas, Research Manager
- Karen Ashbury, Research and Access Coordinator
- Jennifer Wood, Government Relations/Community Engagement Liaison Officer
- Pamela Vernaus, Statement Gatherer
- Trina McKellep, Statement Gatherer
- Logan Nadeau, Education Coordinator

### Background

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TCR) of Canada was created through a legal settlement between Indian Residential School Survivors, the Assembly of First Nations, Inuit representatives and the parties responsible for creation and operation of the schools: the federal government and the church bodies.

The TRC's mandate was to inform all Canadians about what happened in Indian Residential Schools. The TRC documented the truth of Survivors, their families, communities, and anyone personally affected by the residential school experience. This included First Nations, Inuit and Metis, former residential school students, their families, communities, the churches, former school employees, government officials and other Canadians.

The TRC concluded its mandate in 2015 and defined 94 calls to action

[https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Calls\\_to\\_Action\\_English2.pdf](https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf)

and transferred its records to the safekeeping of National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR).

The ongoing National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation has three mandates, public education, research and archiving - operating as a legacy body. We conducted several interviews with the NCTR.

Source: <https://nctr.ca/about/history-of-the-trc/truth-and-reconciliation-commission-of-canada>

### Reflections

The TRC was birthed from the Settlement Agreement from The Indian Act Amendments.

The process was complex and had to pass three levels of government, receive unanimous consent of ten provinces and have one hundred lawyers actively working confidentially on brokering the Agreement.

The TRC was broadcast nationally inviting the Canadian public to engage in the atrocities committed intergenerationally in the Indian Residential School system. In many ways it was an awakening for Canada around colonial oppression and started in earnest the reconciliation process across both government and interested citizens.

The TRC program took place at multiple sites around Canada and engaged generations of First Nations people. They also offered a model whereby a community could lead their own Truth Telling process which aided healing with community support structures in place.

However, within the Settlement Agreement it was agreed that Survivors could tell their Truth, but not name their perpetrators. Survivors were offered truth without justice. Government Relations/Community Engagement Liaison Officer Jennifer Woods, a Survivor herself, felt this decision, which protected the perpetrators, retraumatized survivors further and dealt a cruel blow to those sharing their stories. Jennifer discussed the impacts of intergenerational trauma, in particular the epigenetics of blood and cell memory and how this is carried onto the next generation, particularly the trauma impacts. She also reflected on the oppressive Indian Act where First Nations people were seen as anything other than people/peoples, which led to them perceiving themselves as 'nothing'. This is supported by a powerful reflection from Jennifer about shaping experiences in the Indian Residential School system.

*“A child’s self-perception emerges from the way they think you see them,”* Jennifer Woods.

Jennifer spoke about needing to deeply understand this mindset before she commenced work on the TRC as it shaped the lived experience of Survivors, including her own, of how they perceived themselves.

The TRC had a carefully considered program in each of its seven national engagements. Each was five days long, attracting between 5-10k participants and was designed to build from a place of darkness into light and hope, which included cultural performances and music. The heaviness and re-traumatisation for participants meant time was needed for healing for both individuals, families, and communities. There was extensive pre-consultation during and post engagement and planning as the TRC engaged in communities they were joining, in particular Elders and local First Nations organisations to shape the week-long program which drove much of the TRC’s success.

There was careful consideration given to artifacts including walking sticks to hold people up as they shared their Truth and the powerful bent wood box which stored traditional medicines and held individuals’ stories and materials to assist with the process of closure. These artefacts travelled across the country and linked the TRC across the seven programs. All artefacts were culturally informed and are now stored in the NCTR exhibition space.

The TRC made a funding provision for healing and trauma informed support which was negotiated within the Settlement Agreement, it was agreed that Health Care Plans would be offered for Survivors and Communities to heal. However, due to capacity and communication issues, many Survivors were not aware or did not access the healing models on offer. Most importantly, the healing had to be culturally appropriate, and trauma informed, and there was mutual agreement that First Nations people were the best resource in relation to healing within community by utilising family, spirituality, and traditional medicine. However, formal care plans were available and supported for up to ten years through Health Canada.

There were reflections provided around the impact on not only the people telling their Truth but on the Statement Gatherers and the depth of trauma they were exposed to. Often families were being exposed to their loved one’s trauma for the first time, so care had to be provided beyond the Survivor which added additional load. Those who were Statement Gatherers spoke of exhaustion and burn

out through vicarious trauma exposure and care for their recovery needed to be factored into the process.

Meeting with professional statement gatherers Pamela Vernaus and Trina McKellep, we explored the importance of their roles on both the TRC and the more recent Truth Commission into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW).

The NCTR and previously the TRC, was and continues to be informed by the Survivors Circle of Elders, who provide cultural guidance and direction. They were clear that Elders must culturally inform this work. Their leadership, cultural knowledge, and continued guidance is fundamental to the success of the process.

The Truth ‘speaking’ principles implemented by the TRC were designed to build best practice included – accessibility, survivor centred, protected, create no harm, trauma informed, inclusive, respectful, and voluntary.

Data Sovereignty emerged as a key issue, honouring cultural ownership of the individual’s and community’s truth. Post the TRC, the NCTR was established as the storage of Truth with all cultural protocols in place and to ensure sovereignty of data.

## **Background**

Some complexities included the records of Reserve School Survivors were collated in a colonial context, which meant it was difficult to align records to individual communities, as children travelled far to different sites. The NCTR is also bound by National Health and Privacy Laws. The NCTR is the steward of Truth Telling Canada and is acknowledged as such by UNESCO.

Karen Ashbury, Research and Access Coordinator, spoke of the importance of defining an archiving strategy in advance of a Truth Telling Program, to define cultural protocols, data sovereignty and future use of the stories, so how the material is archived can be planned accordingly. Strict provisions around intergenerational transfer of stories were also discussed and the importance of permissions as part of the Statement Gathering Process – including private / public access. The control and power must sit with the Survivor.

All NCTR team members we spoke with discussed the transformative effects of the TRC – with those who chose to tell their stories often doing so for the first time in their lives. There were communities of Survivors connecting after

the formal TRC. It has been said this was the turning point for Reconciliation in Canada and an awakening of the impact of Canada's colonial history.

The NCTR as the legacy organisation, now holds 5M records (including the 7K statements), stores 7K records of audiovisual content, holds information for 17 Government Departments and 132 Church entities. The NCTR's remit is to continue this important research work, creating a permanent archive to honour Residential School Survivors, to educate Canadians to ensure such atrocities are never repeated. Through the legacy of NCTR and acknowledging, hearing, and believing Survivors stories, the National Reconciliation agenda will move forward.

The subsequent Commission into Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women had a two-year mandate from 2017-2019 and heard 700 cases. The final report is yet to be implemented.

### Experience and Findings

- Truth 'speaking' principles should be prioritised - accessibility, survivor centred, protected, create no harm, trauma informed, inclusive, respectful, and voluntary.
- A Commission process should deeply engage the Elders and community to establish a truth process. Elders' and Indigenous leaders' voices must lead the curation of the program and adjust from location to location.
- Early engagement with communities and program shaping should be culturally led and is of vital importance.
- Truth 'speaking' principles should be prioritised - accessibility, survivor centred, protected, create no harm, trauma informed, inclusive, respectful, and voluntary.
- A Commission process should deeply engage the Elders and community to establish a truth process. Elders' and Indigenous leaders' voices must lead the curation of the program and adjust from location to location.
- Early engagement with communities and program shaping should be culturally led and is of vital importance.
- Making space and time in the community to transition from darkness to light aids the healing process.

### Qikiqtani Truth Commission – QTC

Inukshuk Aksalnik and Hagar Idlout-Sudlovenick

<https://www.qtcommission.ca/en>

#### Background

The work that precipitated the QTC began as early as 2000, when QTC together with the Makivik Corporation of Nunavik called for the Federal Government to launch a public inquiry into the killing of qimmiit (dogs used for sledging) between 1950 and 1975.

issues related to social policy, language, and the dog slaughter/relocation. In 2004, QTC began collecting testimonies directly from the Inuit to better understand how government policies, programs and decisions affected them and their families, and profoundly and irreversibly altered their way of life. The most significant impacts resulted from the loss of qimmiit and relocations to established communities in the decades following World War II.

On March 5, 2005, in response to mounting pressure, the Commons Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development reported to the House of Commons a motion calling on the Federal Government to inquire into the alleged slaughtering of Inuit sled dogs in the North between 1950 and 1970. In response, the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Anne McLellan, requested that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) conduct a comprehensive review of all actions related to sled dogs in the North during this time.

The resulting RCMP report concluded that there was no evidence of an organised slaughter of sled dogs by RCMP during the time in question, under their own initiative or directed by government policy. Rather, some dogs were destroyed for reasons of public health and/or public safety. The RCMP report was quickly and soundly rejected by QIA and Makivik, who announced in 2006 that they were sponsoring a Truth Commission "to set the historical record straight".

This mistreatment was documented by the QTC from 2007 to 2010, through interviews with almost 350 witnesses during 16 public hearings across the region.

led initiative of its kind. It is also a rare example of a comprehensive social justice inquiry led by an Indigenous organisation. It led to a powerful acceptance by the Government of the impacts of the dog slaughter on the communities which was followed by a formal apology.



Post apology, the responsible Minister also announced a memorandum of understanding between the QTC and the Government of Canada to work in partnership in response to the Commission's findings. That partnership included \$15 million for QTC's legacy fund, over \$2 million towards Inuit history and governance programs, and over \$1.2 million for a travel and healing program for Inuit affected by the Dundas Harbour relocation and the closing of Kivitoo, Paallavik and South Camp communities. Another \$2.9 million will be dedicated to a qimmiit revitalisation program, with \$100,000 being given annually to the Nunavut Quest sled dog race from 2020 to 2027.

The aim through these programs is Saimaqatigiingniq which refers to 'when past opponents get back together, meet in the middle, and are at peace'.

Source: <https://www.qtcommission.ca/en>

Kivitoo, Paallavik and South Camp communities. Another \$2.9 million will be dedicated to a qimmiit revitalisation program, with \$100,000 being given annually to the Nunavut Quest sled dog race from 2020 to 2027.

The aim through these programs is Saimaqatigiingniq which refers to 'when past opponents get back together, meet in the middle, and are at peace'.

Source: <https://www.qtcommission.ca/en>

## Reflections

Of all the Truth Commissions we interviewed, the QTC was a model that was a 100% Indigenous led process. The process came from a previous floored process from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), which investigated itself around the slaughter of 10K Inuit dogs, leading to a loss of trade, economics, dog teaming culture, and community impoverishment. The RCMP led a forensic rather than Historical Impact Truth Process, which was rejected by the Inuit people. The travesty of a government agency investigating itself was a profound example of mistrust between Inuit and Government agencies.

The subsequent QTC process was offered in language supported by translation, and was Indigenous led, which generated trust in the people and process. An Inuit organisation sponsored their Truth Telling Commission which included an Inuit Commissioner who was a retired Judge establishing the process as Quasi-Judicial, whereby those providing testimonies / truth swore on the bible.

QTC was a community led process where all testimonies were gathered on country, of which they covered 13

different communities across three regions, which spans the largest Inuit land ownership globally. Survivors' stories were captured in language and were voluntary with video recordings taken of those choosing to participate. The whole process was open and transparent and once the stories were gathered and organised, they returned to community to ensure stories and interpretation had been captured correctly. This fact checking was an integral part of the QTC process.

The QTC Report was released in 2010 after a two-year process. There were 25 Recommendations and an Implementation Plan. The Report was crafted as a Red and Blue Book. The Red Book looked at thematic reports that came from the Truth Telling Commission and the Blue Book went into detail of each of the 13 communities' truth process.

In 2019, because of the QTC, the Canadian Government made an apology to the Inuit people for the lasting impacts of the dog slaughter on their culture, communities, and families. They also supported a \$5million investment into program design and a \$15million grant for program implementation.

The programs centred around:

- Acknowledging and healing past wrongs
- Strengthening Inuit governance
- Strengthening Inuit culture
- Creating healthy communities

An important component of the program was the re-establishment of dog-teaming culture, which now boasts an annual festival that has re-introduced dog-teaming back into Inuit communities.

Source: [https://www.qtcommission.ca/sites/default/files/public/files/qia-qtc\\_recommendations\\_poster\\_en.pdf](https://www.qtcommission.ca/sites/default/files/public/files/qia-qtc_recommendations_poster_en.pdf)

## Canadian Museum of Human Rights

Mr Robert Greene, Elder in Residence

Ms Angeliki Bogiatji, Interpretive Program Developer

<https://humanrights.ca/>

## Background

As the world's first museum dedicated to human rights, they are centred around the idea that respect and understanding of human rights can serve as a positive force for change in the world.

Their mandate is to explore the subject of human rights, with special but not exclusive reference to Canada, in order to enhance the public's understanding of human rights, to promote respect for others, and to encourage reflection and dialogue.

Source: <https://humanrights.ca/about/mandate>

## Reflections

The Canadian Human Rights Museum (CHRM), which opened in 2014, houses over 90% of its collections in digital form, making it a highly adaptive environment that is continually evolving in response to world events and leadership.

The Museum has an Elders Circle of seven cultural leaders and a full time / part time (personal preference) Elder in Residence role that was filled by Elder Robert Green. This role has been foundational in how the museum has consulted with First Nations people and shaped the experience of the museum through a First Nations lens. Through having this important reference, museums don't 'sanitise' or 'colonise' the First Nations experience based on guilt and shame. The truth at CHRM is provided from a First Nations perspective and the museum is bound by the Elders Circle to always tell the Truth, no matter how confronting it is.

Elder Green spoken of the widespread denialism that still exists throughout Canada and the importance of such institutions in telling the truth. Institutions such as the CHRM are integral to understanding history and context and provide an environment for healing.

- The museum now provides more than memorialisation, but is an agency to:
- Focus on the resilience of people whose rights were and continue to be exploited
- Raise up the first Nations voices who experienced human rights abuses
- Highlight the continuing struggle for acknowledgement and justice
- Highlight continuing contemporary issues for First Nations people such as the Truth Commission into Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women

Acknowledging genocide and its ongoing impacts on First Nations people

Elder Green spoke of Truth coming before Reconciliation

and the power of the museum to enable deep listening over speaking, to ensure we understand the First Nations experience which has been felt around the world.

In the words of Elder Robert Green:

*"You cannot suppress the truth, it will always come out in the end."*

## Experience and Findings

- Elder in residence and Elder Circles 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.
- Digital collections allow adaptability and evolution as the Truth is revealed. Collections to remain contemporary.
- Providing a safe place for the Truth to be heard and revealed ensures healing can commence, no matter how hard those Truths are to hear.
- Museums can act as agency of change rather than purely memorials to the past.
- Having people leave with more questions than they arrive drives a curiosity in truth.

## Background

The City of Vancouver established a vision to be the City of Reconciliation in 2014.

The City of Vancouver established a vision to be the City of Reconciliation in 2014.

It stands on the territories of the three tribes - The xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) peoples, the original inhabitants of the unceded land which is now known as the City of Vancouver.

## Reflections

City of Vancouver has formed a new department centred around Indigenous relations and are focused on implementing UNDRIP (United Nations Declaration for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples) with the support of a taskforce. Fundamental to the success of this approach is the buy in from Council and Leadership and their commitment to Truth Telling and cultural education. Not only does the city have

a strong cultural program (including anti-racism training) and Indigenous curriculum, but employees are expected to conduct their own learning and actively demonstrate this. Truth telling has aided the city to de-colonise and look to how they can embed knowledge from Indigenous people of the lands where they operate.

The city's UNDRIP and Reconciliation Strategies are led by First Nations leaders in co-design with the City of Vancouver. There are clear calls to action over a five-year period, some of which will require the city to adjust its charter and some that will require national engagement. Currently the City of Vancouver is the only City implementing UNDRIP and funding key Reconciliation work. Provincial and Federal funding was not available at the time of writing this report.

With the engagement of the three local tribes, as the original inhabitants of the Vancouver region, the city is focused on building trust, and leaning in to listen. Michelle Bryant Granville, Senior Director of Indigenous Relations, discussed that trust had been built with First Nations Groups and when mistakes are made, they are coming from a good place. Each of the three Tribal nations are unique and require a different blueprint to support a culturally led and informed approach.

When discussing key challenges, Michelle discussed government legals can be a key challenge and require a shift from a risk mindset to a relationship model. The three nations at times do overlap territories and the city needs to tread carefully and not weigh in on those debates, as they must be resolved between the First Nations groups.

However, through this progressive approach, the City of Vancouver now sees sovereign nations as entities with a panel of the three tribes and the city meeting on matters that impact Indigenous people, reconciliation, and land.

#### Experience and Findings

- UNDRIP provides a ratified global model that supports best practice in engaging with and elevating self-determination for Indigenous people through free, prior, and informed consent.
- The city has redesigned their governance models for decision making around reconciliation and land matters whereby Elders from the three tribes sit at the table as equal decision-making partners.
- Progressive organisations such as the City of Vancouver are centring truth telling in their cultural education practice.

- Decolonising and leaning in to listen reframes the relationship on how Indigenous and Government organisations can work together. Their responsibility for cultural intelligence is being transferred to the individual, with leaders at the city having to demonstrate self-learning as part of their practice.
- Decolonising and leaning in to listen reframes the relationship on how Indigenous and Government organisations can work together.

### Museum of Anthropology

University of British Columbia

Susan Roley, Director and Team

<https://moa.ubc.ca/>

#### Background

The Museum of Anthropology (MOA) as part of the University of British Columbia, is committed to promoting awareness and understanding of culturally diverse ways of knowing the world through challenging and innovative programs and partnerships with Indigenous, local, and global communities.

#### Reflections

Meeting with Director Susan Roley and her curatorial and research team provided incredible insight into the transformation taking place within the Museum and collections/archival sector. For years, global collections have been preserved and protected, often from cultural ownership, in the archives of museums. In addition, systems of display have not considered cultural permissions, protocols, and restrictions, with exposure of artefacts of significance shown publicly with low regard to the appropriateness of access or to cultural sensitivities.

In the archives of museums. In addition, systems of display have not considered cultural permissions, protocols, and restrictions, with exposure of artefacts of significance shown publicly with low regard to the appropriateness of access or to cultural sensitivities.

The Museum of Anthropology is going through a significant transformation as they work alongside the First Nations community through an Advisory Committee. Director Susan Roley discussed the most important element of all engagement is keeping the relationship strong. Their practice is shaped around this working philosophy.

The Indigenous community pushed back on what was previously considered 'best practice' and 'blew up' curatorial processes. The curatorial team spoke to challenging their own mindsets.

The practice of 'witnessing' was reflected on by the team, whereby you are brought into a conversation and trusted by Indigenous leaders, then it is your responsibility to share this information and practice with others. The leadership of the museum had to transition to consider the work it was doing is for those that are not here and a reflection on 'deep time'. Whilst collections in a traditional museum context were considered as a reflection of the past, Indigenous people saw them as family lines and a future responsibility. One key part of the evolution was integrating voices and stories into contemporary exhibits as one element with Indigenous teaching focused on opening hearts and minds. MOA referred to this as 'gentle unsettling'.

With their auspicing body, University of British Columbia, they have collaborated on a project Indigitisation:

<https://www.indigitization.ca/>

to fully develop a culturally informed preservation systems with includes cultural protocols, permissions, and tracking to guide a new way of working.

A transformation in their curatorial practice was the Collections Access Program ensuring the collections are accessible to those who own them and are responsible for them - the Indigenous community including intergenerational access. The collections themselves act as teachers for the community, and the Museum itself provides a community lounge for coming together to share the knowledge of the collections. The collections are also taken on country for cultural ceremony and interactions recorded as part of their continuing truth. With community access to the collection, so much more is being learnt.

The Curatorial Team spoke of the collection travelling to Potlatch ceremonies where ceremonial masks were invited to sing again. Following important ceremonies, there were periods of rest and quiet required for the masks. During that time, they could not be on public display. This required explanation to the public who would visit to see such collections, and often were disappointed to find them not accessible. An education process around the living nature of collections became part of the truth the Museum had to share and educate around.

This thinking in the Museum world is a significant shift. It

has also established new relationships and interactions between the Museum of Anthropology and the First Nations community, where the purpose and meaning of their collections were reinvigorated. The transformation from a collection piece to a significant 'living' and powerful part of the community ceremony, is a continuation to their cultural relevance.

This of course has challenged coloniser legal structures and collection policies, but the powerful relationship built on trust has bought a renewed approach to truth and sustainability for the Museum, which has been supported by a strong commitment to reconciliation by the University of British Columbia.

The Museum also sees its role fundamentally as an educator and capacity builder, hosting professional days for teachers, building training for Indigenous knowledge as they open hearts and minds across a broader community of professionals. In addition, they offer an annual Indigenous Internship Program to continue to build and involve Indigenous leadership in their curatorial practice.

## Experience and Findings

- Director Susan Rowley articulated building a modern museum is always about people and trust and never about the bricks and mortar.
- Through more active engagement with Indigenous people through advisory boards and ongoing capacity building, assumptions must continue to be challenged and ongoing education and conversation is fundamental.
- Leaders must remind themselves of their privilege and their responsibility – which is that a museum environment has traditionally been the gatekeeper / owner and is now evolving to facilitator / enabler.
- Through continual evolution, a gentle unsettling process is unfolding.
- Ownership and access to collections provides a new relevance for museums to activate collections and become a living space.
- Through continual evolution, a gentle unsettling process is unfolding.

- Through continual evolution, a gentle unsettling process is unfolding.
- Ownership and access to collections 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.
- Understanding that collections represent a completely different context for Indigenous people is fundamental, including that many items are still 'living'.
- Building accessibility, education and stories through the participation in ceremony builds relevance, reconciliation and sustains museums for future generations of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

*"Indigenous perspectives are changing our museums through the shifting to comfort and accessibility of collections,"*

said Susan Rowley, MOA Director.

### Indian Residential School Dialogue Centre

University of British Columbia

Ms Jess Boon, Community Outreach Coordinator

<https://irshdc.ubc.ca/>

#### Background

The Indian Residential School History and Dialogue Centre (IRSHDC) at University of British Columbia (UBC) addresses the colonial impacts of Indian Residential Schools and other policies imposed by the Canadian government on Indigenous Peoples, and ensures that this history is acknowledged, examined, and understood within the UBC community. The Centre helps provide access to records and information for Survivors and Intergenerational Survivors of the Residential School system. They also work with partners at UBC and beyond to encourage dialogue about the Residential School system and the on-going repercussions of colonialism in Canada.

Source: <https://irshdc.ubc.ca/about/what-we-do/>

#### Reflections

UBC has a strong focus on Reconciliation and supports the Dialogue Centre and place of memory and information for those who were residents at BC Indian Residential School Survivors and their families. Based in the heart of the campus, the Centre has done extensive digitisation of their record archive providing an interactive timeline wall for survivors to explore their history and truth.

The strength of the dialogue centre is its digital accessibility, providing survivors with broad access to British Columbian Residential Schools' formal records and those who agreed to share their stories of survival as part of the TRC in a digitised timeline. They work closely with the NCTR in sharing resources and provide access and ownership to Survivors, intergenerational Survivors, and communities wanting to access records around British Columbia. They spoke to the importance of defining the ethics of community access and ownership and the work the IRSHDC are doing to reverse the colonial model which is usually based on an extraction of the truth. There was also concern raised about the level of denialism that still exists within colonial structures which is rampant and damaging.

The IRSHDC is exploring beyond Indian Residential Schools and looking at the Indian Hospitals, where further abuse occurred. However, as was the case with what Canadian's called the '60's scoop' where there was a shift to shut down Indian Residential Schools, and affluent non-Indigenous women adopting Indigenous children into Christian families, there lies the current crisis, known as the 'Millennium scoop', which has seen unprecedented levels of children in state / provincial care.

The Centre is committed to continuing the work of the TRC and empowering through Indigenous Data Sovereignty and through their oral testimony program, which over time will integrate into their digital truth wall.

#### Experience and Findings

- Universities provide academic rigour and ethics around data sovereignty and provide Indigenous leadership opportunities to drive programs.
- The designated centre that is resourced by the University prioritises truth telling and access for future generations. It makes a bold public statement as to the importance of reconciliation, truth and justice in Canada and the UBC.

- Utilising technology and 'digital walls' provide an immersive experience for users to engage in detailed archival material and content as Survivors and intergenerational Survivors. Being digital means it can be an evolving resource as more truth is captured and made accessible.
- Continuing truth work and preserving Survivor stories across other environments (Indian Hospitals) broadens the context for historical capture.

### **Museum of Vancouver (MOV)**

Mauro Vescera, CEO & Sharon Fortney, Curator of Indigenous Collections  
<https://museumofvancouver.ca/>

#### **Background**

MOV's mission is to be a gathering space that fosters connection, learning, and new experiences of Vancouver's diverse communities and histories. As a civic organisation they are committed to deepening their collective understanding of the city through common stories, objects, and experiences.

MOV conceptualizes this through their engagement priorities, which have been focused into four broad areas including redress and decolonisation, immigration and diversity, environment and sustainability, and urban and contemporary issues.

Source: <https://museumofvancouver.ca/about-us>

#### **Reflections**

The team at MOV has explored and supported how reconciliation in Canada has evolved to redress and decolonisation. The City of Vancouver's commitment as

the City of Reconciliation has informed MOV's work and focused the efforts of the museum within the framework of UNDRIP (United Nations Declaration for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples), which is premised on free, prior, and informed consent.

MOV have placed cultural leadership at the top of their organisation, with the three First Nations groups of the Vancouver area being represented via a seat at the Board. MOV itself follows cultural protocols including the Centre being brushed down with cedar and regularly smudged.

Knowledge repatriation work in colonial institutions is still extractive vs relational and the Museum is working, guided by several Indigenous groups, on an active repatriation program. Their archived collections are extensive and slowly being repatriated to traditional custodians or being overseen by cultural protocols.

Their philosophy is that Reconciliation is an empty word unless there is public education and the work of MOV focuses on this.

The leadership described what is called strata's of truth throughout MOV collections linked to British Columbia's history including the Residential School artworks among Indigenous themed exhibitions. The team are trained to support people who experience trauma or are triggered through collections at MOV, ensuring cultural safety.

MOV prioritise Indigenous exhibitions, including a permanent Indigenous Garden and planting guide within the central courtyard with 145 species used by Indigenous people for technology, food, medicine, and ceremony.

#### **Experience and Findings**

- The Board of MOV has governance leadership from the three First Nations groups in Vancouver which guide all cultural practice and collections oversight.
- MOV have matured in their truth and reconciliation journey prioritising education and an active repatriation program prioritising decolonisation of collections and practice.
- MOV trains its team that interact with visitors to support people experiencing trauma, that could be triggered through collections and exhibitions, ensuring cultural safety is offered to visitors.
- MOV prioritise both exhibitions and live collections, including their Indigenous Garden to support Indigenous people to practice technology, food, medicine, and ceremony.

## Reconciliation Canada

Chief Dr. Robert Joseph, Gwawaenuk Elder

<https://reconciliationcanada.ca/>

### Background

Born from the vision of Chief Dr. Robert Joseph, Gwawaenuk Elder, Reconciliation Canada is leading the way in engaging Canadians in dialogue and transformative experiences that revitalize the relationships among Indigenous peoples and all Canadians. Their model for reconciliation engages people in open and honest conversation to understand our diverse histories and experiences. They actively engage multi-faith and multi-cultural communities to explore the meaning of reconciliation. Together, and are charting a new way forward.

### Reflections

As a survivor, Chief Dr Robert Joseph shared the importance of the TRC and its impact on not only survivors but of all Canadians as a moment of truth and reconciliation. The Chief passionately advocated that this work is a spiritual imperative to bring balance, harmony and peace to rediscover our common humanity. He powerfully advocates that reconciliation is for everyone, so we can love fiercely and with compassion, starting with our families, communities and then as a country.

The Chief spoke in detail of the TRC process, in which he participated as a Residential School Survivor. Pre the TRC, healing had been spoken about for a decade, Survivors kept asking for safe places to tell their stories. Ensuring Survivors were central to the process was important and the feeling of ownership was the power of the TRC process.

The Chief strongly articulated that as well as healing for survivors, the process was powerful for the children and education on mass was fundamental to success. When the truth was shared, people started understanding the trauma that had been inflicted. Survivors heard the word 'trauma' for the first time and all off a sudden they understood what had happened to them and there was a word to explain their experience. This was a fundamental component of the healing process. Through the process there was a revival of traditional healing and medicine and the Chief witnessed Survivors going back to their genesis and values which was the foundation of Indigenous people.

The TRC triggered significant reconciliation momentum

across Canada with the TRC being broadcast nationally. There was an awakening of Non-Indigenous Canadians to the impacts of the Indian Residential School System. The Chief spoke to "how we can be our highest selves – when our hearts, minds and learning capacities develop, then everything else becomes easier. We do this by finding our common humanity – and strive to live as one".

Reconciliation comes from a spiritual perspective with deep and meaningful dialogue. It transcends politics. We enter a new era where we can no longer extrapolate time between Government, the Church, and the Courts, we must come together to tell our stories and break down barriers. When we understand who we are as a collective, we recognise the value in all people.

### Experience and Findings

- Chief Dr Robert Joseph provides cultural and spiritual leadership throughout Canada supporting the reconciliation movement. His leadership has inspired significant momentum in the aftermath of the TRC, rallying all Canadians to find their common humanity.
- Having Elders lead significant community dialogue brings Indigenous thinking and learning to the national discussion and discourse.
- Involving Elders and leaders in the design of local programs created significant buy in to the TRC process and responded to a decade long call for healing. Naming their experience as trauma provided context for their experience.
- Providing a platform for survivors to share their stories creates an opportunity to find our common humanity. Once the truth is revealed, Chief Joseph stated we can find our highest selves as a united people.



Meeting with Qikiqtani Truth Commission





# GERMANY

Whilst not a country embarking on an Indigenous truth telling process, we selected Germany to look at a region that had experienced an historical rapid justice movement, memorialisation and societal transformation since WW2 and how that had been achieved. Those interviewed had a different perspective on the practice of truth telling, claiming the Nuremberg trials bought justice through a legal process. They assert that when the truth is confronted through a system or process, justice is served. Memorialisation captures this history and presents an opportunity to confront the truth, educate, and transform, as Germany has done.

## Museums of Nuremberg Memorium Nürnberger Prozesse

Mr Axel Fischer, Research Associate

<https://museums.nuernberg.de/memorium-nuremberg-trials/>

### Background

World history was written in a courtroom of the Nuremberg Palace of Justice. It was historic Courtroom 600 where leaders of the Nazi regime had to answer for their crimes before the International Military Tribunal between November 20, 1945, and October 1, 1946. The trials had an enormous influence on the development of international criminal law right up to the present. The Memorium Nuremberg Trials is an information and documentation centre which is located on the top floor of the courthouse. It provides insights on the defendants and their crimes, the Subsequent Nuremberg Trials of 1946-49, and the impact of the Nuremberg Trials still today.

Source: <https://museums.nuernberg.de/memorium-nuremberg-trials/>

### Reflections

The Memorium provides insight into the Nuremberg Trials, which was created by unlikely coalition of USA, Russia, UK, and France post WW2. This international military trial, the idea of a 'world criminal court' was implemented for the first time and achieved powerful outcomes for multilateralism. The principles that emerged are known to this current day as the 'Nuremberg Principles' and have formed the basis of modern international criminal justice whereby if you cannot prevent war crimes, you can prosecute those who commit them. There is increasing interest in understanding the

Nuremberg Trials and its impact on history with over 120K annual visitors to the Memorium,

as the city continues to respond to interest through the curation of new exhibits.

As a working judiciary building, the City of Nuremberg made the Memorium permanent in 2010.

Germany was a powerful example of a country that faced down its history within a generation of the impacts of the Nazi regime across Europe in WW2. Mr Axel Fischer, Research Associate at the Memorium discussed the power of awareness and education to build human interest. The brutality of regime and of the crimes committed, in what many believe to be the first example of industrial genocide, have been captured to remind us of a dark period in history. The Nuremberg Trials allowed capture of this period of history not as a normal socialist cycle, but one of a system of criminal history. But in advance of the Nuremberg Trials, the coalition had to determine how to approach these crimes and prosecute them. In Germany more than 50K trials took place from the millions of perpetrators, which was significant for the working judiciary.

The enormity of the challenge of who to prosecute and within what framework cannot be understated.

Whilst the Nuremberg Trials were run within the framework of occupational policy, and whilst modern day language such as 'truth telling' may not have been applied at the time, the process brought about justice against those perpetrators. The trials used public information systems through the mass media, radio, and news reels at the time, engaging in broad public discourse around the process. There were over 250 representatives of the world media present in the courtroom, reporting live back to their newsrooms on the

trial deliberations and outcomes. The Memorium advocates that the education system must include historical curriculum. In Germany in Years 7/8/9, the history of national socialism and the Nazi regime is taught in schools. In addition, it is free or very low cost to access all Concentration Camps, in a bid to ensure the widespread ability of people to access memorial sites that confront history and tell the truth.

Using the Concentration Camps throughout Germany as memorisation sites provides a powerful reference. They provide a 'culture of remembrance'. As the Chief Prosecutor of the Nuremberg Trials stated – “you need to change the heart before you change the mind”.

### Experience and Findings

- A robust truth and justice process through the Nuremberg Trials led to swift action and punishment for those who committed atrocities as part of the Nazi regime.
- By holding perpetrators to account a community / country can move forward and define its future vision, in the case of Nuremberg this was to be the City of Peace and Human Rights.
- The City of Nuremberg has responded to the international interest by memorialising the site of the Memorium and Courtroom 600 and curating the truth for the world to learn from.
- Germany provides access to the truth around its memorials and concentration camps, providing free access to sites for education and learning.
- Germany has built key learnings into its education curriculum to ensure the next generation learns of the atrocities committed. Education is fundamental to moving forward from a head and heart perspective and learning from history.

### City of Nuremberg

Ms Martina Mittenhuber, Manager, Human Rights & Equal Opportunities Office

[https://www.nuernberg.de/internet/stadtportal\\_e/](https://www.nuernberg.de/internet/stadtportal_e/)  
Peace and Human Rights

### Background

From the background of its history during the National

Socialist reign of terror, the City of Nuremberg feels particularly committed to human rights. It therefore adopted the motto of 'Nuremberg – City of Peace and Human Rights' and established a municipal Human Rights Office. The office's tasks include planning, organising and co-ordinating human rights activities within the city, in co-operation with numerous partners.

Source :[https://www.nuernberg.de/internet/menschenrechte\\_e/#:~:text=Nuremberg%20%E2%80%93%20City%20of%20Peace%20and,a%20municipal%20Human%20Rights%20Office.](https://www.nuernberg.de/internet/menschenrechte_e/#:~:text=Nuremberg%20%E2%80%93%20City%20of%20Peace%20and,a%20municipal%20Human%20Rights%20Office.)  
[Reflections](#)

### Reflections

With a prolific history as the centre of Nazi Germany, through truth telling and justice, the City of Nuremberg has chosen a vision of being a city for peace and human rights in 2001, responding to past atrocities and stimulated by the desire to build a civil society.

With a Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Office reporting to the mayor, the city boasts a team of twelve staff who focus on programs around the city to enable the vision. This is unique in Germany and part of an international co-operation.

Martina Mittenhuber, Manager, Human Rights & Equal Opportunities Office said,

“It's not enough to only describe history – but to take the lessons learnt and implement education and action – to avoid repeating history.”

Each year the city hosts an International Human Rights Award and provides shelter to international activists where they negotiate asylum. Nuremberg's population has become diverse with over 50% coming from migrant backgrounds. The city's human rights work looks to create a respectful society built on social cohesion. They have an anti-discrimination office, that works closely with the human rights office.

Every year the city commemorates the Holocaust Memorial Day. They engage heavily with young people, Universities, and civil society grass roots movements to frame out what this has to do with contemporary life and the civil society.

The city itself takes a proactive approach with its staff investing in a two-day human rights program with a cognitive learning approach as they commence employment. They aim to have staff enter their workforce with the right attitude.

As well as funding from the city, funding is secured from the federal programme 'Live Democracy' With this programme, the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth has been supporting civic engagement for a diverse and democratic society since 2015.

Live Democracy facilitates projects all over Germany which develop and trial new ideas and innovative approaches in promoting democracy, shaping diversity, and preventing extremism.

- A shared vision to unite a city / place provides a framework for social cohesion.
- Acknowledging history provides important context for people and communities impacted and provides a pathway forward.
- The Nuremberg Trials provided justice which allowed the city to share its truth and recreate a future which is in stark comparison to its past as the city of peace and human rights.
- The city's commitment to a range of initiatives including training, education, awards, asylum processes and commemorations supports broad engagement and positions around the city's vision.
- Working in partnership with grass roots movements provides momentum at a community level to support progress.

## Background

The Flossenburg Concentration Camp was established in May 1938 during the SS reorganisation of the entire concentration camp system. In the new system, the purpose of the camps was no longer only to imprison and terrorise political opponents of the Nazi regime.

Rather, the SS now also aimed to profit from the exploitation of prisoner labour. Prisoners were put to work in SS-owned economic enterprises to produce building materials. To this end, the SS founded new camps, and deported ever larger number of people to the camps. Of the 100K prisoners that were imprisoned at Flossenburg, 30K were killed.

Source: <https://www.gedenkstaette-flossenbuerg.de/en/history/flossenbuerg>

## Reflections

Many of the Concentration Camp remains in Germany have been maintained as memorial sites to build a culture of remembrance.

At Flossenburg Concentration Camp, it took many decades for German society to confront the truth of what happened at the camp with housing and industrial zones built overlooking the site.

In 1989 the Holocaust series and in 1983 the Hollywood film Schindler's List, created international curiosity about Nazi history and then in 1985, at the Flossenburg Concentration Camp, there was the return of the Survivors after 40 years. Since then, the Survivors have been returning annually and are front and centre of everything done at the memorial. Survivors after 40 years. Since then, the Survivors have been returning annually and are front and centre of everything done at the memorial.

Education and tours are a strong focus at the Flossenburg Concentration Camp and access is free for everyone. The approach utilised is not a monologue, but rather dialogue. The Education team look to respond to questions people have versus just meeting their expectations and comfort zones. They aim to enlighten on not only the past but the present and the society they live in today, such as the visitor's role in discrimination, racism and antisemitism and how we can live together as a pluralistic society in a peaceful way. The Memorial work has a strong focus on education, and they curate this work starting with "a sense of irritation to disturb people's notion of truth," said Dennis Foster. People seek more information through asking even more questions through their experience at the camps.

Dennis Foster, who is in the Education team, said memorialisation of this history in Germany in the 90's is now becoming endangered, with right wing political forces wanting to turn the clock back and cover the truth up.

## Experience and Findings

- Education and "causing irritation with the truth" drives the engagement through dialogue (not monologue) at the Flossenburg Concentration Camp.
- Ensuring accessibility to these sites through minimising fees or having free access is important.

- Having Survivors at the Centre of the programming and commemoration approach is important in honouring their truth.
- Curating programs to have a contemporary focus within a historical context is powerful – in this case looking at the impacts of discrimination, racism, and antisemitism and how we can live together as a pluralistic society in a peaceful way.
- Having Survivors at the Centre of the programming and commemoration approach is important in honouring their truth.

# SWEDEN

## Samediggi – Sami Parliament

Mr Stefan Mikaelsson, Sami Parliamentarian

Mr Frederik Österling, Past Sami Parliament CEO

<https://www.sametinget.se/english>

## Background

The Sami Parliament is both a publicly elected parliament and a state agency. The tasks of the Parliament are regulated by the Swedish Sami Parliament Act. It has at the main office officials carry out the daily tasks of the agency and there is a political level with publicly elected politicians. These politicians are not residing in the main office in Kiruna, they are merely laymen. The Sami Parliament, established in 1992, works for increased self-determination. The Sami want to be decisive in questions that concern them as Sami. Sami self-determination is not about forming a new state.

Source: <https://www.sametinget.se/english>

## Reflections

The Sami Parliament in Sweden is governed by the Sami Parliament Act and is a powerful demonstration of self-determination. Stefan Mikaelsson, Sami Parliamentarian, said the idea that Sami people speak for their own sake and know what is good for them seeks to defend Sami culture and livelihood, particularly in a period of polarisation with the racism that is growing across the Nordic countries.

Frederik Österling, Past Sami Parliament Director explained the Sami Parliamentary structure across the Nordic countries and into Russia. Norway has a higher degree to self-governance – they are not directly tied to the Norwegian Government which means more comparatively to the other Nordic countries, has its own authority to direct policy and expenditure on Sami matters. Finland is the least liberated group through history with the Finnish Government often suppressing the Sami people. The Russian Sami have been the most oppressed of the Sami people and have almost abolished Sami languages.

Whilst the Sami Parliament is tied to the Swedish Parliament, it provides an environment for Sami politics to develop whilst serving the Sami people as a political arena. There is a challenge between the political self-determination and the

controls of the central government which has caused friction in the past.

There is significant work to do across the Sami Parliament maintaining culture, education, and traditional practice – but variable funding provides challenges.

One of the main challenges for Sami people has been the colonial boarder structures. The traditional reindeer herding tracks moved across the Nordic countries and with changes over time including the boarder closure between Norway and Sweden in 1905, the annual migration of reindeer herders changed their grazing trails, which to this day has caused friction between the northern and southern Sami. Over time, borders have reopened although they remain closed between Sweden and Finland.

In 2021, Sweden assigned a Truth Commission to investigate the abuses of the Sami people by the Swedish State. The Sami Parliament and Swedish government agreed on the directive for a Truth Commission and in 2022 the Commission members were appointed and commenced their work.

The appointment of those to work on the Truth Commission were selected by the Sami Parliament. Prior to the Truth Commission, extensive research was completed by the Sami Parliament to create a clear scope, which is already considered too expansive. Frederik Österling believes the Saami Parliament has underestimated the scope of its importance and the Swedish Parliament is keen to draw the truth commission to a conclusion and move forward. The Truth Commission scope will identify and review from a historical perspective the policies the Sami were subjected to and the subsequent consequences for the Sami people. The Commission shall bring to light and spread knowledge about the experiences of the Sami and the Commission's conclusions will propose actions that can contribute to amends and promote reconciliation.

Stefan Mikaelsson reflected on the importance of the truth

commission to ensure the voices of women are heard as the colonial regimes internationally have had significant impact on them. He spoke to the importance of improving the current living situation of Sami people in Sweden beyond education and housing and reflected on the importance of attitudinal changes and the living situation – behaving and respecting indigenous people in Swedish society. Much of Sami culture is shared through storytelling. In Swedish dominated society, he reflected that this has been seen or labelled as dangerous or even rejected so the process of the Truth Commission, there is hope this will improve education broadly across Swedish society and the cultural traditions and practices of Sami people are more deeply understood and respected.

Through the Swedish Sami truth telling process and delivery of the final report, Stefan Mikaelsson hopes the Prime Minister of Sweden will make time to visit the Sami Parliament, which he has never done, the community will see investment in education through the Sami Schools (many Sami children attend both Summer and Winter schools in different locations following the animal migrations) and support Sami animal husbandry.

He also reflected on the Sami youth that in a globalised world, are moving away and becoming disconnected from their cultural heritage.

As a working philosophy, the Sami people have a belief that you should be a little bit cold and a little bit hungry as you pass through life, particularly those who are still fishing, hunting, and herding in the arctic, and this is often juxtaposed with the comforts of modern world. However, in contrast the Youth Sami movement Sami Nuorra have been fierce advocates for change, particularly around the green energy movement, supported by Greta Thunberg, often staging sit in protests in Parliaments of their respective countries.

Education plays a major role, and the Sami are seeking to create an environment where the Sami nations (four countries – Norway, Sweden, Finland, Russia) knowledge systems and research, with a particular focus on the environment, can transferred to the next generation.

### Experience and Findings

- Scope of Truth Commissions is fundamental to achieving outcomes that will redefine coloniser history. Whilst the Sami Truth Commission is underway, several interviewees spoke of the breadth of scope and shortness of time. These elements must be considered carefully when planning.

- Acknowledgement by leadership, particularly the Prime Minister, is key to acceptance and genuineness of a truth telling process.
- Truth Commissions should not create conflict within the community ie. North and South Sami, rather acknowledge the colonial impacts on Sami people and work to remedy them.
- Building educational outcomes for both Sami children and historical truth in mainstream society will assist Swedish society move forward on its reconciliation journey.
- The Sami Youth movement have been a powerful force for change and maintain political pressure. Youth movements can maintain pressure on governments to do what they committed to in a contemporary context by those who can challenge in a modern context.

### Race Biology Institute

Ms Katrina Pirak Sikku, Artist, Jokkmokk, Sweden

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State\\_Institute\\_for\\_Racial\\_Biology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State_Institute_for_Racial_Biology)

### Background

The State Institute for Racial Biology was a Swedish governmental research institute founded in 1922 with the stated purpose of studying eugenics and human genetics. It was the most prominent institution for the study of racial science in Sweden. It was located in Uppsala, Sweden. In 1958, it was renamed to the State Institute for Human Genetics and is today incorporated as a department of Uppsala University.

An early research priority was studying the commonness of the Nordic racial traits in the Swedish population and the alleged downsides of race-mixing between the majority population and Finns and the Sámi people.

[Source: Wikipedia]

### Reflections

Katrina Pirak Sikku is a Sami artist who explores through photography, textiles and other art forms, the meaning of the race biology research and its impacts on the Sami people, her parents, and her ancestors. Katrina states "I want to be a subject, not an object".

Katrina spoke of the power of art to "lift the head off the shame," by addressing the race biology carried out on Sami. She wanted to tell the Sami peoples story and not be

demonstrates empowerment and healing through truth telling and art intersecting.

Importance of who owns historical data and how it is stored in a culturally respectful way, and where possible, by the community whose data it represents.

### Swedish Sami Truth Commission

Ms Marja Skum, Truth Commission, Statement Gatherer, Umea, Sweden

<https://www.sametinget.se/truth-commission>

### Background

The Sami Truth Commission will identify, make visible, analyse and highlight the consequences of the policies the Sami people were subjected to. The Commission shall also spread knowledge about and raise the general awareness of Sami history and how historical abuses affect the conditions for the Sami today, participate in the general debate and participate in different forms of education and information activities. The Truth Commission will conclude in December 2025.

Source: <https://www.sametinget.se/truth-commission>

The Commission is currently underway and will survey and examine the policies pursued towards the Sami from a historical perspective, and their consequences for the Sami people.

Source: <https://sanningskommissionensamer.se/en/about-the-commission/>

### Reflections

In 2008, the Sami Youth organisation Sáminuorra, wrote a letter to the responsible Minister at the time, demanding that the Government establish a Truth Commission. The Sami Youth continue to play a powerful advocacy lobby across the Nordic countries.

In 2019, the Sami Parliament submitted a petition to the Ministry of Culture for the central government to fund the process of establishing an independent truth commission. By that time, the Sami Parliament had long been working on this issue. In 2020, the Sami Parliament received a commission from the Government to prepare and solidify the work in the Sami society.

The Commission is currently underway and will survey and examine the policies pursued towards the Sami from a historical perspective, and their consequences for the Sami people.

Source: <https://sanningskommissionensamer.se/en/about-the-commission/>

As a highly credentialed Sami Language speaker, Marja Skum is one of the Truth Statement Gatherers as part of the Sami Truth Commission and spoke about the ambitious scope and time pressures already being felt by the commission and the early challenges observed in the process.

The Truth Commission has a three-year horizon and is due to deliver its report on 1 December 2025.

As this is a live Truth Commission, it was interesting to observe the learnings seen in other truth commission environments placing pressure on the process. There are 15 people in the commission with seven people in the Secretariat roles to cover the broad remit and process which includes research, truth statement gathering, historical timelines and calls for action.

Source: <https://sanningskommissionensamer.se/en/about-the-commission/>

The process is being led by the Sami and is independent of Government. Marja spoke of her hope that the research conducted through the truth Commission will be embedded into the Swedish education system to build understanding and appreciation of Sami Culture. Swedish people are on a journey and there is hope the truth commission will broaden public understanding of the challenges faced by Sami people and the impacts of colonisation. The statement gathering process has been pursued in a narrative style and Marja spoke in detail about the importance of establishing trust and a relationship with people you are interviewing, in fact, many interviews take a whole day to enable to establish trust and a relationship.

She discussed how you had to be aware of the demands of different seasons for Sami people for example to moose hunt, or the harsh winter months when they are managing reindeer down from the mountains. People will not be able to speak their truth to the commission during those times due to the demands of looking after animals and land. The Sami are the people of the wind and are heavily guided by their environment. Understanding these dynamics is essential in gathering the people to speak their truth to the Commission.

Having Sami people lead the truth telling process is fundamental to build trust and important relationships, to enable this work.

Led by a Sami Steering Group and the truth statement gathering led with Sami language speakers is positive. One hundred stories are being captured as part of the commission process.

There is a healing and psychology support service available to those participants who choose to tell their truth which includes 3 x 45 minutes counselling session with Sami professionals. Marja acknowledged that there are big wounds, and they will take time to heal. There is hope that the Sami led Truth Commission will go some way in aiding this if its scope can be realised.

A case study around colonial impacts was playing out in a contemporary context relating to the Nordic Green Movement. The Sami Parliament has released a statement showing no confidence and support for the movement after poor consultation with Sami people. The significant investment in windmills across Lapland has impacted the traditional grazing trails of the reindeer and their movements, due to noise impacts and large ice shards thrown from the windmill blades with the potential to kill reindeer and the herders passing through. There was an opportunity to devise clearance zones to enable grazing pathways, but developers progressed with what the Sami call 'Green colonisation' with their focus purely on profit.

### Experience and Findings

Scope and timing of truth work is vitally important to what can be accomplished in the truth process. Tight time frames can limit the impact and outcomes of the process. In the case of the Swedish Truth Commission having four years to consider the impacts on the Sami since colonisation is a broad remit.

Having Sami people lead the Statement gathering process builds trust and respect. Resourcing the project for success is fundamental and may need to evolve as the process progresses. Funding and the Truth Commission process must be independent from Government.

Timing of statement gathering is highly affected by environmental and animal duties and needs to be considered in relation to peoples' seasonal availability. When working with seasonal or nomadic people – the process of gathering truths must be very flexible.

The healing journey must be carefully defined to ensure that re-traumatisation is minimalised as an outcome to the process. The process itself re-traumatises so important

healing supports are key.

The ground must be prepared for what's to come in a post truth telling environment.

The archiving must be owned and maintained by the Sami people - a request has been made to entrust the Truth Commission to the Saami Museum in Jokkmokk.

### Ajjite Museum, Jokkmokk

<https://www.ajtte.com/english/>

### Background

Jokkmokk, just north of the Arctic Circle, is the site of Ájtte, Swedish Mountain and Sami Museum, a gateway to the high mountains, to Lapland and to the Sami culture. The museum tells the story of Sámi, the land and the people, of life and survival in a demanding climate and environment. It is a story set in the wetlands, forests and mountains.

Source: <https://www.ajtte.com/english/>

### Reflections

The Museum is the cultural collection of the Sami people which is led by Sami providing a place for archive, research, culture, and collections.

Ms Katrina Pirak Sikku, who we interviewed regarding the Race Biology Institute spoke to the importance of Sami people owning their historical data and its use, and it is in the Ajjite Museum where Sami now house the majority of their data history and story. Not only are the cultural artefacts and collections of deep importance, but the past and ongoing research into the Sami people and the lands that have been cared for by the Indigenous people for millennia.

The Museum shows the evolution of intergenerational Sami culture to the current day and includes both historical and contemporary practice, demonstrating the Sami operating in the modern world.

### Experience and Findings

The importance of Indigenous owned and led museum environments where artefacts and data are handled in a culturally appropriate manner.

As Indigenous led, cultural and collection protocols are led by Sami people, including taking back coloniser collections



that in previous generations, harmed or categorised Sami people.

The powerful education environment museums provide for broader understanding and acceptance across society.

The opportunity to present Indigenous people and collections as they operate and adapt in contemporary society.





Swedish Sami Truth Commission: Pictured Marja Skum and Robyn Smith-Walley



# SOUTH AFRICA

## Robben Island

Museum visit

<https://www.robben-island.org.za/>

### Background

Robben Island Museum (RIM) is a public entity responsible for managing, maintaining, presenting, developing and marketing Robben Island as a national estate and World Heritage Site. It was established by the South African Department of Arts and Culture in 1997.

RIM implements a wide range of conservation, educational, tourist development, research, archiving and general heritage programmes that are designed to achieve its mandate; conserve the Island's natural and cultural resources and heritage; and promote it as a platform for critical debate and life-long learning.

Source: <https://www.robben-island.org.za/>

### Reflections

Robben Island provides a tourism and education experience based out of Cape Town that connects the mainland to Robben Island, most famous for incarcerating Nelson Mandela for 18 of his 27 years in prison.

There are many elements to this experience that speak to truth, the most powerful is the fact that the tours on Robben Island are led by ex-prisoners, many of whom who were imprisoned during the apartheid era. Interestingly, many of those prisoners have now returned to live on the island in a small community established on the island and perform tours for visitors. Hearing from those who survived this oppressive penal colony and existed alongside Mandela was sobering. Most are old men now, and their stories and truth have been captured for the future generations <https://www.robben-island.org.za/prisoner-stories/>. Hearing their truth through lived experience is a powerful component of the tour.

The element of this experience starts on the mainland at the ferry terminal, where passengers are shown historical videos of Mandela's life, leadership of the

liberation movement, and his experience in the prison. Much of the education took place before even landing on the island.

On the ferry transfer, further videos were shared to the 'captive audience' ensuring that once visitors arrived on the island, they had a level of context and knowledge. Once on the island, tour groups then commenced the prison tour, followed by the island tour.

The prison curation remained bleak and stark as to the prisoner experience. The harshness of conditions and back breaking work in the island quarries were on full display. The site had not been overly curated and gave a real sense of the lived experience. Those who had experienced the most brutal and violent of regimes, were free to tell their truth in person and by doing so, experience freedom. Mandela's cell was on display as well as the simple garden he planted, providing him with hope as the seasons rolled past.

Alongside the experience, the Robben Island website provides education programs and information, along with prisoners' truths for broader access. The power of the Robben Island experience was in its interconnectivity between mainland and island and lived experience guides.

### Experience and Findings

In a placed based approach, and in an island environment, the opportunity to connect the experience from the mainland and across to the island, including in transit, is powerful and provides an opportunity to educate and inform as part of the journey.

Having the conversation led by Prisoners, or people with a personal connection ensures powerful truths are shared and contextualized. The emotional response from the audience ensured the truth of their experience resonated.

In a prison environment, ensuring it is not overly curated and left 'as is' – provides a stark reality for visitors, and in the case of Robben Island demonstrated the harshness the prisoners experienced.

Ensuring a strong online experience and education supports the physical experience and enables people to plan, research and re-visit post their experience.

### Amy Foundation

Mr Kevin Chaplin

<https://amyfoundation.co.za/?v=e4dd286dc7d7>

### Background

The Foundation was named after American student, Amy Biehl, a gifted and dynamic young woman who was committed to making a difference in South Africa. She tirelessly worked with members of the African National Congress (ANC) at the University of the Western Cape's Community Law Centre on the new Constitution and Women's Rights, as well as helped register voters for the country's first free elections in 1994.

On August 25, 1993, Amy Biehl's life was tragically cut short in an act of political mob violence in the Gugulethu township just outside of Cape Town. Four young men were convicted of her murder, and after spending 5 years in prison were granted amnesty through the parents of Amy and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

Determined to honour Amy's love of South Africa and her belief in the truth and reconciliation process, Amy's parents founded the organisation.

Source: <https://amyfoundation.co.za/about-us/?v=e4dd286dc7d7>

### Reflections

The Amy Foundation was born from the most brutal experience but through a long journey of truth and forgiveness has become a beacon of hope for South Africa. Through the TRC, the perpetrators on Amy's murder were granted amnesty by her parents, and they in her honour, formed the Foundation which looks to ensure young people, particularly cape coloured and black young people, are given care, employment and training opportunities to close the gap of disadvantage.

Currently the Foundation cares for 1200 children which includes a range of hospitality, transport, and training

opportunities to maintain schooling and development into future jobs. They have a Youth Skills Centre which has placed 1483 (at time of interview) into jobs in 175 organisations.

This is fundamentally a story of forgiveness and reconciliation, that was enabled through the TRC process.

What is remarkable was for many years, two of the perpetrators worked in the Amy Foundation with one continuing to be an active employee. This demonstrating a genuine commitment of their remorse. This example demonstrates the intended outcome of the TRC, which was based on forgiveness, a value for which Archbishop Desmond Tutu was a strong advocate as part of the process.

From an education perspective, Amy Biehl's story has been included in the Year 11 South African Curriculum in schools as an example of the outcome of the TRC and the healing that occurs. This is a powerful legacy where the focus of the Foundation to educate, develop and empower youth lives on.

He expressed there has been a loss of hope in the system, and the complexities of a mixed raced community with ongoing community racism, tensions, unemployment, and violence, means there is much work still be done post the TRC and apartheid. This is visible in housing and economic realities on the ground. Whilst we were visiting, there were several violent protests which reverted our interviews online, including with the Amy Foundation.

As well as the Amy Foundation, Kevin also leads the Ubuntu Foundation, which as a literal translation means 'I am because we are'. The intent is to bring people together for the betterment of South Africa, and in turn the world. It's been established to break down barriers and start the journey of hope through shared humanity

[\[www.saubuntu.org.za\]](http://www.saubuntu.org.za).

### Experience and Findings

- Framing the TRC within the context amnesty, based of forgiveness, proved to be successful in the case of Amy Biehl and the establishment of the Foundation by her parents.
- Of the four granted amnesty through the TRC process, two went on to work in the Amy Foundation and support youth to build a better life. The process of forgiveness being one of the cornerstones of the TRC process.

- Providing care, training, and economic opportunities for those impacted by being a minority, disadvantaged or suffering poverty, aides the healing journey. The Amy Foundation is seeking to break the intergenerational cycle of disadvantage through its programming. Economic empowerment is a fundamental driver of reconciliation.

Embedding truth and Amy Biehl's story within the Year 11 Curriculum shines a light on the truth process and the act of forgiveness by her family. Broadening understanding through education is a powerful enabler of change and hope.

### South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)

Colonel Joop Pinckaers, Past TRC Independent Auditor

<https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/>

#### Background

The TRC was established by the Government of National Unity to reconcile the atrocities committed under the apartheid regime. The conflict during this period resulted in violence and human rights abuses from all sides. No section of society escaped the impact of apartheid.

The TRC effected its mandate through three committees: the Amnesty Committee, Reparation and Rehabilitation (R&R) Committee and Human Rights Violations (HRV) Committee.

This register gave members of the public a chance to express their regret at failing to prevent human rights violations and to demonstrate their commitment to reconciliation.

source: <https://www.justice.gov.za/trc>

#### Reflections

Whilst unable to meet formally with the TRC after multiple attempts, we were honoured to meet online with Colonel Joop Pinckaers, who had been recruited from Holland by the South African Government as an Independent Auditor of the TRC process to ensure its integrity and independence.

More than forty years of apartheid cast a long shadow of human rights violations, including massacres, torture, lengthy imprisonment of activists, and crippling racial discrimination.

Nelson Mandela's release in 1990, after 27 years in prison, led to negotiations between South Africa's apartheid government and the African National Congress, and elections in 1994.

Colonel Pinckaers provided a detailed briefing, outlining the establishment of the TRC negotiations that led to the amnesty model. The African National Congress sought a process involving a Court of Justice, similar to the Nuremberg process in Germany, where the National Party sought a process of general amnesty.

In 1995, the South African Parliament mandated the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The TRC's report, published in 1998, included testimony from over 21,000 victims and witnesses. More than 2,000 testified at public hearings.

The result saw the promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act, ruled amongst other regulations: that individuals could apply for amnesty on the basis of:

1. Committed gross human rights violations
2. Committed during a certain period (between 1-3-1960 until 6-12-1993)
3. Based on a political instruction

The TRC was charged with investigating and documenting gross human rights violations committed within or outside South Africa in the period 1960-1993. In doing so, it was to compile as complete a picture as possible of these events and violation. The Commission sought to reflect the motives and perspectives of both the alleged perpetrators of gross human rights violations and of their victims.

However, prior atrocities committed to Indigenous (Khoisan), black and coloured communities in South Africa provide a broader picture of the inequity in South Africa faced over many centuries and are important for context.

Three committees were established as part of the TRC:

1. The Human Rights Violation Committee who enables people to tell their story in order to start the reconciliation and healing process.
2. Amnesty Committee which dealt with the most difficult of issues to be negotiated of which there were 1700 lodged, some of which were reverted to criminal cases.
3. Reparation / Rehabilitation Committee

The process was broadcast nationally and over 21,000 statements were gathered, by far weighting in favour of African (19,144), Coloured (354), Asian (45), White (231) with over 38,000 cases of gross human rights violations committed. The number of participants demonstrates those deponents who described themselves as African is much higher than would be expected from the population statistics.

However most other efforts to respond to victims' rights and pursue individual criminal responsibility for crimes committed during apartheid have failed:

- The TRC law authorized a controversial offer of "amnesty for truth" to perpetrators of human rights abuses who were willing to confess.
- Former President Thabo Mbeki's presidential pardons process—publicly described as a means for resolving 'the unfinished business of the TRC'—conducted secret proceedings which excluded victim representation.
- Amendments to the National Prosecuting Authority's Prosecution Policy provided for a 'back-door amnesty' that effectively granted impunity for apartheid-era perpetrators who had not applied for the TRC's amnesty.

During 2008, the Pretoria High Court declared the Prosecution Policy's amendments unconstitutional. In 2010, the Constitutional Court upheld victims' rights to be consulted before political pardons were granted. Despite the striking down of such impunity promoting measures, not a single case recommended for prosecution is before the courts today.

The low number of white deponents is not wholly a consequence of hostility towards the Commission. The Commission made a concerted effort to reach all sections of the community. Special appeals for whites to come forward were made through the media and the Commission held several sectoral hearings focusing on issues of interest to the white community. The reality is that the conflicts of the past affected very few whites in comparison to the rest of the population, so very few came forward to make statements.

The healing process of the TRC was overseen by the Reparation and Rehabilitation Committee and had several mechanisms to be utilised, however, many were not provided to victims and compensation payments were adjusted from what was originally promised.

Most of the recommendations on reparations made by the TRC, including the yearly payment to survivors of R21,000 for six years and the collection of a 'wealth tax' to fund reparations from industries that benefited from apartheid, were not implemented by the State. Instead, the government established a reparations fund with money from the State and from donors; using this fund, it paid a lump sum of R30,000 each to about 23,000 persons who registered with the TRC as victims. It has also provided reburial expenses to 47 families of disappeared persons. Additional support for medical, higher education assistance and 'community rehabilitation projects'

in economically distressed communities were prioritised with remaining funds.

Additionally, before, during and after each hearing, the Commission tried to ensure that victims who testified and their families could access appropriate psychological support services to aid healing.

An important component of the TRC was the Independent Investigation Unit due to the size and complexity of the Commission. The Independent Investigation Unit focused on the following four areas:

- The complaints of the victims or relatives who testified in the hearings
- The information from amnesty applications and facilitating the granting of amnesty
- To initiate independent investigations as determined by the Commission
- The information from police dockets

Within the Independent audit function, an Analysis Function was established and whereby investigating information gathered relating to broad themes could be centrally processed and analysed so as to identify trends and patterns and double check the validity of claims.

Whilst the TRC was globally recognised and many countries supported the process through sponsorship, the process was not popular in South Africa for the apartheid leadership for obvious reasons. One interesting powerful supporter was the Jewish community who post WW2, had their truth acknowledged during the Nuremburg Trials.

With its short lifespan and limited mandate and resources, it was obviously impossible for the TRC to reconcile the nation. Selected moments from the life of the Commission do express significant steps in the reconciliation process. Some are beacons of hope where others warn of pitfalls. Together they constitute signposts on the long road towards making individual, communal and national reconciliation an important and ongoing process in South Africa.

### Experience and Findings

Excerpt of Volume 1 and 5 of Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report, shares key experiences and reflections from the TRC process which should be considered by truth commissions globally.

The work of the Commission dispels the "myth that things

can be done with magic dust, to bring people together and then they just start working together. There are stages in reconciliation.”

The following stages or signposts on the reconciliation road have been highlighted by this chapter:

- Reconciliation does not come easily. It requires persistence. It takes time.
- Reconciliation is based on respect for our common humanity.
- Reconciliation involves a form of restorative justice which does not seek revenge, nor does it seek impunity. In restoring the perpetrator to society, a milieu needs to emerge within which he or she may contribute to the building of democracy, a culture of human rights and political stability.
- The full disclosure of truth and an understanding of why violations took place encourage forgiveness.
- Equally important is the readiness to accept responsibility for past human rights violations.
- Reconciliation does not wipe away the memories of the past. Indeed, it is motivated by a form of memory that stresses the need to remember without debilitating pain, bitterness, revenge, fear or guilt. It understands the vital importance of learning from and redressing past violations for the sake of our shared present and our children’s future.
- Reconciliation does not necessarily involve forgiveness. It does involve a minimum willingness to co-exist and work for the peaceful handling of continuing differences.
- Reconciliation requires that all South Africans accept moral and political responsibility for nurturing a culture of human rights and democracy within which political and socio-economic conflicts are addressed both seriously and in a non-violent manner.
- Reconciliation requires a commitment, especially by those who have benefited and continue to benefit from past discrimination to the transformation of unjust inequalities and dehumanising poverty.

President Nelson Mandella post the TRC process made

a Commitment to Reconciliation and Unity which was an invitation to the South African people and those in positions of leadership and influence. These were his commitments:

- The Commission, believing that reconciliation is a process vital and necessary for enduring peace and stability, invites fellow South Africans to:
  - accept our own need for healing
  - reach out to fellow South Africans in a spirit of tolerance and understanding
  - work actively to build bridges across the divisions of language, faith and history
  - strive constantly, in the process of transformation, to be sensitive to the needs of those groups which have been particularly disadvantaged in the past, specifically women and children
  - encourage a culture of debate so that, together, we can resolve the pressing issues of our time
  - initiate programmes of action in our own spheres of interest and influence, whether it be education, religion, business, labour, arts or politics, so that the process of reconciliation can be implemented from a grassroots level
  - address the reality of ongoing racial discrimination and work towards a non-racial society
  - call upon leaders in local, provincial and national government to place the goal of reconciliation and unity at the top of their respective agendas.
- (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report page 304 – 350 Volume 5)
- In addition to the learnings from official reports, Colonel Joop Pinckaers shared the following insights from the perspective of leading the Investigation Division of the TRC:
  - The establishment of a truth commission should not formally commence its allocated time until the commissions if fully established and staffed. This takes consultation and time and often absorbs valuable time allocated for actual truth telling and reporting. The TRC extended its timeline twice.

- The truth process coupled with justice is vital, the legacy of the commission was also compromised as the post-Mandela government was slow to implement the TRC's recommendations, including the reparations program. By the end of the first decade, few of the commission's recommendations had been implemented, and there had been few prosecutions of individuals who failed to apply for amnesty or who were refused amnesty by the TRC. The failure to prosecute has disillusioned many victims and encouraged the view that the government had strengthened impunity and that the beneficiaries of apartheid had escaped accountability for their actions.
- A key weakness of the commission was that it did not focus sufficiently on the policies or political economy of apartheid. The failure to examine the effect and impact of apartheid's policies resulted in the need for the perpetrators to bear the collective shame of the nation and let those who benefitted from apartheid to escape responsibility.
- Countries must hear and understand their truth in order to take the next steps.
- A truth process must commit to the entirety of the program that was promised and must include healing if you are asking people to re-visit past trauma.
- International attention and collaboration provide a layer of oversight, interest, and investment. Involving countries or communities (the Jewish community in the case of the TRC) can ensure attention around the integrity of process.
- Truth sharing must always be voluntary.
- Due to a lack of closure of the TRC process with compensation and education programs not fully implemented – the healing process remains incomplete and has been significantly challenging for the reconciliation movement in South Africa.
- The consideration of what constitutes a victim is fundamental, particularly as many atrocities have and continue to impact intergenerationally. Including family members in this definition, aids healing.
- In a Truth Commission of this scale and importance, the importance of an independent oversight cannot be underestimated.

- Vicarious trauma of those examining the evidence through the truth process is highlight impactful, as the reflection from Joop Pinckaers details below:

*The members of the Investigative Unit worked long hours in hostile conditions, in which from time to time their safety was not assured. They confronted former and serving members of the security forces, politicians, judicial officers, government officials on all sides of the spectrum.*

*They were met with lack of cooperation, delays and lack of understanding. They worked with victims and experienced their trauma, anguish and pain. They worked with perpetrators and saw the brutalised, traumatised people who carried out horrific acts of violence.*

*They worked with those stories, stories of torture, rape and murder, of bodies being blown up repeatedly, being burnt for hours.*

*They were there when remains of victims were exhumed. They saw the bullet holes in the back of heads and felt the terror of those victims in their last hours.*

*They went home to be with their families, to interact with friends. And they returned to work another day to face the trauma, the stress and the anxiety again.*

What we unfortunately see is that the recommendations for the future generations are not in place or maintained. Since the passing of Nelson Mandela, Alex Boraine and Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the fathers of reconciliation and healing, the necessary attention for reconciliation and healing have all but disappeared.

### **The Desmond and Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation**

Ms Janet Jobson & Ms Phumi Nhlapo

<https://www.tutu.org.za/>

### **Background**

Founded in 2011, the Desmond and Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation represents one of the world's most iconic leaders, and his life-long partner. The Foundation strives to ensure their uncompromised bravery is celebrated, communicated and curated for posterity.

Source: <https://www.tutu.org.za/>



## Reflections

The Desmond and Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation is a powerful movement looking to heal South Africa from the legacy of Apartheid. CEO Janet Jobson reflected on the need to heal from the complexity of who South Africa is as a nation.

Post the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in South Africa, the legacy was not uniformly good (see interview with Colonel Joop Pinkers, which explores this further). Many of the compromises made through the TRC are now the issues South Africa faces. The TRC at its core was seeking to find a way to get the Apartheid regime to negotiate for peace. The process was telecast nationally, and the truth of the brutal regime laid bare.

As part of the Amnesty model in the Truth Commission – 2.8K people applied for amnesty with only 300 from the Apartheid regime fronting, with the groundswell of 2.2K from the Black Liberation movements. However, the process did not deal with the perpetrators with over 300 cases for prosecution being put forward through the truth commission and only one (1) ever being prosecuted. Families of victims set up judicial processes to seek the truth but were severely let down.

The country is now revisiting those cases and seeking to prosecute with 42 cases currently being investigated, however the Apartheid regime before being overturned conducted a mass shredding and destroyed the majority of records held by the regime, which adds to the difficulty of evidence for prosecution.

<https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/>

The post TRC environment also presented real challenges with the government of the day not seeing through on the TRCs recommendations. Whilst reparations were committed to by the Government which included a payment and bursaries for university education, few accessed the benefits and have not had the opportunities to move forward from the process. As the TRC had limitations in what they could achieve, and without reparations being delivered in a large part, secondary trauma as people have aged has had impact.

However, the model did secure peace when South Africa was on the brink of civil war with many notable clashes including the infamous Soweto Uprising and the Sharpeville Massacre.

Through all the TRC process, Archbishop Desmond Tutu's focus was on the act of forgiveness, driven largely by his religious beliefs and that this would be the most cathartic outcome for survivors. This at times drew major critique, and compounded with the lack of government follow through, many victims felt the TRC process failed them, including Steve Biko's family.

The exhibition at the Tutu Foundation in Cape Town shares the archbishop's journey alongside many allies including his life partner Leah Tutu and leaders such as Mandella.

The brutality of the Apartheid regime is laid bare to remind South Africa of a dark period in its history and those leaders who fought for freedom and justice. Several seating areas present confronting and harrowing moments on film in the journey to freedom. It's sister Museum in Johannesburg, the Apartheid Museum, which is shared in detail further on, broadens the story to the anti-Apartheid movement globally.

What differs in South Africa from other countries, is the perpetrators and oppressors were the minority and the survivors are the majority. Whilst the truth was told through the TRC, the opportunity to heal was lost. The Tutu Foundation is looking at the unfinished business of the reconciliation and healing for South Africa and is starting a journey, in the spirit of the archbishop, to create hope for South Africa.

## Experience and Findings

The Foundation Leaders shared that truth telling changes the public discourse and should be publicly broadcast.

They believe its fundamental to be clear what the end goal is and what should be accomplished through the course of a formal truth telling and healing process. In South Africa, there is still so much more work to be done.

The truth telling process should not be cross examined as it's not a legal process, rather, a healing one and should not be adversary in nature.

Formal truth processes should not be time bound, there should be a capacity for truth gathering to continue when people are wanting and ready to do so. Truth triggers re-traumatisation, so timing is fundamental.

The TRC created societal level healing for those hearing others' experiences. Through the act of truth telling, stories of people who have connection are heard and shared, often

The Tutu Foundation provides access as an education site and the TRC is embedded into the South African School Curriculum, creating strong visitation to the exhibition 'Truth to Power' at the Foundation.

## Nelson Mandela Foundation

Mr Verne Harris, Acting CEO

<https://www.nelsonmandela.org/>

### Background

The Nelson Mandela Foundation is a non-profit organisation focused on memory, dialogue and legacy work, founded by Nelson Mandela in 1999. We are the custodian of his life and times; we are a committed facilitator of his living legacy; and we are mandated to promote his lifelong vision of freedom and equality for all.

Part of the preservation and advancement of Madiba's legacy and making this legacy available to the world is the provision and ongoing preservation of its extensive archive collection materials.

Source: <https://www.nelsonmandela.org/>

### Reflections

Mandela's legacy through the foundation has been powerful to bring a focus to the impact of the apartheid movement in South Africa and the global movement Mandela and others led to topple the regime.

The Foundation has led powerful justice work through the Nelson Mandela International Dialogues - providing a forum to discuss the complex personal, collective, and professional challenges facing those engaged in reckoning with the past. This work completed between 2013 - 2014, was done in partnership with ten countries and 26 specialist practitioners.

The Nelson Mandela Foundation benefited greatly from the experience, reflecting long and hard on its own praxis, its mandate from Nelson Mandela, and its positioning within the South African tradition of 'memory for justice'. The latter emerged in the late 1970s and crystalized in the struggles for liberation during the profoundly damaging 1980s driven by the Apartheid movement. And it was the call to memory for justice which shaped South Africa's strategy for reckoning with its oppressive pasts in the 1990s. The lessons learned for the continuing work of memory in a country burdened by its past and reaching for a liberatory future have been captured through this work.

Source: <https://www.nelsonmandela.org/>

As the past Archivist, Verne Harris, who is the now Acting CEO, spoke to the challenge of making just futures if you don't reconciliation with the past. The Mandela Foundation has led much of the post-Apartheid thinking and reflection in South Africa.

As an archivist professional, in relation to truth telling, Verne spoke of having absolute clarity of purpose, and then being person and purpose centric in the work above all else. To ensure the truth telling process is sustainable, its powerful to envisage how the work may be used in 20 years' time, to ensure its designed to achieve its full purpose.

He reflected on the team you put around this work must care deeply and have activist style energy. He reflected on the punishing nature of the work and the toll it can take on people, thus caring for those involved is critical.

At the Mandella Foundation in Johannesburg, a comprehensive exhibition is kept to honour Mandella's life work, which includes his in-situ office and archive.

### Experience and Findings

- The value of international collaboration when doing truth telling, justice and reconciliation seeks the best practice and a collective to examine outcomes using different cultural lenses.
- Be acutely purpose focused, then when there is absolute clarity, people focused.
- Think sustainably as to the future use of the exercise so it can be designed accordingly.
- Choose you team to do the work with an activist mentality. They must demonstrate both resilience and determination for the work of liberation.

## Apartheid Museum

Museum visit

<https://www.apartheidmuseum.org/>

### Background

- The Apartheid Museum opened in 2001 and is acknowledged as the pre-eminent museum in the world dealing with 20th century South Africa, at the heart of which is the apartheid story. The Apartheid Museum, the first of its kind, illustrates the rise and fall of apartheid.

- The exhibits have been assembled and organised by a multi-disciplinary team of curators, film-makers, historians and designers. They include provocative film footage, photographs, text panels and artefacts illustrating the events and human stories that are part of the horrific period in South Africa's history.

Source: <https://www.apartheidmuseum.org/about-the-museum>

## Reflections

The Apartheid Museum is a powerful collection of truths from South Africa's difficult Apartheid era. The experience commences as purchase your ticket as a 'White' or Black' citizen and enter the museum through different queues and commence your museum journey with a curated perspective on your race. It's an uncomfortable moment of truth – but a reminder of South Africa's recent history that is challenged through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Once you emerge from the entry hall, there is a long reflective walk, like Mandella's freedom walk that has multiple mirrored reflections as you take the journey. It's a stark reminder, we are all part of this story. A powerful element was a side corridor that was optional to walk through that gave the story of South Africa's First Nations community, the Khoisan. Whilst part of a broader 'black' community of Apartheid impact, the museum seized the opportunity to acknowledge First Nations people.

The architecture was a powerful reminder of the various oppressive policies with high prison like walls, razor wire and hard lines. With the apartheid movement having a relatively tight frame in the context of history, the curation is all encompassing of this oppressive regime.

The museum provides powerful learnings through the use of film footage, giving the viewers shocking vision of the bloodshed of the uprisings. Interviews with key leaders, Mandella, Tutu and many others, who were powerful orators, demonstrated the strength of the movement, supported by a powerful breakout exhibition of the American uprising against apartheid.

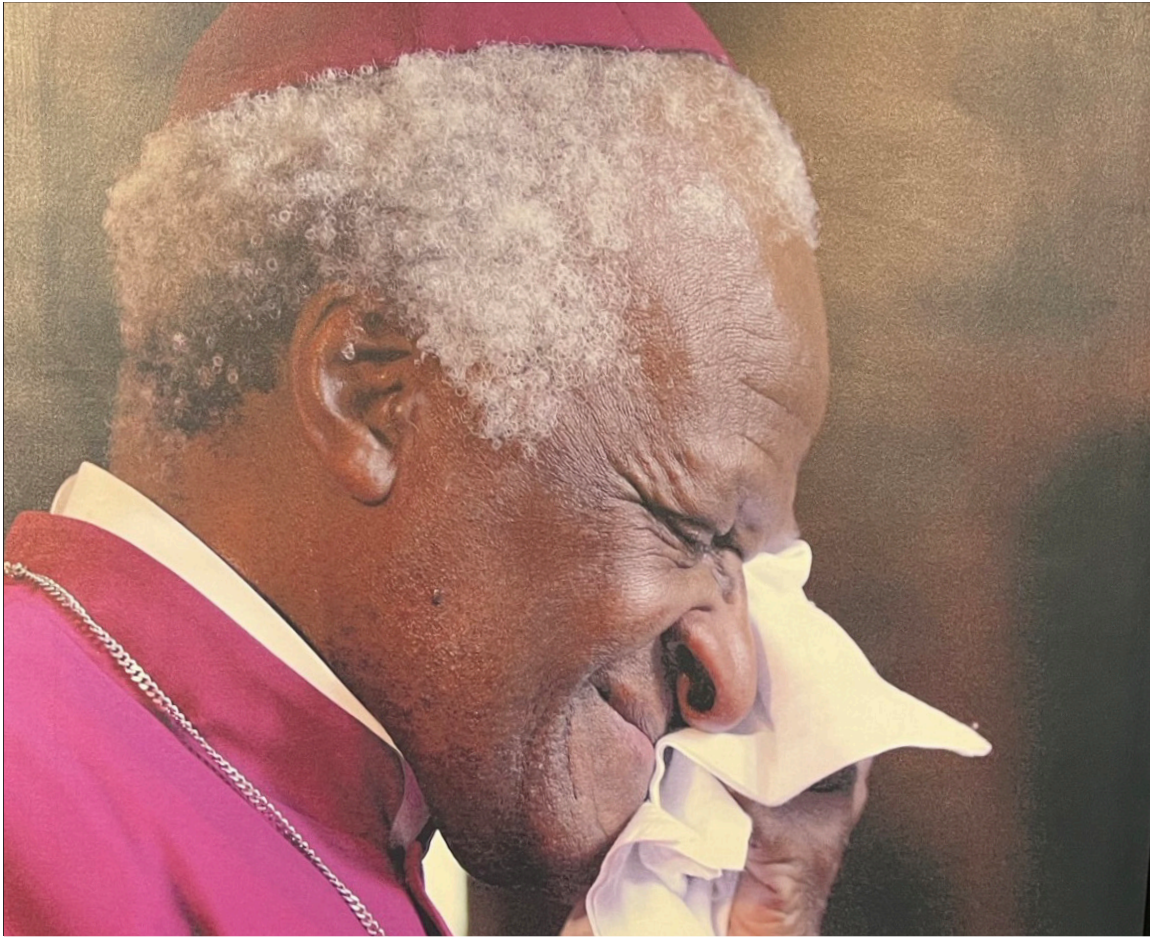
Bringing in the global perspective shone a light on the international condemnation of this era, which led to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

## Experience and Findings

- The Apartheid Museum builds truth into its experience

including the 'Black' and 'White' ticketed and dual entry into the Museum, the Long Walk to Freedom and architectural features including prison features that are observed throughout the site. By sharing truth as part of the experience, it created impact and reflection for the visitor by just entering the space. The experience is built around a story that impresses on exit that this political regime should never be allowed to see light again. However, many in South Africa commented apartheid is alive and well hovering just below the surface.

- There are powerful reflections and questions as you leave the Museum that creates a sense of accountability and responsibility going forward.
- A global view is shared in the Museum of the impact of apartheid and the political pressure that came down worldwide to topple the movement. Having a broader international lens adds power to the story.
- The use of film, artefacts and reflections within a site-specific design is very powerful.
- The Museum has a partnership with the Tutu Foundation in Cape Town to share Archbishop Desmond Tutu's Apartheid story. The connect between the two sites is powerful and could be considered for programs such as Wayelup (Fremantle) and Wadjemup (Rottneest).



# AUSTRALIA

## Truth Telling and Healing in Australia

As part of our journey, we visited the state of Victoria and reflected on the powerful work of the First Nation's Assembly which was established with the support of the Victorian State Government. The Yoorook Justice Truth Telling Commission is the first formal state process in Australia. Whilst Commissioners were focused on important reports when we visited, we spoke to Government officials and academics to discover the commissions progress and learnings to date.

As many truth commissions demonstrated during our overseas research, the breadth of Yoorook's scope is significant and often too broad. This Commission's brief is to investigate systemic injustice since colonisation, and they have a three-year period of enquiry. The process has recently commenced at the time of writing this report.

<https://yoorookjusticecommission.org.au/>

Professor Andrew Gunstone, Director of the National Centre for Truth, Justice and Reconciliation, based at Federation University in Victoria, spoke to us about practices of truth telling which reinforced our learnings gained from international experience. He focused on the importance of the process being led by First Nations people and honouring time and the diversity of voices. He also reinforced the power of Indigenous language in people sharing their truth.

<https://federation.edu.au/about-us/our-university/reconciliation/national-centre-for-reconciliation-truth-and-justice>

Whilst the national context was beyond our brief, we were appreciative of the common insights shared.

<https://www.recwa.org.au/>



# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Our Churchill Fellowship provided deep insight into a range of truth telling commissions, organisations and individuals, and the challenges that exist to truly reconcile between First Nations and Colonisers.

We continually observed the challenge for minority peoples fighting to be heard and to heal. We saw good intent by colonising governments to create closure to significant societal issues only to fall short on aspects of process through being controlling, bureaucratic, cutting short the process or at worst incomplete.

We also witnessed the strength of Indigenous people who, time and again, showed resilience and integrity of leadership in the face of adversity, and sought to call out poor practice, bureaucracy, and restrictive timelines that prevented truth telling work from achieving its ends. So often, we witnessed cultural leaders who were educating colonial powers as to better ways of working, sharing truth and healing.

As Elder Robert Green from the Museum of Human Rights in Canada stated, "You cannot suppress the truth, it will always come out in the end."

As a result of truth commissions and smaller community truth processes, there were powerful societal transitions and transformations observed. Quite often it took many more years than it should have to realise healing and reconciliation, but the work continues.

However, whilst systems were often imperfect, there was progress and powerful learnings that we have captured for this Churchill Fellowship Report and summarised into a Noongar Six Seasons Truth Framework.

By observing multiple truth commissions, we concluded that a nation can achieve maturity when it faces the truth of its past and present. The powerful practice often brought people from both Indigenous and Non-Indigenous communities closer and built the path to healing and reconciliation. We saw this powerfully displayed in Canada after its own Truth and Reconciliation Commission with a national awakening about the devastating impact of the Indian Residential School system. Chief and Residential School Survivor Dr Robert Joseph spoke of tens of thousands of Canadians walking in solidarity on the newly declared National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, a national day that emerged from the Truth Commission process.

The most powerful Indigenous Truth Telling process we observed was the 100% Indigenous led Qikiqtani Truth Commission. After a State led process into the slaughter of tens of thousands of their dogs by the Department that performed the cull, the

Indigenous group rejected the state process and held their own truth commission. It resulted in an apology from the Crown, sovereignty over their territories and government support to re-establish the cultural and education programs that they nominated, including re-establishing dog teaming. However, it took decades and abundant persistence and determination before they finally secured government support.

In the non-Indigenous space, we compared the process of the Nuremberg Trials in Germany, post WW2 to bring the perpetrators of Nazi rule to justice. With a truth, justice and education process, within a generation the truth of this harrowing period has been woven into the national education curriculum. Concentration Camp memorials were created, and a national narrative that condemned the Nazi regime in perpetuity. As a result, the City of Nuremberg now positions itself as the City of Human Rights and Peace, in stark contrast to the City's previous notoriety as the location of the Nazi war criminal trials. The most mature example of Indigenous truth telling work was found in New Zealand, through the long running and detailed Waitangi Tribunal process, which provides a detailed and deep truth telling process as part of the treaty negotiations.

Disappointingly, after an electoral change to conservative government in New Zealand, the Waitangi Tribunal is under review after 40 years of bi-partisan support, ten years short of its target to complete the treaty work.

The Tribunal's detailed reports provide powerful context and history of each Iwi in New Zealand for future generations and an apology, land parcel and economic stimulus to ensure the Māori community's future.

We observed through most of the truth telling processes that healing is a fundamental part of the process, not separate. Many aspects of the truth telling process itself can start the healing process through Indigenous-led, language-led, community-led approaches. However longitudinal support for both the individual sharing their truth and impacted family members is fundamental in the healing journey. The real impacts of intergenerational trauma have been demonstrated through epigenetic transfer of blood and cell memory, and vicarious trauma is at the heart of many social issues for Indigenous people globally.

We set out to build a blueprint for truth telling, healing and sustainability for Western Australia, in particular for the Wadjemup Island (Rottne) Truth Telling and Memorialization process. Wadjemup is the largest Aboriginal Deaths in Custody site in the Southern Hemisphere. After more than thirty years of continued lobbying by the Noongar people, the Western Australian government has recently made a sizeable investment

to honouring this work. Our research provides context for the work; we have studied closely those who have gone on this journey ahead of us. We believe there is a chance for us as a nation to truly heal if we re-frame the story of Wadjemup for future generations and move forward in solidarity.

The Noongar Six Seasons Framework aims to support those committed to truth telling at a national, state, and local level. Australia has been on a long and difficult road to reconciliation, not helped by the rejection of the 2023 Voice Referendum. As we approach the Western Australian Bicentenary in 2029, there is a significant opportunity to build and lead a truth process for the State. In turn, it will form a picture of our true and complete history, spanning more than 60,000 years. A true picture, based on truth telling, will provide future generations with a much deeper knowledge system, and a roadmap in our healing journey between First Nations and Settler communities from 1826 to the present, and into the future.

By sharing truth to advance civil society through understanding and respecting our whole story, we aim to build unity for the next generation and our collective future. As Western Australia begins its truth journey CEO of Te Arawhiti, New Zealand Lil Anderson reminds us that “Truth Telling must leave people sharing their truth in a better place”.

### Dissemination and Implementation

The report will sit on the Churchill Trust website [www.churchilltrust.com.au](http://www.churchilltrust.com.au)

The report and ‘Many Truths’ Framework will be available on Reconciliation WA’s website [www.recwa.org.au](http://www.recwa.org.au)  
The presentation of the learnings will be hosted online.

The National Centre for Truth, Justice and Reconciliation will share the research in a national context.

### Recommendations

- In order to extend our research to provide Open Source ‘Many Truth Six Seasons Truth Telling Framework’ to practitioners working in Truth Telling and Healing programs.
- Engage the WA State Government through Department of Premier and Cabinet leadership and in partnership build the Blueprint for Western Australia model.
- Present to the Churchill Fellowship community on invitation.
- Present to Reconciliation WA Membership in August 2024.
- Present to the Wadjemup (Rottneest Island) Cultural Authority and Leadership in September 2024.
- Present to the National Centre for Truth, Justice and Reconciliation (Federation University) in 2024 as Adjunct Fellows.
- Submit to the National Truth Telling and Justice Commission Forum by 20 September 2024.
- Partake in a partnership with Murdoch University to present a Western Australian Truth Telling Forum for National Reconciliation Week 2025.
- Scope an international Truth Telling Convention in WA in 2027, leading into the Western Australian Bicentenary.
- Research International Truth Telling Conferences and how we may further share the research in 2025 and beyond.

### APPENDICES

Many Truths Framework, 2024 (open source)

