



INDIGENOUS YOUTH AND MUSEUMS

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for the Arts

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INDIGENOUS YOUTH AND MUSEUMS: A REPORT ON THE *INDIGENOUS YOUTH ACCESS* PROJECT

Lynda Kelly
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The *Indigenous Youth Access* project aimed to increase Indigenous youth access to museums by identifying critical issues affecting Indigenous youth through researching needs, attitudes and leisure habits. This baseline data will enable suggestions and recommendations to be put forward. The pilot study took place from August, 2001 to January, 2002 and was assisted by the Australia Council, the Commonwealth Government's arts funding and advisory body, through its Audience and Market

Development Division, with in-kind support (salary, travel and disbursements) provided by the Australian Museum, Sydney. This pilot study included a literature review, extensive consultations across museums and industry, as well as focus groups and depth interviews with Indigenous youth. Recommendations have been made for strategies that will facilitate access by and engagement of Indigenous youth with museums in ways that meet their identified needs. For the purposes of this study, youth were defined as being aged between 15 and 24 years of age.

This report covers a number of areas:

- Introduction
- Literature Review
- Research Findings and Implications – museum/industry consultations and Indigenous youth
- Research material
- Glossary of key terms used throughout this report
- Resources and References
- As well, a number of case examples have been used throughout the report to illustrate key findings, with names of individual's changed where mentioned to maintain confidentiality.

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Executive Summary

Our research found a varied response across industry in providing services for or even thinking about Indigenous youth as an audience for targeted programs. However, this is applicable to the youth audience in general. Many, especially smaller and regional museums, are concentrating on attracting any visitors at all, let alone Indigenous young people. In some regions there was a belief that due to the relative small numbers of Indigenous youth in a particular area resources may be better spent on attracting audiences with a larger population base, although this was something that could be further explored.

The literature review showed that youth in general have significant issues facing them in the twenty-first century and, in Australia, Indigenous youth have additional challenges due to a range of cultural, social and political factors. The welfare sector in particular, both in Australia and internationally, was taking the greatest action in reviewing and tackling the primary concerns of young people, sponsoring a number of forums with subsequent reports and increasing amounts of literature becoming available that focussed on them and their needs.

Our research with Indigenous young people found a lack of understanding of what museums did beyond presenting exhibitions, and little awareness of the extent of Aboriginal collections held by museums. When shown collection items, they enjoyed looking at objects from their country, seeing familiar people and names and thus making personal connections with these. They expressed curiosity and a desire to know more through referencing the past as it impacted on contemporary issues and the future. They were interested in accessing a range of cultural institutions as information centres for researching family histories using the resources of museums, libraries, archives, and other agencies with relevant information. They were also highly interested in employment opportunities at museums.

Our Industry consultations found that targeted programs where museums worked together and focussed on the interests of Indigenous young people by offering information and resources about their rich and significant cultural heritage, as well as providing practical skills through training and mentoring programs, resulted in positive responses and engagement. Similarly, in research we have undertaken with general audiences, young Aboriginal people wanted the same types of experiences from museums:

- respect for them as people;
- a welcoming atmosphere;
- seeing themselves reflected in content, programs and staffing;
- active learning experiences that catered for their individual and collective interests and learning styles in a comfortable and supportive atmosphere;
- involvement in program development and delivery;
- contemporary modes of information exchange using interactive, digital technologies such as the web, film, radio, CD-ROM/DVD;
- examination of contemporary youth issues such as music, sport, technology, fashion, art, performance and, for Indigenous youth, a particular emphasis on cultural practices and family history.

Our research also found that while there was keen interest by museums in attracting the youth market generally and Indigenous youth specifically (especially among the larger city-based institutions), this view was not universally held across organisations. Youth and, specifically, Indigenous youth, expressed a desire for inclusion and involvement to both stimulate their learning and test their skills in a peer and adult arena. This will require a major shift in attitude across museums: for true engagement museums will need to provide broad access to resources and collections, while taking a mentoring role and allowing Indigenous youth to control their own experiences through exhibition curation and program management, as well as reflecting contemporary issues in their collection policies and acquisition programs. Coordination and mentoring of this kind may not come naturally to professionals used to different ways of dealing with diverse audiences.

Do museums have the will and the leadership in place to actually do this? Will they change practices embedded in tradition? Are they willing to put resources in terms of money and people toward programs for these audiences? At this stage, from our consultations and industry knowledge through other projects we have conducted in this field, we are not sure that the will is there. In our industry discussions with staff at operational levels, we found a keen interest and enthusiasm for involving and engaging a range of youth audiences, including Indigenous youth, and identified a need for assistance with accessing information and resources. However, strategic decisions about audience focus are often made at a managerial level and are usually resource-dependant. To overcome this we believe solutions lie in:

- having accessible information available online about this audience;
- working together across industry and with new partners from broader areas such as the welfare and TAFE sectors;
- developing a set of small, targeted programs (as proposed in Section 3);
- seeking diverse forms of funding;
- evaluating outcomes – both the short-term and long-term impact of programs;
- networking/sharing these outcomes and information via conferences, workshops and the Internet.

The major recommendation from this study is that the Australia Council and other organisations such as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission¹, Museums Australia and the Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies² could play a mentoring role in hosting a **National Forum** for cultural institutions such as museums and Keeping Places³; Indigenous community members (including young people); and peak bodies to discuss this report and develop fundable start-up programs to develop Indigenous youth audiences that build in monitoring, evaluation and reporting processes. An initial partnering arrangement could be formed between large and small institutions as well as Indigenous communities to implement

¹ Referred to in this report as ATSIC – see Appendix 6: Glossary of Terms

² Referred to in this report as AIATSIS – see Appendix 6: Glossary of Terms

³ Keeping Places are also known as Cultural Centres or Aboriginal museums – see Appendix 6: Glossary of Terms. The name Keeping Place is used throughout this report to include these types of organisations.

pilot projects – and there was certainly interest within the sector for this to happen. We believe that museums don't necessarily need to focus on Indigenous youth as a group. Rather, we believe that museums should focus on the Indigenous community as a group, and recognise the complex social structures, cultural influences and specific practices inherent in Indigenous culture in order to foster more inclusive, long-term and ongoing relationships. Involvement of Indigenous people at the **National Forum** is critical. Also, extensive consultations with both Indigenous youth and Elders will be necessary for planning programs that address the needs of Indigenous people and, specifically, Indigenous youth.

⁴ For an overview of these see Kelly, L & Gordon, P. (2002). Developing a Community of Practice: Museums and Reconciliation in Australia. in Sandell, R. (ed.) *Museums, Society, Inequality*. London: Routledge, pp.153-174. Also see <http://www.amonline.net.au/amarc/> for a listing of Indigenous evaluation projects conducted by the Audience Research Centre in partnership with the Aboriginal Heritage Unit.

1. Introduction

The overall aim of the *Indigenous Youth Access* project was to increase Indigenous youth access to museums by identifying the political and social issues affecting Indigenous youth. With this knowledge museums could respond to these issues and fill an identified gap by finding a voice for Indigenous youth, particularly in the areas of arts and culture. This project also sought to contribute to a future of active participation in museums by Indigenous youth which will be crucial for them to sustain links to their cultural heritage. This was a pilot study only, with the scope of the project to be consultations and a scan of industry practice. However, in conducting this study we were able to draw on our extensive experience and industry knowledge from other projects conducted for the Australian Museum⁴.

1.1 Goals

This project addressed the concerns of Indigenous youth by identifying their needs, interests and beliefs and finding ways to address these. The initial data gathered from the consultations, workshops, focus groups and interviews helped define what Indigenous youth actually want and need from museums. The data also provided an overview of the current services available to young Indigenous audiences. This report highlights ways to build desirable relationships between these audiences and long-term program objectives and, as this was a pilot study, ways to identify further research and development opportunities.

1.2 Rationale

Fundamentally, collecting institutions (specifically museums) were a means of increasing knowledge about cultural heritage and the natural world, although the methods of acquiring objects in the past have been a source of criticism and debate. As well, there was a recognised need for traditional museum practices to address more complex issues, including access to Indigenous collection material held by cultural institutions.

Museums are now compelled by their diverse range of stakeholders to deliver superior customer service through new methods of internal and external communication, including the use of new technologies. They aim to be responsive to audience needs, to increase community awareness of the natural and social world, to regularly consult stakeholders and audiences, to provide increased access to the museum experience to a broad range of communities, and to utilise a variety of different interpretive strategies to convey messages.

Indigenous training programs currently exist across the arts sector, with objectives to further consolidate community access and research at local, regional and national levels. Yet there are many perceived levels of exclusion, especially for Indigenous youth, due partly to a lack of understanding of this audience. Locally and globally, cultural institutions are obliged to ensure that a layered approach to communication and audience is achieved to substantiate the community role of museums.

2. Literature Review

There was an enormous amount of literature and resources available about young people generally. However, little specifically focussed on Indigenous youth. This review covered the following key areas:

- Characteristics of Australia's Indigenous population, including age breakdowns and geographic spread;
- Characteristics of youth audiences generally;
- General youth audiences and leisure;
- Indigenous people and museums;
- Indigenous youth issues and programs, both Australian and international.

There were several definitions of what age the term 'youth' covered. For example, the Australian Bureau of Statistics defined youth as those aged 12 – 24 years of age while the Australia Council defined youth as those from pre-school age to 35. For this project, youth were defined as being aged between 15 and 24 years.

A range of Government reports were accessed (for example, *Footprints to the Future*, Report from Youth Pathways Action Plan Taskforce, 2001; ATSIIC Indigenous Youth Treaty Forum Report, 2001; *Australians & The Arts*, Australia Council, 2000), as well as reports commissioned by various welfare agencies such as the Salvation Army (*The Burden of Youth*, 2001), Mission Australia (Online Fact Sheets) and the Dusseldorp Skills Forum (*Australia's Young Adults: the Deepening Divide*, 1999). Most of these reports are available online as detailed in Appendix 7 (References). Reports were also purchased from the Australian Bureau of Statistics and LeisureScope®. While this study focussed on Indigenous youth, we found many useful reports and organisations that dealt with general youth issues, which are detailed in Appendix 5 (Resource Guide) and Appendix 7 (References).

Our literature review found that:

- although the Indigenous population of Australia was relatively small (2.2%), those aged 20 years and under formed the majority and could therefore be seen as a key future audience for museums;
- the welfare sector showed a big interest in identifying general youth issues and meeting the needs of young people;
- youth in general have many challenges facing them for the future, including finding their identity in an uncertain and changing world, social and political change, peer group pressure, as well as employment, health, education and financial issues;
- Indigenous youth faced greater pressure as they tried to live both white-Australian and traditional lifestyles;

⁵ At the time of finalising this report, initial data from the 2001 Census was released. This showed a 16.2% increase in the Indigenous population to 410,003 persons, or 2.2% of the population. No further breakdowns were available at that time.

⁶ A copy of this is available online at <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs%40.nsf/94713ad445ff1425ca25682000192af2/caef79080a31b757ca2569de002139b7!OpenDocument>

- young people were not motivated to visit museums unless topics and interpretive strategies were relevant to them, were contemporary and forward-looking, and catered for group engagement;
- museums were competing with a wide range of widely available leisure activities and interests of young people;
- programs that involved Indigenous youth and Elders working together in their communities were usually well received and resulted in useful products, such as oral history records, exhibitions, collection material, and other programs.

2.1 Australia's Indigenous Population

Statistical information was sourced through the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Results in this report come from the 1996 Census and were the latest available, as the 2001 Census results were not due for release until at least June 2002⁵. It should also be noted that Census data captured those who chose to complete the survey, and a proportion of the Indigenous population may not have participated. Comparisons to population profiles in Canada and New Zealand were made where relevant.

2.1.1 Population Statistics

The estimated resident Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population at June, 1996 was 386,000, or 2% of all Australians. The annual growth rate for the Indigenous population from 1991 to 1996 was 2.3%, almost twice the rate for the total population (1.2%). Most Indigenous people resided in NSW (28.5%) and Queensland (27.2%). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people occupied the highest proportion of the Northern Territory population at 28.5% (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1999).

The Australian Bureau of Statistics Population Special Article (1999)⁶ gave a good overview of the Indigenous population, summarised as follows:

- This population was younger, with a median age of 20 years.
- There is a low life expectancy of 57 years (males) and 62 years (females).
- Children under 15 years made up the majority of the group, and those aged 65+ made up the lowest proportion of the population.
- The Indigenous population has a lower proportion to the total population of Australians (2.0%), is comparable to Canada (2.8%), and lower than New Zealand (14.5%). These three countries experienced higher growth rates in Indigenous populations than the general population, with a 20–33% increase from 1991–1996, compared to general population increases of 6–7%.
- The population was becoming increasingly urbanised – in 1991, 67.7% of the Indigenous population lived in urban areas: in 1996 this had increased to 72.6%. However, this could have been due to changes in Census classification or an increased willingness of Indigenous people to identify themselves on the Census form.
- Those in non-urban areas were more likely to reside in smaller centres of 1000–99,000 people (42.3% of Indigenous people compared to 23.2% of the total population).
- In 1996, 13.3% spoke an Indigenous language at home. This was highest among the older and non-urban populations and was concentrated in the Northern Territory and Western Australia.

2.1.2 Education Statistics

- Indigenous Australians were less likely to be attending an educational institution full-time.
- In 1996, 73.7% of Indigenous 15-year-olds were in full-time education compared to 91.5% of all 15-year-olds.
- 13.6% had a post-school qualification compared to 34.4% of the total population. These figures were comparable to New Zealand (14.3% of Maori people had post-school qualifications compared to 32.2% of all New Zealanders).
(Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1999).

For young Indigenous people the following facts were observed:

- Overall access and participation in education and training have improved – 14% had formal education qualifications in 1996 compared to 10% in 1991.
- There was a 40% increase in Indigenous school enrolments from 1991 to 1998.
- 83% of Indigenous students remained in school to Year 10 in 1998.
- Indigenous students were much less likely to continue education beyond compulsory years.
- Completing year 10 or 11 increased an Indigenous person's chance of employment by 40%.
- Completing year 12 increased this by a further 13%.
- Post-secondary qualifications increased this by 13–23%.
- Vocational Education Training (VET) enrolments doubled from 1994 to 1998; enrolments in higher education increased by 60% from 1991 to 1998. VET representation was good, but the nature of the training was different – usually shorter courses at lower levels and served as an alternative to schooling rather than an extension of it.
- Indigenous students were 1.2% of higher education enrolments, yet more tended to delay entry to higher education, and levels of study were typically lower.
(Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1999; *Footprints to the Future*, 2001, Section 2.9).

2.1.3 Labour Market Outcomes

- In 1996, 52.7% of the Indigenous population aged 15 years and over were in the labour force, compared to 61.9% of all Australians.
- 22.7% of Indigenous labour force participants were unemployed compared to 9.2% of the total population. In New Zealand, however, there was virtually no difference in labour force proportions – 65.3% of Maori people compared to 65.4% of the total New Zealand population.
- 56.6% of employed Indigenous people were full-time compared to the total population of 67.8%. (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1999).

For young Indigenous people the following facts were observed:

- There were limited employment opportunities in communities.
- The Community Development Employment Projects (ATSI⁷) were potential springboards to full-time employment and a versatile way of assisting young people into a range of activities.
(Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1999; *Footprints to the Future*, 2001, Section 2.9).

⁷ 'Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) provide employment for Indigenous people in a wide range of community projects and enterprises, and allow Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations to take control of their own communities' economic and social development. Now the

2.2 Characteristics of General Youth Audiences

Youth audiences had quite particular interests and expectations when it came to museums. This age group tended to be seeking involvement in relevant areas, becoming aware of cutting edge developments and were looking to build upon their identity and role in society. In general, they felt that traditional museum exhibitions did not facilitate dialogue and social interaction, relying for the most part on text panels and display cases to convey messages to visitors. This age group wanted to share and compare experiences rather than read and view (AMARC, 2000).

The Australian Bureau of Statistics defined youth as aged 12–24 years. In the 1996 Census they made up 18% of the total population, with three quarters living in Capital cities/metropolitan areas. Fifteen per cent were born overseas. The majority of those aged 15–19 lived with their parents and three quarters of those studied. Of those aged 20–24 half lived with their parents and three quarters of them worked. Recreation and leisure accounted for the largest proportion of their time, approximately 4–5.5 hours/week (AMARC, 2000; Environmetrics, 2000).

‘Youth’ are not just a featureless block – they are comprised of many sub-groups and a variety of individuals. What appealed to one group may not appeal to another. Many in this age group were already engaged in secondary or tertiary study so overly educational approaches to conveying information in museums were an additional burden and of less appeal. It was found that young people were preoccupied with three main things:

- developing their sense of personal identity, as opposed to understanding the nations’ identity;
- developing their relationships (sharing views with friends and partners);
- building on skills and talents (current works, techniques, advances and designs).

(AMARC, 2000; Environmetrics, 2000).

Young people did not see museums as being very relevant to them as they wanted to know about the ‘now’ and the future and saw museums as retrospective. They were looking for a social and enjoyable venue, a personal experience with the opportunity to meet and learn from like-minded people, ask questions of interesting people, and share ideas. They saw museums as dull, with didactic, unapproachable and ‘safe’ exhibitions. Past experiences strongly influenced their decisions, with memories of enforced school visits doing boring worksheets that prevented them from pursuing their own interests. Family visits were remembered more favourably but relegated to the distant, nostalgic past. They didn’t feel a part of museums, as they were not a group that wanted museums to do things *for* them, they wanted programs done *with* them. They wanted opportunities to test skills and engage with interactives, but often found them unappealing as they were usually aimed at children. They were interested in issues that explored personal identity in relation to more global issues (AMARC, 2000; Environmetrics, 2000).

Commonwealth’s largest Indigenous program, CDEP, began in 1977 at the request of a number of remote communities who wanted an alternative to continued reliance on unemployment benefits. In 1984 it was expanded to include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in rural and urban areas. The new CDEP objective, endorsed after a 1997 review, is: “To provide work for unemployed Indigenous persons in community-managed activities which assist the individual in acquiring skills which benefit the community, develop business enterprises and/or lead to unsubsidised employment.” (reference: ATSIC website - http://www.atsic.gov.au/default_ns.asp).

Youth were restricted by expendable cash, and made spontaneous choices on what to do on the day. Museum visits were triggered by other factors such as friends or relatives. They tended to socialise with peers and sometimes family, therefore wouldn't visit museums if they didn't have anyone to go with. However, some would if they wanted a learning experience, or were likely to meet/see others from their own age group. Those aged 18–19 years were more likely to do things in same-sex groups, and 22–24-year-olds were more likely to socialise as couples. The males in this group often visited museums and galleries to accompany their partner (AMARC, 2000; Environmetrics, 2000).

Young people were more interested in the ideas linked to objects than the objects themselves. The following three main areas of interest were identified.

1. Identity:

- Markers of cultural sub-groups, for example, shoes, body art.
- Occupational or leisure interests, especially those relating to personal skill.
- Relationship-building through interaction in exhibitions and programs.
- Topics of interest identified in developing a sense of identity which could be of interest were dress, fashion, film, language, and values.

2. Talents and skills:

- Achievements of their generation in fields such as art, design, science, literature, food.

3. Contemporary and forward-looking:

- Interested in the here and now and possible futures rather than looking back.
- Interested in ideas.
- Opportunities to explore widening world and reflect on the meaning of experiences.
(AMARC, 2000).

2.3 General Youth Audiences and Leisure

An analysis of 18–24 year olds and their leisure activities was undertaken using data from a telephone poll of 1000 Sydney adults undertaken twice a year (Environmetrics, 2000). This report detailed four waves of data from 2000 to 2001 with a total sample size of 4102, of which 12% (n=479) were aged 18–24 years. In this research, it was not specified whether any respondents were of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent. General findings were:

- more young people visited outdoor venues such as Darling Harbour, Sydney City, Circular Quay, the Rocks and Cockle Bay Wharf than the total sample;
- the number of visits made to these venues was higher than for the total population;
- less young people visited museums and galleries (31%) than the total sample (34%), except for the Museum of Contemporary Art (10% of young people compared to 6% of the population);
- of those who visited museums in a six month period:
 - > 11% visited the Art Gallery of NSW
 - > 10% visited the Museum of Contemporary Art
 - > 5% visited the Australian Museum
 - > 4% visited the Maritime Museum

- > 4% visited the Museum of Sydney
- > 3% visited the Powerhouse Museum

Compared to this:

- 74% visited Darling Harbour
- 41% visited Sydney Olympic Park
- 17% visited the Royal Botanical Gardens
- 16% visited Bicentennial Park
- 12% visited Panthers
- 7% visited the Sydney Aquarium
- 6% visited Taronga Zoo
- more young people preferred renting/watching videos, movies, eating out, going to a night club/bar, buying music CDs/records, using the Internet, shopping and playing sport than the total population;
- working around the house and gardening were activities less likely to be undertaken by young people.

The *Australians and the Arts* report prepared for the Australia Council indicated that young Australians (for this report defined as 15–24 years) were more likely to be neutral about the arts or not like them at all, yet many had been involved in the arts sometime in the past two weeks. They were more likely to have a limited spontaneous definition of the arts (Costantoura, 2000, p.3). In the survey conducted as part of this report it was found that young people agreed with or highly valued the following attitude statements more so than the total population:

- ‘The arts should include only the most sophisticated types of things’
 - ‘More opportunities for you to be personally involved in the arts’
 - ‘Performing, creating or writing things yourself for others to enjoy’
 - ‘The arts are about making your mark on the world’
 - ‘Shows and performances more relevant to the ways things are today’
 - ‘Practising, creating, or writing things yourself just for your own enjoyment’
 - ‘I would like the arts to stay pretty much the way they are’
 - ‘More opportunities to mix with people through the arts’
- (Costantoura, 2000, p.3).

Marketing strategies to reach this audience needed to include magazines (high profile, mainstream ones only) with special attention paid to youth media (street press), the Internet, film and television. Word of mouth was particularly important for young people as they don’t have the money to waste on unsatisfying experiences and wanted to be involved in activities that their peers were also involved in (AMARC, 2000).

2.4 Indigenous People and Museums

For the year ending June, 2000 there were 2049 establishments in Australia, including art galleries, historic properties and war memorials. These institutions ranged from large State and National museums employing in excess of one hundred people each to much smaller regional museums and Aboriginal Keeping Places. The institutions covered a variety of content, including natural and social history, anthropology and archaeology, science, technology, industrial design

and so on. Fifty eight per cent of these organisations were operated on a voluntary basis (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2001).

‘Museums in Australia have been actively involved in reconciliation since the late 1970s, long before its recognition as a formal political movement. In 1978 the UNESCO regional seminar, *Preserving Indigenous Cultures: A New Role for Museums*, was the first time museums and Indigenous people sat down together as equals to talk about obligations and processes: the obligations of museums to respect Indigenous rights to their cultural heritage and addressing this within the practices of museums at the time. Since then there have been immense changes in how museums have dealt with these issues resulting in new relationships forged between Australian museums and Indigenous peoples in response to both internal and external political and cultural forces’ (Kelly & Gordon, 2002, p.153).

‘Museums have changed rapidly in the twentieth century from “cabinets of curiosities” with thousands of objects displayed in didactic ways to institutions that are about ideas, actively encouraging debate, critical thought and action. Museums are increasingly becoming involved in political issues and many are more willing to engage in discourses that are confronting and controversial. Museums are also more regularly working with their communities to provide rich learning experiences for a variety of users. The recognition of the primary rights of Indigenous people to access their cultural material has set museums in Australia apart from other countries in the way they are responding to these issues’ (Kelly & Gordon, 2002, p.156).

Research commissioned by the National Museum of Australia about the new Museum (Cultural Perspectives, 2000), found that among some Indigenous people museums were still thought of as traditional rather than contemporary spaces holding current and historical exhibits. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were interested in the establishment of a new Museum that was authentic in its portrayal of their history and cultures, with the main appeal of museums being their inherent community and family relevance. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were interested in rediscovering and celebrating cultural heritage and diversity, and recognised the definite need to consult with communities to ensure that the new Museum presented an authentic historical perspective. The barriers identified were:

- a cultural feeling that museums were white institutions where there was a perceived lack of true and varied representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people wanted to feel comfortable, as though the new Museum was for them. It was suggested that one way to achieve this was through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation in the Museum such as tour guides and storytellers.
- the new Museum needed to create a welcoming and friendly environment through interactive activities, relaxed and interesting exhibition spaces that include music, sounds and verbal stories, as well as facilitating the social nature of visits through seating and other amenities.

‘There was recognition of the importance of museums’ potential ability to contribute to a sense of belonging, act as a tool of empowerment and provide a forum for cross cultural education. There was a view that community outreach has a crucial role in cultural maintenance by commissioning the community to make pieces for museum collections. Outreach programs were needed that include rural areas and participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. There was

also an acknowledgment that museums have a role in passing knowledge and skills down to young Indigenous people as a serious way to achieve community involvement. Special events were also considered to be effective in encouraging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to visit museums for the “event not the venue” (Cultural Perspectives, 2000).

In order to deal with contemporary Indigenous issues and remain relevant ‘Museums will continually need to find new ways to deal with the evolving requirements of contemporary society, responding to an ever-changing political climates and audience needs by recognising and reacting to opportunities as they present themselves. They will need flexible management structures that are able to change in response to the demands of the many communities they serve, while taking a strategic and long-term view. Museums in Australia have played an active role in reconciliation in a variety of ways: maintaining cultural heritage by providing access to information and increasing understanding; giving Indigenous people a voice in the ways that they are represented and how their stories are communicated in exhibitions; assisting with self-sufficiency and employment in their support of community museums through outreach programs; and in the repatriation of cultural material’ (Kelly & Gordon, 2002, p.170, original emphasis).

Through working together with Indigenous people on their terms it has been found that ‘...visitors, staff and communities can positively benefit from programs that address issues identified as important by Indigenous people in ways that meet their needs’ (Kelly & Gordon, 2002, p.170). This has been demonstrated through evaluation studies conducted over a long period of time at the Australian Museum (for a detailed overview of these issues see Kelly, 2001; Kelly & Gordon, 2002).

2.5 Indigenous Youth

Although there was a vast body of work about young people and the issues that faced them, there were only a few that specifically related to Indigenous youth in Australia. The reports that we found useful were *Footprints to the Future*, Report from the Prime Minister’s Youth Pathways Action Plan Taskforce (2001), *the National Indigenous Youth Treaty Forum* (ATSIC, 2001), *Working With Indigenous Young People* (Watkinson & Bessant, 2000) and the *Winston Memorial Fellowship Trust Report* prepared by Leilani Bin-Juda, National Museum of Australia (2001).

2.5.1 Footprints to the Future Report, 2001

The Youth Pathways Action Plan Taskforce was established by the Commonwealth Government to provide advice on a Youth Pathways Action Plan aimed at improving support for young people and their families during the transition to independence. The resulting report, *Footprints to the Future*, set out a policy framework for supporting young people through school, and from school to further education, training, work and active citizenship.

Through their research and consultations, the Taskforce found that Indigenous young people in Australia generally:

- experienced difficulty in the transition from school to independence;
- were disadvantaged in terms of educational participation, educational qualifications and labour market participation;

- had insufficient attention paid to their recreational, cultural and spiritual needs;
- experienced a fractured pattern of education and employment participation;
- showed lower performance in academic subjects, particularly literacy;
- had higher rates of unemployment;
- needed their own role models and mentors, as they lacked opportunities for leadership and participation in community decision-making;
- needed to feel valued and respected in their communities; and
- needed activities beyond school with peers which stimulated and extended their cultural values, recreational interests, skills and relationships with other age groups.

Culture and language and a sense of belonging to a community were key issues identified by Indigenous youth and Elders. Young Indigenous people experienced confusion while trying to live both white Australian and traditional lifestyles. Elders perceived a lack of respect by young Indigenous people and have in some cases turned their backs on them, leaving them isolated and vulnerable. There were major social, economic and health issues that needed to be urgently dealt with, but there were some positive actions, often initiated in communities by young people in partnership with families, Elders, schools, key youth workers or mentors. It was noted that recent educational policies recognised the need for increased inclusiveness of Indigenous culture and language within the curriculum, with practical action in direct response to local community needs and situations required (*Footprints to the Future*, 2001, Section 2.9).

2.5.2 Working With Indigenous Young People (Watkinson & Bessant, 2000)

This was an introductory guide for youth workers that were working with Indigenous communities. The main conclusion was that plans and objectives developed by youth workers needed to be inclusive of the community's wishes and directed by them. Undertaking research on protocols and local conventions was required to gain trust and confidence in programs. 'To assist Indigenous young people through youth work practice, it is necessary to gain the confidence of community members. In Indigenous communities, collective decision making tends to be the preferred practice' (Watkinson & Bessant, 2000, p.36). It was also pointed out that 'Program development in Indigenous communities may take longer than in non-Indigenous communities due to a preference for inclusive decision making' (Watkinson & Bessant, 2000, p.36).

It was further concluded that 'The most important considerations for effective youth work practice with Indigenous communities include:

- recognising the impact of colonialism on Indigenous communities and the collective experiences of Indigenous people as a result of that encounter;
 - recognising essentialist thinking about Indigenous young people and their communities;
 - recognising that how "Indigenous youth problems" are defined influences practices; and
 - thinking about how to ensure your practices are informed, inclusive, respectful and collaborative.'
- (p.38).

2.5.3 *National Indigenous Youth Treaty Forum Report*, ATSIC, 2001

A meeting of forty young Indigenous people, aged 18–25 years of age was convened in February, 2001 to discuss ways youth could be engaged with ATSIC processes in pursuit of Indigenous rights, particularly the issue of a Treaty. From this, there was a strong recommendation that Indigenous youth needed their own body to ensure that youth perspectives were considered and recognised in ATSIC decision making. There was a lack of knowledge and understanding of what Treaty meant with a demonstrated enthusiasm for more information to be accessible in Indigenous communities. Suggestions included written information, inclusion of Treaty information in the education system and a series of regular community meetings/camps where Elders and leaders could talk together with youths. Young people wanted opportunities to meet and talk, but not in complete isolation from the experience and guidance of others in Indigenous communities. The important role that technology could play was identified, with educational videos and an email discussion list identified as potentially effective tools. The education system was also seen as essential in engaging other young people.

2.5.4 *Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Fellowship Report*, Leilani Bin-Juda, National Museum of Australia, 2001

This report detailed research that investigated strategies used by museums overseas to involve Indigenous young people in museum development. A key reason behind undertaking the study was that ‘... it became evident that there was a need to encourage younger people to become involved in the transgenerational passing of cultural knowledge and heritage from our Elders to our young people’ (p.6). A series of recommendations were made, as well as highlighting issues for discussion, debate and further research in two major areas: partnerships with Indigenous communities, and training and development programs. This report is available online at <http://www.churchilltrust.org.au/fellowsreports.html>.

3. Museums/Industry Consultations

Consultations took place with Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff across a range of organisations, including large State museums, regional museums/Keeping Places and key industry groups, as shown on Table 3.1. The major purpose was to engage organisations in the project and raise awareness of the issues, as well as to:

- find out levels of interest in involving Indigenous youth in museum programs;
- discuss current activities, programs and policies for Indigenous youth and outcomes;
- identify barriers to Indigenous youth participation in museum programs;
- explore outreach programs/opportunities;
- identify other opportunities and suggestions;
- explore resource and other issues impacting on the provision of programs for Indigenous youth.

A questionnaire was developed and circulated prior to the discussions (Appendix 1), which also enabled responses from people who were interested but unable to attend a meeting. Some consultations worked better than others. For example, the Indigenous Advisory Council of Museums Australia Queensland responded well to their electronic survey, whereas the Indigenous Youth Roundtable's response was low. Difficulties were also found in arranging the Sydney consultations due to lack of availability of people even when a range of times and venues were offered.

Table 3.1. Participating Staff/Organisations

NAME	ORGANISATION	CONSULTATION TYPE
Leilani Bin-Juda Nancy Michaelis Johanna Parker Susan Tonkin	National Museum of Australia, Canberra	Focus Group
Peter Haffenden Larry Walsh	Melbourne's Living Museum of the West	Depth Interview
Jim Berg Wally Cooper Len Tregonning	Koorie Heritage Trust Inc, Melbourne	Depth Interview
Alan Brown	Bunjilaka, Melbourne Museum	Depth Interview
Olivia Robinson	Queensland Museum	Depth Interview
Trevor Pearce	EPA, Queensland (formerly Indigenous Project Officer, Museums Australia National Office)	Depth Interview
Norm Graham	National Parks & Wildlife Service, NSW (formerly of Museum Victoria)	Depth Interview
Steve Miller	Powerhouse Museum, Sydney	Depth Interview
Bernie Cavanagh	Historic Houses Trust, Sydney	Depth Interview

NAME	ORGANISATION	CONSULTATION TYPE
Staff	Minjungbal Resource Museum and Study Centre, Tweed Heads, NSW	Depth Interview
Trudy Summerville	Tibooburra Keeping Place, NSW	Fax survey
Linda McHugh (Director) & Performers	Shake, Canberra Youth Theatre Company	Focus Group
Johanna Parker Daina Murray	National Museum of Australia, Canberra	
Destiny Devow	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, Canberra	Depth Interview
Suzi Hewlett Tony Hughes	Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs, Canberra	Depth Interview
Luke Taylor	Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra	Depth Interview
Veronica Coutts	Deputy Principal, Beugcolman Primary, Palm Island, Queensland	Depth Interview
Staff	Job Placement Employment and Training (JPET), Tweed Heads, NSW	Depth Interview
Members	Museums Australia Queensland Indigenous Advisory Council	e-mail survey
Members	Indigenous Youth Roundtable, DEST	e-mail survey
Members	Indigenous Online Network	Posting to discussion list

3.1 Findings/ Recommendations

Museums across Australia have a long history of actively engaging and involving Indigenous people in their research and programs (Kelly & Gordon, 2002). In this study it was found that responses to and programs for Indigenous young people varied across organisations. There were (and still are) significant resource issues that face museums across Australia, with a general decline in funding and an increased need for museums to supplement often inadequate government money from other sources such as commercialisation, sponsorship and grants. Some museums have been more willing to put resources into training, outreach and other programs for Indigenous people generally, and these have been shown to have had positive outcomes for museums, staff and communities when maintained across the long term (for example, see Kelly, Gordon & Sullivan, 2000; Kelly & Gordon, 2002). There was, however, strong interest by museums in forming and strengthening partnerships both across the museums sector, peak bodies and with Indigenous communities, and many opportunities were identified particularly in the research and collections fields.

From this stage of the study, one major recommendation has been made, with a number of detailed findings and recommendations also put forward. The major recommendation is that a **National Forum** be held in Canberra in 2003 to develop Indigenous youth audiences through formulating an Action Plan to:

1. discuss and explore in depth the detailed findings from this report;
2. develop a series of small targeted programs suitable for funding submissions;
3. initiate partnerships that could be established across industry and with other organisations such as the welfare sector;
4. identify potential funding bodies;
5. draft funding applications;
6. identify suitable program evaluation strategies;
7. commence work on developing a **Handbook/Resource Guide** for museums working with Indigenous people, including case studies and evaluation methodologies.

Participants in the **National Forum** should include representatives from Museums Australia; Australian Museums Online (AMOL); major state museums; the National Museum of Australia; ATSIC; members of the Indigenous Youth Roundtable; staff from the Youth Bureau at Department of Education, Science and Training; Mission Australia; Dusseldorp Skills Forum; AIATSIS; the Australian Indigenous Cultural Network; and a range of Keeping Places across Australia. The Forum could be co-facilitated by the Australia Council and the Australian Museum and possibly hosted by the National Museum of Australia or AIATSIS. To prepare for the Forum, participants would be given a package of material including this report, case studies, other relevant reports and information about funding sources prior to attending. Possible sources of funding for the forum could include charitable trusts such as the Myer Foundation, the Ian Potter Foundation or the Telstra Foundation.

DETAILED FINDINGS

1. Access to Collections and Information

1.1 A wide range of ways to access collections and information was being provided across industry. Examples included the Koori Supporters Club, (Melbourne Museum); online access/catalogues (National Archives online, AMOL) and repatriation programs.

1.2 There was a recognition that more could be done to promote both the available facilities and information about collection holdings.

DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1.1 Develop a coordinated, national training program in all aspects of collection management and access specifically for Indigenous youth from regional areas that have developed or are developing a Keeping Place.

1.1.2 Encourage current industry training programs to have a percentage of places available for Indigenous youth.

1.2.1 Develop a coordinated 'one-stop shop' for information through either AMOL, or other Indigenous online networks and include relevant links.

2. Research Programs

2.1 Museums showed high levels of interest in and support for expanding research programs for Indigenous people generally, as well as Indigenous youth. Opportunities were identified to encourage and foster Elder/young person interactions and passing on traditional knowledge and language which could result in products such as books, exhibitions, CD-ROMS, film/television/radio programs.

1.2.2 Promote this resource widely through schools, Aboriginal agencies, youth centres, and local government agencies, with links from existing websites accessed by young people.

2.1.1 Through the **National Forum** develop a series of pilot projects across several cultural institutions/museums (large and small) that could be used in funding applications such as:

- small grants scheme for Family History Programs (modelled along the lines of the NSW Fisheries Scientific Committee Student Grants program – see <http://www.fsc.nsw.gov.au>) with partners across industry, including archives, libraries and AIATSIS;
- language programs located within communities with access to material, information and training undertaken through local Keeping Places;
- Oral history training for Indigenous youth through schools, youth centres, museums and Keeping Places;
- Research projects in Indigenous biodiversity and traditional knowledge that includes training of young Indigenous people in scientific methods and techniques;
- Research projects into objects/collections from country (modelled along the lines of the NSW Fisheries program – see above).

2.1.2 Seek funding to develop a website database for tracking projects and outcomes.

2.1.3 Seek funding through Visions Australia, State Arts Ministries, and other Commonwealth agencies to turn projects into travelling exhibitions and/or websites.

3. Development Programs

3.1 Currently, a number of museums and other organisations provide support for young Indigenous artists by exhibiting and purchasing their work.

3.2 Museums and other organisations commissioned communities to make artefacts which facilitated the passing on of traditional skills and knowledge to Indigenous young people, as well as adding to the collections.

3.3 Art and performance-based programs existed in many organisations and were seen as important ways to involve Indigenous youth in public programs.

4. Employment & Training

4.1 There was a recognition by museums that Indigenous people needed to be employed across all areas of the organisation, however commitment varied across museums. The problem is often seen as a resource issue, but we think it is a matter of will. Museums that were actively employing Indigenous staff include Museum Victoria, the Australian Museum, the National Museum of Australia, Melbourne Living Museum of the West, the Powerhouse Museum, the Museum of Tropical Queensland and the Cairns Regional Gallery. It was also recognised that museums needed to make better use of programs such as the Elsa Dixon Fund and the Trust for Young Australians.

3.1.1 Continue/expand this and seek sponsorship for an annual prize for an Indigenous artist aged 15–24.

3.2.1 Develop on-site programs that show the process of making objects as well as displaying the finished item, and investigate the potential to turn these into CD-ROMs/web products.

3.3.1 Continue to provide venues for performances and seek sponsorship for an annual prize for a young Indigenous performance.

3.3.2 Commission contemporary pieces from Indigenous youth groups and individuals, particularly in regional areas.

4.1.1 Develop and implement an industry-wide employment strategy, which includes induction procedures and networking across organisations and across disciplines that will lead to change in museums staff profiles. This could be undertaken through Museums Australia, and should be further explored at the **National Forum**.

4.1.2 Improve networking across Indigenous staff in museums through a grants scheme that funds attendance of young Indigenous people at the Museums Australia Annual Conference. This could be facilitated by Museums Australia, or one of the large State/National institutions.

4.2 Opportunities to enter into employment partnerships with organisations outside the museum sector were identified. This could occur by establishing alliances with welfare organisations such as Mission Australia, and educational institutions such as AIATSIS and the TAFE⁸ networks. Smaller institutions, such as Keeping Places, currently made good use of CDEP.

4.3 Opportunities to encompass outdoor programs and field research were identified. This would be particularly useful in regional areas – for programs to ‘go beyond’ traditional museum practices (for example see Case Example 3.1 Koori Gardening Team and 3.2 Minjungbal Resource Museum and Study Centre).

4.4 While training programs currently exist, they were patchy, ad hoc, usually under-resourced and not evaluated. There was a recognition that these often didn’t lead to paid employment and could be seen as resource intensive for little gain.

4.5 It was found that existing museum employment and training programs were poorly promoted and understood. Also, few assessments of the success of the programs were undertaken. As a result, there was little opportunity to learn or share information across the sector.

4.2.1 At the **National Forum**, investigate options for funding from programs such as CDEP for employment partnerships between the larger state museums, regional museums, Keeping Places and external partners.

4.3.1 Ensure that identified employment projects extend traditional practices and work areas to include outdoor guiding, performance programs, nature programs, art-based programs, and management.

4.4.1 Investigate structured approaches to training programs for young Indigenous people at the **National Forum**.

4.5.1 Document and promote organisations with the best practice examples and case studies, such as the Koori Gardening Team, Museum Victoria’s Indigenous employment policy, and the Australian Museum Aboriginal Outreach Program’s support to Keeping Places. This can be achieved through workshops and extending AMOL’s Indigenous resources website (see http://www.amol.org.au/craft/indigenous/indig_index.asp).

⁸ See Appendix 6: Glossary of Terms

5. Funding

5.1 There were diverse sources of funding across a wide range of organisations, both in Government and non-Government sectors. We found a number of potential funding agencies in designated youth fields not traditionally accessed by museums, such as DEST⁹, TAFE, Green Corps, CDEP, Local Government youth initiatives and the Australia Council. There was also a perception that Indigenous communities were not currently accessing available grant funds.

6. Working with Communities

6.1 Many museums had active, ongoing programs for working with communities. This was seen as an area of strength for museums and one that could be further developed. Some examples of community programs included the Cobb and Co Museum oral history/photographic project (Queensland Museum); Koori Gardening Team (Melbourne Living Museum of the West); Aboriginal Outreach Program (Australian Museum); Bunjilaka temporary exhibition and performance program (Museum Victoria), and *Tracking Kultja* (National Museum of Australia).

6.2 It was identified that museums needed to recognise that they must work in the communities rather than expecting Indigenous people to travel into capital cities. Where this is not possible, museums should provide ongoing training and support services.

6.3 It was concluded that museums needed to re-think their professional standards and expectations to recognise that there were many levels of 'quality control', especially in the areas of collection management and conservation. Policies and practices needed to reflect the wishes and requirements of both museums and Indigenous people.

5.1.1 Develop an online Resource Kit detailing current granting schemes (perhaps through extending AMOL's current Indigenous resource section) and promote this to industry and communities.

5.1.2 Provide ongoing training for Indigenous communities in applying for grants.

6.1.1 Identify ways to develop a series of community programs targeted specifically at Indigenous youth, particularly as young Aboriginal people were interested in '(re)discovering' their cultural heritage. Programs need to ensure that this group is included to foster their development.

6.2.1 Document examples of best practices in the Resource Kit (see 5.1.1 above) that includes indicative resource and travel costs.

6.3.1 Make this information more widely available through the Resource Kit (see 5.1.1 above).

⁹ See Appendix 6: Glossary of Terms

Case Example 3.1: Koori Gardening Team, Melbourne Living Museum of the West, Victoria, Australia

The mission of the Melbourne Living Museum of the West is to be a community museum actively involving people of Melbourne's west and others documenting, preserving and interpreting the region's social, industrial and environmental history. It was originally established by historians to research the Western Suburbs of Melbourne. Currently core funding comes from Arts Victoria, supplemented with grants for special projects and income from consultancies.

The Koorie Gardening Team started out as a school project to re-vegetate a patch to demonstrate to young Indigenous people how their grandparents used plants as a way of teaching them about their cultural heritage. These were turned into apprenticeships and, as the Team gained gardening contracts, money was brought in and skills built up in contract negotiation. The Koorie Gardening Team is now a successful business operating in the commercial arena that employs and trains Aboriginal youth in gardening and business skills.

WEBSITE: <http://www.livingmuseum.org.au>

Case Example 3.2: Minjungbal Resource Museum and Study Centre, Tweed Heads, NSW, Australia

The Minjungbal Resource Museum and Study Centre, Tweed Heads, was established to work for the preservation and protection of local Aboriginal cultural heritage, as well as to conduct education programs and host exhibitions. The Centre has an outdoor component and is active in training and employing local young people through the CDEP program. Staff could see opportunities to both extend current programs and in training in archival work. This museum presented a new way of thinking about services provided by regional museums to their communities while encouraging education of the broader population about Indigenous cultural heritage through exploring tourism opportunities.

WEBSITE: <http://www.amonline.net.au/ahu/keep/keep09.htm>

Case Example 3.3. Alutiiq Museum and Archaeological Repository, Alaska, U.S.A.

Located on the coast of Kodiak Island, Alaska, and accessible only by plane or boat, the Museum is dedicated to serving the Alutiiq, a native Alaskan people. A large grant from the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council enabled the development of a state-of-the-art repository and regional research facility to promote awareness of Alutiiq history, language and arts. The Museum is governed by the Alutiiq Heritage Foundation which represents eight tribal organisations. The Alutiiq Museum and Archaeological Repository enriches communities through innovative educational programs, including a number with young people. A central goal of the Alutiiq Museum has been to revitalise the language Alutiiq, one of six local languages.

WEBSITE: <http://www.alutiiqmuseum.com>

Case Example 3.4. Hove Museum and Art Gallery, Sussex, U.K.

The Hove Museum and Art Gallery identified young people who had left school, university or work seekers as gap in their audience and developed an exhibition in 1998, led by young people for young people, to raise awareness of museums in Sussex. The exhibition was based on the permanent collections and brought together ten young people aged 18–25 years with no previous experience of the museum, but with visual arts backgrounds, to produce an exhibition based on domestic collections such as furniture or glass. Museum staff offered advice in a range of areas such as preventative conservation, as well as practical help with installation and the education program. In the resulting exhibition, *Forensic: Bags of Evidence*, imagery and artwork, rather than text, were used to portray individual thoughts on the collection, reflecting current trends in youth culture. It was found that the exhibition had more energy than the more traditional permanent displays were lacking. Feedback from the group showed they enjoyed and learned from the experience, as it offered them ‘the opportunity to exhibit a piece of work affecting a place that seemed very ordered and closed to them’.

WEBSITE: <http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/bhc/museums/hove/>

4. Indigenous Youth Discussions

An important component of this project was to talk to the target audience, Indigenous young people, to test out understandings about museums, prior experiences with museums and seek ideas for ways that museums could better engage and involve them in programs. This pilot study only allowed for a small number of consultations which could be further enhanced through participation by Indigenous young people in the **National Forum**.

4.1 Research Process

Three focus groups were held:

- Indigenous females aged 15–18 years from the inner city of Sydney (Redfern/Waterloo)
- Indigenous males and females aged 13–20 years from the Western suburbs of Sydney (Minto)
- One mixed group of female Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal youth (Canberra).

For the Sydney groups a recruiting agency was used to source participants. It was planned to hold a group of years 11 and 12 students and adults aged 20–24, however these had to be cancelled due to lack of participants. A discussion guide was developed (see Appendix 3), although it was found that the questions needed to be more flexible and responsive to the interests of the group. For the Sydney groups a PowerPoint presentation was shown outlining the role of museums (see Appendix 4) and participants were also given access to the *Keeping Culture* CD-ROM about Aboriginal Cultural Centres and Keeping Places developed by the Australian Museum.

The focus group research was supplemented by interviews with young Aboriginal people in Tweed Heads (through the Minjungbal Resource Museum and Study Centre) and with the Deputy Principal of the Palm Island Primary School, Queensland (of Torres Strait Islander descent). The difficulties in conducting research with this audience and suggestions for future research areas are outlined below.

4.2 Findings/Recommendations

Generally this research found that these Indigenous young people lacked understanding of what museums did beyond presenting exhibitions and were unaware of the extent of collections held by museums in Aboriginal areas. In the focus groups there was low awareness exhibited by participants about their own cultural heritage and roles that museums could play in this. They expressed curiosity and a desire to know more through reference to the past as it impacted on contemporary issues and the future. They enjoyed looking at objects from their country, seeing familiar people and names and thus making personal connections with these. They were interested in using museums and other cultural institutions as information centres, such as in researching family histories using the resources of museums, libraries, archives, and other agencies with relevant information. They were also highly interested in employment opportunities at museums, and in contemporary modes of program delivery such as technology and music.

The major recommendation from this aspect of the study is to develop a **Handbook/Resource Guide** for use across the museum sector and by the general evaluation profession. This publication should contain guidelines about conducting research with Indigenous people, and including a range of methodologies and case studies of museums and other projects. This could

be undertaken through a partnership between the Australia Council and the Australian Museum (AMARC and the Aboriginal Heritage Unit). It is also recommended that a number of young people from regional Australia and larger population centres (such as Darwin, Kempsey, Moree, Walgett, Brewarrina and Bourke) be invited to attend the **National Forum**.

DETAILED FINDINGS

1. Research Methods

1.1 For evaluation and research with Indigenous people it was found that models that were inclusive, collaborative, respectful of protocols and culturally sensitive while being cost-effective were required. Research methodologies needed to meet both community and project needs, as well as feeding findings and outcomes back to communities.

DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1.1 Develop a **Handbook/Resource Guide** addressing research with Indigenous people, detailing relevant methodologies and case studies that are specifically tailored for the cultural sector and make this widely available across the industry (via publication and AMOL). This should cover the following methods (as well as investigating other practices):

- Visiting communities using existing Aboriginal networks and structures.
- Visit communities as a 'naïve' researcher to obtain more open feedback, especially from Indigenous youth.
- Involve Elders, youth workers or other respected people to assist in managing group behaviour and dynamics when discussions are held with adolescents.
- Conduct interviews with individuals or friendship pairs.
- Use existing structures, for example, workshops in communities, youth centres, schools, TAFE and other educational centres.

1.1.2 Ensure ethical considerations are understood, met and included in the **Handbook/Resource Guide** (for example see AIATSIS guidelines for research with Indigenous communities <http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/corp/docs/EthicsGuideA4.pdf>).

DETAILED FINDINGS

1.2 Focus groups, while a useful research method, may not be the best way to talk to Indigenous people. Undertaking research with young people needs different approaches – sometimes it helps to have an Elder involved, other times it was easier to be ‘naïve’ researchers. Individual or friendship pair interviews also worked well. Also, it needed to be recognised that there were many time demands on Indigenous communities, and that other issues may impact on availability (such as funerals, family matters, etc).

2. Museums

2.1 There was a low awareness of and understanding about the role and scope of museums shown by participants (however this is true for a vast majority of Australians!).

2.2 When the work of museums was presented to them, there was a high interest shown in what museums offered, especially in the research and collection areas. Indigenous youth in this sample were very interested in looking at objects that came from their country, or that had names of people they knew or were related to. The Indigenous youth from urban Sydney in this study generally showed low awareness about their culture – what little they knew was through Elders, peers and school.

DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS

1.2.1 Recognise that people will usually attend focus groups if interested and paid (this is true of all people, not just Indigenous youth!).

1.2.2 Undertake further consultation with Indigenous youth and Elders in regional areas (such as Kempsey, NSW which has largest regional concentration of Indigenous people), and in areas where there are large contingents of Indigenous people compared to the general population (such as Darwin) to discuss and test findings from this study. This could be done through inclusion of representatives from these localities in the **National Forum**.

2.1.1 Ensure that existing networks, subcultures and ways of finding out about museum programs and services (such as through music magazines, websites, television) are used, with examples given in the **Handbook/Resource Guide**.

2.2.1 Museums need to find ways to capitalise on this potential source of interest, with the following to be explored and expanded at the **National Forum**:

- Work with Indigenous youth to set up exhibitions and spaces in their own community, suburb or youth centre.
- Use contemporary modes of delivery for exhibitions and programs such as film, art, performance, music, Internet, CD-ROM technology and television.
- Create online collection catalogues.
- Create/offer guest curator programs.
- Develop web programs (for example the Australia Council/National Museum of Australia website design project <http://www.theprogram.net.au/>).
- Develop projects in conjunction with different types of agencies (such as youth centres, Aboriginal Employment Agencies, performance venues, etc).

DETAILED FINDINGS

2.3 It was recognised that museums needed to deal with contemporary issues that Indigenous youth were both interested in and that impact on them.

2.4 It was highlighted that museums needed to be seen as accessible places with welcoming spaces where Indigenous youth were accepted positively and where all young people gathered, worked and generally hung out.

2.5 It was found that museums should provide programs that met the needs of this audience and addressed their psychological stage of development, which included peer approval; rebelliousness; risk-taking behaviour; and working out self-identity and where they fit in the world. For Indigenous youth this was further complicated by the problem of negotiating both black and white cultures.

DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS

2.3.1 Develop programs around a range of issues that are relevant and of interest to Indigenous youth, such as racism, reconciliation, stolen generations, repatriation, family, music and contemporary culture.

2.3.2 Recommend to Museums Australia that collection and acquisition policies need to reflect contemporary material culture in broader areas (other than artworks) and formats (such as digital works, performance pieces, film).

2.4.1 Implement training programs for industry to raise awareness of the needs of different cultural groups, including Indigenous youth (for example the Museums Australia Queensland training needs analysis publication <http://www.maq.org.au/profdev/indig/index.html>).

2.5.1 At the **National Forum**, develop a set of guidelines for programming for Indigenous young people that will engage them in ways they like to learn, such as television/video, film, dance, music, multimedia and gaming technologies, and that accounts for their psychological stage of development and cultural needs.

3. Role Models

3.1 Indigenous youth felt there was a lack of general role models, with too much focus on sporting achievers of little interest to females.

3.2 A mentoring project was conducted several years ago that paired young Indigenous people with professionals working across a wide range of industries, including museums (information supplied via Steve Miller, Powerhouse Museum).

4. Employment and Training

4.1 Indigenous youth were concerned about obtaining jobs (as are most young people). While they valued traineeship programs, cadet schemes, volunteering and placements, they ultimately wanted permanent, full-time paid employment. Opportunities do exist for Indigenous youth to be employed in 'non-traditional' areas of museums such as scientific research, social and family history research, which would allow for a more inclusive element to this aspect of museum work and make explicit the key role museums have in exploring Indigenous knowledge in broader contexts.

Case Example 4.1. Holly*: Seeing myself

Holly is a fifteen year old Aboriginal girl living in inner Sydney. Holly's major interests were being with friends, music and dance. Holly became interested in the potential of museums through recent visits to both the Australian Museum and the Powerhouse Museum. As with other girls in this group Holly wanted to see black faces at the front desk and among the floor staff, and felt more comfortable at places that accepted her for what she was – a young, proud, black woman. Holly would love to work at the Reception Desk of a museum or gallery and would take great pride in talking to visitors about her people and culture.

3.1.1 Implement a research and exhibition project that provides information on a range of Indigenous achievers. Indigenous young people should be involved developing the exhibition (for example, the current book *Black Chicks Talking* by Leah Purcell).

3.1.2 Travel this exhibition to schools, youth centres, regional museums and Keeping Places, and develop an online version. Regularly add components to the exhibition at each regional site/centre.

3.2.1 Undertake additional research into details and outcomes of this project and present at the **National Forum** for further exploration.

4.1.1 Explore the following options for employment programs at the **National Forum**:

- Set aside a percentage of positions specifically for Indigenous youth.
- Make better use of employment schemes such as the Elsa Dixon Fund, CDEP programs.
- Employ Indigenous young people in key front-of-house roles.
- Expand CDEP programs to include areas such as natural history research, museum education, curatorial work and interpretation.

Case Example 4.2. Val*: Information Access

Val is a school teacher in a remote Aboriginal community in Queensland. This posed special problems regarding access to information about other projects being undertaken, availability of educational resources and information about funding programs. A comprehensive Resource Kit (in both paper and website formats) would assist community people in remote areas, such as Val, to access information, advice and services.

Case Example 4.3. Paul*: Engagement

Paul is a thirteen-year-old Aboriginal boy living in Western Sydney. He has had a tough life, being in and out of juvenile detention and lacking educational and family support structures. Paul became extremely interested in the CD-ROM, *Keeping Culture*, and the catalogue of collection items from the Australian Museum shown during the focus group, as he recognised names of people that he may have been related to, topics that he'd only heard about in passing (for example, missions) and objects such as breastplates, boomerangs and carvings. Paul was very enthusiastic about animals and the natural world and would be interested in engaging with museums in researching these areas further.

Case Example 4.4. Jim*: Changing Perspectives

Jim is a twenty-year-old white youth worker at a youth centre in Western Sydney. This centre caters for three major cultural groups, including the local Aboriginal kids. Jim saw these groups as largely homogeneous, with the main issues impacting on them being those that affected all young people: transport, entertainment, employment, drugs and alcohol, and lifestyles. Jim attended one of the discussion groups and commented afterwards that he never realised that the Aboriginal young people he dealt with were interested in their culture – it had never been raised before, and he had never really seen them as 'Aboriginal youth', just as 'youth'. He saw that there was potential in tapping into this interest and enthusiasm to discover information together with the local Aboriginal kids about their cultural heritage and how youth centres generally could become involved with museums.

* NOTE: Names and details have been changed

Appendix 1. Museum Staff Questionnaire

INDIGENOUS YOUTH ACCESS PROJECT

This project aims to increase Indigenous youth access to museums and galleries through:

- A pilot study researching needs, attitudes and leisure habits across a targeted sample of Indigenous youth to collect some baseline data.
- Consultations with museums, Keeping Places and key peak bodies to research current programs on offer and suggestions.
- Development of recommendations for programs and marketing strategies that will promote access and engagement of Indigenous youth with museums in ways that meet their identified needs.

The project is being undertaken by the Australian Museum Audience Research Centre in conjunction with Indigenous staff from Anthropology and is being funded by the Australia Council's Audience and Market Development Division. For the purposes of this research, youth is defined as people aged between 15 and 24 years of age.

Focus Questions

How interested are they in involving Indigenous youth in their programs? [i.e. do they see them as a key group to engage?]

What activities (if any) have they undertaken that specifically involve Indigenous youth?

What were the outcomes, both positive and negative?

What do they think are some of the barriers to young Indigenous people engaging with museums? [prompt – lack of interest, time constraints, lack of understanding about what museums are about]

If there were resources available, what opportunities, suggestions do they have for projects, programs that could involve Indigenous youth? {prompts – some ideas that have come up so far: debates/forums; trainee curator schemes; exhibition development/staffing; other employment programs; research projects; oral history; language programs; use of new technologies in programming and information provision}

What services, resources, etc could be provided to their organisations that would assist in involving this audience further?

Other comments/suggestions?

Appendix 2. Keeping Places Questionnaire

INDIGENOUS YOUTH ACCESS PROJECT

This project aims to increase Indigenous youth access to museums and galleries through:

- A pilot study researching needs, attitudes and leisure habits across a targeted sample of Indigenous youth to collect some baseline data.
- Consultations with museums, Keeping Places and key peak bodies to research current programs on offer and suggestions.
- Development of recommendations for programs and marketing strategies that will promote access and engagement of Indigenous youth with museums in ways that meet their identified needs.

The project is being undertaken by the Australian Museum Audience Research Centre in conjunction with Indigenous staff from Anthropology and is being funded by the Australia Council's Audience and Market Development Division. For the purposes of this research, youth is defined as people aged between 15 and 24 years of age.

Focus Questions

How interested are they in involving Indigenous youth in their Keeping Places? [i.e. do they see them as a key group to engage?]

What activities (if any) have they undertaken that specifically involve Indigenous youth?

What were the outcomes, both positive and negative?

What do they think are some of the barriers to young Indigenous people engaging with museums? [prompt – lack of interest, time constraints, lack of understanding about what museums are about]

If there were resources available, what opportunities, suggestions do they have for projects, programs that could involve Indigenous youth? {prompts – some ideas that have come up so far: debates/forums; trainee curator schemes; exhibition development/staffing; other employment programs; research projects; oral history; language programs; use of new technologies in programming and information provision}

What services, resources, etc could be provided to their organisations (i.e. the Keeping Places) that would assist in involving this audience further?

Other comments/suggestions?

Appendix 3. Focus Group Discussion Guide

INTRODUCTION (5 mins)

- Introduce Lynda and Allison. Session being taped for later analysis. Session will go for around one and half hours. Comments remain anonymous, all opinions important, speak one at a time.
- Participants introduce selves and say a little about themselves (name, interests)
- Talk about aims of project (refer to letter)

YOUTH/INDIGENOUS ISSUES (10 mins)

- Go round room and ask each to nominate top issues facing youth/Indigenous youth currently (whiteboard)
- Group consensus – what are the top five issues? And why?

MUSEUM EXPERIENCES (10 mins)

- Ask about previous museum, exhibition or gallery visiting experiences: best and worst, who they went with, why, what they did there
- If never visited probe on why (eg not interested, too hard to get to, not relevant to me, don't know what museums are for, etc)
- Other arts, cultural activities (film, performances, theatre, dance)

THINGS THAT MUSEUMS DO (40 mins, incl. 5 mins/case study)

- Why are there museums and galleries? what are their roles? Why do they exist? (prompt – programs, exhibitions, working with communities) what do they do well? What could be improved?
- **Introduce Case Studies:** these are some of the programs that are currently being done by a range of museums.
- Go through each and seek reactions and comments (PowerPoint presentation)
 1. **Accessing Collections:** (handout catalogues) Aboriginal Collection of AM Catalogue is an example of providing access and information to cultural material held by museums, used by communities for research, exhibitions, as well as in repatriation programs
 2. **Communicating Information:** messages about Indigenous issues are communicated to a range of audiences, especially non-Indigenous visitors both onsite and via websites
 3. **Education Programs:** through placements, demonstrations and performances museums engage Indigenous people and non-Indigenous people, share skills, provide employment
 4. **Development Programs:** Koori Gardening Team example
 5. **Working with Communities:** Keeping Culture CD-ROM is an example of encouraging self determination for communities in establishing Keeping Places in their regions (play introduction)

MUSEUMS & YOUTH ISSUES (10 mins)

- Given what's possible what are some ways that the top youth/Indigenous issues could be dealt with by museums? (whiteboard)

OTHER COMMENTS

- Anything else?
- Thank and collect written sheets
- Give out cash and ensure they sign for it!!!

Appendix 4. Focus Group Presentation

1. Access to collections

- research
- information
- loans
 - short-term
 - long-term
- repatriation
- training:
 - collection mngt
 - conservation



2. Communicate information



- issues, information, personal stories
- through:
 - exhibitions
 - websites
- for visitors:
 - non-Indigenous
 - schools (<5 - yr 12)
 - tourists
 - remote users (eg web)
 - diverse backgrounds



3. Education programs

- training
- performances
- artists programs
- employment
- skill-sharing
- placements, internships



4. Development Programs

- Koori Gardening Team:
 - practical training in horticulture
 - research into native vegetation
 - adds to collection
 - now a viable business



5. Working with communities

- training
- programs
- collection management
- conservation & maintenance of objects
- through physical visits, outreach website, CDROM



Appendix 5. Resources

Table 5.1 lists organisations, places and programs that were sourced through the literature review. An Information Sheet for each of these is available through the online version of this report (<http://www.amonline.net.au/amarc/>), with further detailed information provided under the following headings:

- Organisation name
- Background
- Program
- Suggestions/Feedback (a summary of their comments if they were part of the consultations)
- Contact Details
- Further Information, including web address

Table 5.1. Resource List

ORGANISATION	STATE/TOWN	COUNTRY
Aboriginal Affairs Victoria (AAV)	VIC	AUS
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC)	ACT	AUS
Allbright-Knox Art Gallery	BUFFALO	USA
Alutiiq Museum and Archaeological Repository	ALASKA	USA
The Association of Children's Welfare Agencies	NSW	AUS
Australia Council	NSW	AUS
Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS)	ACT	AUS
Australian Museum	NSW	AUS
Australian Workplace Internet Portal	ACT	AUS
Bunjilaka Aboriginal Centre, Melbourne Museum	VIC	AUS
Canberra Youth Theatre	ACT	AUS
Children's Welfare Association of Victoria (CWAV)	VIC	AUS
The Children's Museum of Indianapolis	INDIANAPOLIS	USA
Conservation Volunteers Australia VIC	AUS	NSW
Department of Aboriginal Affairs	NSW	AUS
Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training	ACT	AUS
The Dusseldorp Skills Forum	NSW	AUS
Essendon Community Legal Centre	VIC	AUS
The History Teacher's Association of Australia (Inc)	SA	AUS
The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission	NSW	AUS
Koori Human Services Unit, Department of Human Services	VIC	AUS
iEarn: International Education and Resource Network in Australia	INT	INT
INFOXCHANGE Australia: Technology for Social Justice	VIC	AUS
Koori Heritage Trust Inc.	VIC	AUS
Launceston Advisory Group	TAS	AUS

ORGANISATION	STATE/TOWN	COUNTRY
Melbourne's Living Museum of the West	VIC	AUS
Mackillop Family Services	VIC	AUS
Mission Australia	NSW	AUS
Museums Australia Inc	ACT	AUS
National Archives of Australia: Melbourne Office	VIC	AUS
National Museum of Australia	ACT	AUS
NSW Commission for Children and Young People	NSW	AUS
Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences	NSW	AUS
Queensland Museum	QLD	AUS
State Library of Victoria	VIC	AUS
The Trust for Young Australians	VIC	AUS
Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA)	VIC	AUS
The Victorian Indigenous Youth Advisory Council	VIC	AUS
Wingate Avenue Community Centre	VIC	AUS
Youth Affairs Council of Victoria	VIC	AUS
Youth Museum of Southern West Virginia	VIRGINIA	USA

Appendix 6. Glossary of Terms

'The **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission** {ATSIC} is Australia's national policy-making and service delivery agency for Indigenous people. It is an independent statutory authority established by the Commonwealth Government in 1990 under the ATSIC Act and, as such, embodies the principle of Indigenous self-determination and forms the principal agency in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs portfolio. ATSIC is a decentralised organisation which advocates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues nationally and internationally, advises the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, and delivers programs to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.' See <http://www.atsic.gov.au/>

'The **Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies** {AIATSIS} is an independent Commonwealth Government statutory authority devoted to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies. It is Australia's premier institution for information about the cultures and lifestyles of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples'. See <http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/index.htm>.

Australian Museums Online (AMOL) is a project of the Heritage Collections Council, funded through the Commonwealth Department of Communication, Information Technology and the Arts. It contains information about museums around Australia, and includes a wide range of resources and links. AMOL represents a collaboration between Australian governments, museums and galleries as well as special project partners. See <http://amol.org.au/>. AMOL contains a section called Indigenous Resources with links to bibliographies, research, conservation, Indigenous museums and training and study (http://amol.org.au/craft/indigenous/indig_index.asp).

Consultation means the process of involving people in decision-making through face-to-face discussions, community meetings, workshops and forums. It requires extensive fieldwork, usually through visiting Indigenous people in their own community locations.

Country means the place where a person comes from, and includes family origins, physical location, cultural links and spiritual connections.

The **Department of Education, Science and Training** (DEST) is a Commonwealth agency established to support the Government's efforts to meet the lifelong learning needs of all Australians through providing advice, policy development and implementation in the areas of education, youth, Indigenous educational programs, science and innovation. See <http://www.dest.gov.au/default.htm>.

Indigenous people, as used in this report, includes the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Australia. 'Indigenous people or first peoples are usually existing descendants of the people who inhabited present territory or country at the time when people of a different culture or from other parts of the world arrived there.' (Museums Australia Inc, 1998, p.27).

Keeping Places are centres established by Indigenous people in their local area to house collections and repatriated artefacts, host exhibitions and conduct education and research programs while providing employment and a meeting place. They are also referred to as Cultural Centres or Aboriginal museums.

Museum The International Council of Museums (ICOM) definition was used as a framework for defining a museum in this study, and includes cultural institutions such as natural history and general/social history museums, historic houses and art galleries that have public exhibitions physically visited by a variety of people.

Museums Australia Inc is the peak national association representing the museum and gallery sector and provides a range of professional services to members and promotes the role of museums in society at local, regional, state and national levels. It was established in 1993 through an amalgamation of a number of industry membership organisations. See <http://www.museumsaustralia.org.au/>.

Outreach is defined as the delivery of programs and services to rural, regional and small communities and museums through for example, travelling exhibitions, training programs, long-term loans, educational resources and catalogues.

TAFE stands for Technical and Further Education, which is primarily applied to primarily State-funded organisations that provide a wide range of training and educational programs to students of all ages.

Visitor Studies is a discipline of museum practice that seeks to uncover information about visitors to cultural institutions. Demographics, behaviour, leisure habits and learning outcomes are examined. This field of practice is also known as Audience Research, Evaluation, and Market Research. See <http://www.amonline.net.au/amarc/>

Youth are defined as persons aged between 15 and 24 years.

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