

CULTURAL STORYTELLING

The Storytelling Framework is a holistic approach to the creation, preservation and sharing of stories in a linked approach incorporating four components:

- Social and Emotional Well-being
- Public Education and Truth Telling
- Economic Well-being
- A Shared future

Social and Emotional Well-being

This domain has a number of components which is based on the National Indigenous Mental Health and Social and Emotional Well-Being model for a healthy life which includes the seven connections to:

- Family and Kin
- Community
- Spirit
- Country
- Thinking and Emotions
- Body
- Cultural Philosophy

It also recognises different starting points of First Nations people in their connection journeys to a healthy life, from misplaced mob or totally disconnected individuals looking for a full First Nations connection to people who are enjoying a continuous connection to country and story.

Given the widespread disconnection that has occurred for most First Nations people across the whole of Australia, this is the foundation stone and main purpose of Cultural Storytelling. It naturally leads into the other components of the model, the next of which is Truth Telling or Public Education.

Public Education

The poor levels of knowledge amongst non-First Nations people about the true history of this country from its beginnings in the Dreamtime, through to first contact with the British, the subsequent policies, circumstances and events which have taken place since colonisation needs to be addressed in a way that raises awareness rather than defensiveness. The primary target groups for this are Government at all levels, the general community and new arrivals into this country. It should also be noted that many First Nations people are not aware of the detail of many events that have occurred, but all have felt their impacts to varying degrees.

Shared Future

Well-constructed storytelling pitched in the right way to suit the right audiences is a significant pathway forward for this country to have a shared and respectful future based on mutual appreciation.

This includes First Nations people taking control of the storytelling process covering the scope, content, styles, ownerships and privacy protocols. This can be a powerful way for reconciling differences between ourselves on the types of strategies currently in place and reconciling differences with the large uninformed majority of the population.

First Nations wisdom could and should be an integral part of future evolution of this country in a genuinely shared future.

Economic Well-Being

The implementation of cultural storytelling can take many forms. A powerful way to do this is to link it to other storytelling mediums such as the arts and tourism. The development of a First Nations peak body to manage the direction of cultural storytelling in the tourism industry, the creation of multiple First Nations businesses to create stories as sellable products, the training of First Nations people in the telling of ripper yarns and the cooperative linking of First Nations people and tourism to the tourism industry infrastructure, use of contemporary business tools and social media will mean economic well-being to complement the social and emotional well-being.

Community Based Cultural Storytelling (Woorabinda and Yarrabah)

Identified First Nations communities are rich in story and culture. There is much information, but a lot of that information is not organised in a way that it can easily be used to bring social, emotional and economic well-being to community members. It requires a starting point to get the processes going.

Woorabinda

Woorabinda has the Mimosa Rehabilitation Centre as a potential starting point. This is taking the lead for promoting cultural storytelling from a social and emotional well-being standpoint and expanding it out to the community. Mimosa already has strong connections with the Men's Group and other who are interested in the areas of cultural preservation and healing.

Yarrabah

Yarrabah has the Yarrabah Tourism and small Business Association and the Yarrabah Cooperative Society as potential starting points. This is taking the lead for promoting cultural storytelling from an economic well-being standpoint and expanding it out to the community. Both organisations have strong links with Traditional Owners and Yarrabah is located within and adjacent to a strong tourism destination.

QTIC First Nations Tourism Group

The Queensland Tourism Industry Council has been working in the indigenous tourism space for over a decade and is well placed to assist individual First Nations businesses and First Nations employees develop their storytelling capabilities in a savvy business framework.

Wakai Waian Healing Services

The drafting of stories and truth telling runs a risk of igniting traumatic memories which need to be processed. This risk needs to be managed. Cultural storytelling requires support strategies to minimise the onset of trauma in the process of telling the stories in the first place and when or if trauma does arise, healing strategies need to be available to contain and remove it.

Storytellers

Because we have different purposes, different audiences and different mediums for storytelling, we need to attract competent storytellers with different backgrounds to provide support/mentoring strategies to ensure the stories end up being 'ripper yarns' that move people rather than tomes that put people to sleep.

A list of willing and suitable people needs to be compiled.

NGOs, Government Agencies and Repositories of Resources

There are a number of sources of good quality information on First Nations culture, history, families and Indigenous management policies such as AIATSIS, DATSIP, Link-Up, Trove, Ancestry data bases, Land Councils, Museums and professionals (archaeologists, genealogists, anthropologists etc) which can be approached for assistance.

Funding

Funding needs to be pursued in areas of Health, Tourism, Education, Philanthropy and Sponsors. Other sources also need to be identified.

Coordination and Management

A small group is required to coordinate the process. Membership of the group which provides the best mix to support successful outcomes is open to suggestions.

Additional Issues

Other issues previously raised and still requiring consideration are listed below. This list will be added to and change over time.

- the level of story - for public consumption and different levels of private access
- IP security and ownership secure storage
- financial aspects e.g. remuneration, if any and how much
- type of story - individual, family, clan, tribe, country/nation/pan First Nations
- themes of stories
- mediums for story delivery - e.g. video, PowerPoint, written, painted, danced, etc
- time-frames of stories - pre contact, contact, projected future
- managing politics
- setting targets e.g. 1000 black stories by January 2020
- capturing the diversity of story which reflects the diversity of First Nations in Australia

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