

# CULTURAL STORYTELLING

## Introduction

Ngarigo Nation seeks to raise the profile and stimulate discussion about the role that cultural storytelling can play in Tribal Revival. Feedback is encouraged to help us all move forward in this important area for us.

## Background

We have tens of thousands of stories, we have tens of thousands of artefacts, art works, dances and we have hundreds of thousands of people across the country, but we are not well organised to take full advantage of them.

We need to take charge and make it happen

We need to get organised

We need to take the whole mob with us

We need systems and protocols in place to manage and protect stories

We need frameworks within which we share the stories

We need a hierarchy of cultural story products from elite to emerging

We need a foundation upon which we build knowledge skills and identity

We need to brand Ngarigo as the heart of the Snowy-Monaro story, everyone's story

We need to take mainstream tourism with us

We need to link story to our overall story of a renascent people moving forward into a bright future

WE NEED CHAMPIONS TO HELP US

WE NEED TO ACT IMMEDIATELY TO CAPTURE AND PRESERVE AS MANY STORIES AS WE CAN

## **The Framework**

The Ngarigo 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 the different starting points of our people in their connection journeys to a healthy life, from misplaced mob or totally disconnected individuals looking for a full Aboriginal 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 and for Ngarigo people in particular from a very early start in the colonisation process, 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 the 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 First Nations peak bodies nationally, in each state and regionally 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**

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.

## **Partnering with 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 and secure storage
- confidentiality levels

- financial aspects e.g. remuneration, if any and how much
- type of story - individual, family, clan, tribe, country/nation/pan First Nations
- style of story -many views of same event – all legitimate
- themes of stories
- mediums for story delivery - e.g. video, PowerPoint, written, painted, danced, etc
- time-frames of stories - pre contact, contact, projected future
- authenticity of stories -Integrity checks on information
- managing politics
- setting targets e.g. 100 black stories by January 2021
- capturing the diversity of story which reflects the diversity of experience of tribal members, regional tribes and First Nations people generally across Australia pre4-contact and since colonisation
  
- Kinship carer stories
- High interest target groups for stories:
  - All kids in care
  - All kids in schools
  - Child safety cultural liaison officers
  - School indigenous school liaison officers
  - Police liaison officers
  - Indigenous Community education counsellors
  - Reconnecting elders to family groups
  - Adopt an elder
  - Knowledge centres –
  - Dreamtime Cultural Centre –

- Stories in situ with tourism industry:
  - 'Indigifying' Tourism Experiences through story
  - Working with Wisdom (Tribal Elders)
  - Entry points 'welcome'
  - Indigenous themed entry/exit signage
  - Traditional 'story telling'
  - Indigenous presence in Visitor Information Centres (VIC's)
  - Indigenous 'Care for Country'
  - Shop window displays
  - Setting targets e.g. creation of a minimum of 20 Indigenous businesses

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