

Ara Irititja

South Australian Museum



Ara Irititja Ara Irititja means ‘stories from a long time ago’ in the language of Anangu (Ngaanyatjarra, Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara people) of Central Australia. The Ara Irititja project works with many Aboriginal organisations on the APY Lands to digitally preserve and repatriate artefacts, photographs, film footage and sound recordings that have been removed from the Ngaanyatjarra, Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara lands in Central Australia.

Many of these items are held in state and private collections. Archival and other collections have been digitised and made accessible to the community through digital archive workstations throughout the APY Lands, and in other appropriate places such as aged care facilities, schools and community centres.

Digital material is managed and made accessible using the Ara Irititja Knowledge Management System, which has been designed in consultation with the community to ensure that it is useful, and protects and manages their information in a manner that is culturally appropriate. The same software is used for recording and annotating the digital archive, helping the community collect, preserve and communicate cultural knowledge and history.

The project was initiated by Anangu elders and commenced as a social history project of the Pitjantjatjara Council in 1994. The South Australian Museum has provided support and formally managed the project in partnership with the community since 2007. Ara Irititja has also developed a number of educational resources; the software is used to help other communities develop their own digital archive, and has produced the multimedia educational program Ara Winki: Life on the Pitjantjatjara Lands.

Software also used by other institutions including Northern Territory Library.

Target audience/community: Ngaanyatjarra, Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara people of Central Australia.

[Source, Meeting of Cultural Ministers, Digital Technologies Working Party Report Attachment 2 ‘Projects Demonstrating Excellence in Digital Innovation’ June 2015]