Find & Connect web resource policy on the words we use

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Version: 1.0
Policy Steward: Find & Connect web resource Program Manager
Approved on: 11 August 2017
Effective date: 11 August 2017
Policy Approver: Program Operational and Research Team (PORT)
Status: Approved

1. Objective

1.1 The Find & Connect web resource aims to facilitate access to information and records relating to the history of institutional 'care' in Australia. It is funded by the Department of Social Services as part of the Find & Connect Services and projects, and is managed by the eScholarship Research Centre, University of Melbourne. It has been designed using archival theory and principles.

1.2 Archival principles state that when describing archival material, the original description and language used on the material should be retained so that full historical context may be understood.

1.3 Much of the language historically used to describe institutional 'care' and the children and adults impacted by it is considered offensive, derogatory and inappropriate today.

1.4 Noting that our primary audience is people who were in 'care', their families and support services, the decision has been made to not always adhere to archival principles and instead rename material, recognising the distress and offence this language causes.

2. Scope

2.1 This policy applies to all aspects of the Find & Connect web resource, including content published on the website from back-end databases, static web pages, online exhibitions, and allied web presences including the Find & Connect web resource blog and twitter account.

3. Rationale

3.1 Offensive ideas and language are part and parcel of the history of institutions for children that are represented on the Find & Connect web resource. This includes material about policies and practices that were, for example, based on racist ideologies, moralistic ideas about women, children and families, and eugenicist views of people with disabilities or mental illness.

3.2 We believe it is important to make historical information about children's institutions more accessible to the public. However, we acknowledge that this information can cause offence as well as distress.

3.3 The aims of this policy are not to censor or sugar-coat the history of 'care' – it is instead about the Find & Connect web resource making conscious choices about the language we use to create our content – language is not neutral or 'historical', and in reproducing offensive language we are endorsing or perpetuating systems that have caused great injustice and harm.

4. Policy

4.1 In general, the Find & Connect web resource reproduces the original language from historical sources, for example photo or document captions and titles from archival

collections (such as the National Archives of Australia). However, in cases where that language is now considered offensive, derogatory and/or outdated, titles will be changed. Any alterations will be clearly indicated.

4.2 Original titles and other archival information will be moved out of the title field and will be displayed in a field clearly indicated as showing archival reference information. This information is retained for two reasons:

    4.2.1 So that archival documents and images can be located within a collection held by an external repository. The title or caption of an image forms part of the key identity information for that object. It is used to link to the item within the collection it has come from.

    4.2.2 In order to demonstrate the language (and thus, the policy or underlying opinions) of the time.

4.3 In cases where the offensive language is used in the name of an institution or Home providing 'care', the name will not be changed, as this was the name the Home was known and operated by. In these cases, contextual information will be provided in the description to acknowledge that this reflects attitudes at the time and is not acceptable today.

4.4 The content created by contributors to the Find & Connect web resource will not reproduce derogatory or offensive terms and will use alternative language to describe events, people and experiences, except if quoting from historical sources. To ensure this is achieved, the editor will review existing content on the web resource as at 2017, and ensure that content created after this date meets this policy on language use.

4.5 If quoting from historical sources using derogatory or offensive terms, this will be clearly indicated as a quote, and the source of the quote provided.

4.6 The titles of photographs and documents published on the Find and Connect website that contain names of children will be edited to alter or remove these names, unless we have the express prior approval of the persons depicted. Any alterations or removals of children's names from original titles will be indicated using the archival convention of square brackets.

4.7 On the *About* page of the website, we acknowledge that language has the potential to cause offence or distress. In addition, the following notice is included at the top of every page on Find & Connect:

> Some people may find content on this website distressing. Read more

The link takes you to a Content Warnings page (see **Appendix B: Content Warnings**)

5. Feedback, takedown and complaints

5.1 If, in the course of using the web resource, users find entries containing offensive or derogatory language, they may contact the web resource team (using the Feedback page) so that the content may be flagged for review.

5.2 The web resource team will acknowledge the request for review in writing within five business days, and will make an assessment of the request. The person lodging the issue will be kept updated of actions taken by the web resource team in response to their request and the reasoning behind those actions. This includes reasoning for any decisions made, including if the web resource team does not take action as a result of the request.

5.3 Requests for take down of published content, and the outcome, will be registered in the project Complaints Register. This register is stored securely on the eScholarship Research Centre's servers at the University of Melbourne and can be viewed on request, subject to privacy considerations.

5.4 In the event that a person is dissatisfied with the response to their feedback regarding the Find & Connect web resource, or with any dealings with the Find & Connect web resource team, they may lodge a formal complaint.

5.5 The Find & Connect web resource complaints procedure is documented on the website, under About - Feedback.

5.6 The Find & Connect web resource team may also at any time remove content from the website at their sole discretion, for operational reasons, or in response to other feedback.

APPENDIX A: Renaming protocol

The renaming protocol is part of the Find & Connect Data Entry manual, and can be provided on request.

APPENDIX B: Content Warnings

The Content Warning is available on the Find & Connect website under About – Content Warning https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/about/content-warning/

APPENDIX C: Feedback and Complaints procedure

The Feedback and Complaints procedure is available on the Find & Connect website under About – Feedback https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/about/feedback/

POLICY APPROVER

Find & Connect web resource Program Operational and Research Team (PORT)

POLICY STEWARD

Find & Connect web resource Program Manager

REVIEW

This policy is to be reviewed by 30 June 2018.

VERSION HISTORY

Version	Approved by	Approval Date	Effective Date	Sections Modified
1	Program Operational and Research Team	11 August 2017	11 August 2017	Policy created.