Tocumwal Archive Rationale and Accessibility Audit

**Rationale:**

The Tocumwal Archive is a website consisting of three separate pages that intends to both preserve the information of the events of the Tocumwal houses being moved into the Canberra suburb known as O’Connor, and to inform those that do not have the information. The site is intended to be used by all ages, and over any platform, such as computer, tablet, or phone.

During the process of programming the website, many choices both stylistic and rational had to be made. To start with, I had decided that using light background colors for the site would be the best idea for the site. The reason for this is because it makes the text and pictures stand out from the webpage, and the light colors are easy on the eyes and evoke a calming emotion to the readers. You will also notice that every page has an image section at the bottom within its own table. I had decided that the images of Tocumwal houses be placed at the bottom of each webpage as a visual reference to visit after gaining all the information from within the text. The decision for using a table to hold the images was to make the presentation of said images seem like they were organized in a collected manner, much like a physical archive. Lastly, the navigation bar at the top also contains the reference images tab, so that viewers who would like to look at the pictures can skip straight to them. The navigation bar also sticks to the top of the page no matter how far you scroll down, for easier navigation. The information in the navigation bar is also centered so that readers don’t have to turn their heads to either side of the screen to navigate to another page.

The home page states the purpose of the webpage and shows some example pictures. This sets up an expectation for the viewer, just so they know the purpose of the site, and why it exists. The heritage listings page provides information on the specific houses, and stories from the people who lived and them during the movement. Their pictures are displayed on the left side of the text as a notion as to what the person telling the story looks like at the time of the story telling, and to form a better connection towards the person telling the story. The origins page displays the historic information of the move to the new neighborhood in O’Connor. I decided against adding any flashy or distracting details to this page, as I believe it would take away from the historic message that it sets. All in all, the amount of information on each page is kept to a minimum as to not overwhelm the reader with and overabundance of text, and to maintain interest in continuing to read into the information.

There are also scaling changes made dependent on the viewer’s screen size. If they are using a phone, tablet, or simply reading in a smaller window, the text is automatically scaled for easier reading. Images that were next to text now appear above the text to first give the reader an idea of what they are about to read. Tables are collapsed into a single column, starting with the picture first, then the name, and then the description, as the order seems formal.

Overall, the project was an interesting one to approach. On one hand, the purpose of the site must be kept in mind, such as whom it is intended for, and how to get the information across in the best way possible. On the other hand, the website must also be looked at from a design standpoint, such as how to make the site appeal to a wide audience, and how to make the site look tidy. I feel that while it looks very calm and welcoming, it could also use some sprucing up with perhaps some interactive videos or audio recordings (which would obviously have to be mockups given the time period of the subject matter). However, for the time being, I believe that the Tocumwal Archive is at its best, with a simplistic and friendly design that welcomes all that visit the website.

**Accessibility Audit:**

**Executive Summary:**

The following report will outline information regarding the Tocumwal Archive website along the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C). Currently, the Tocumwal Archive sits at an accessibility level rating of only a single A.

**Background and Methodology:**

Website Reviewed: The Tocumwal Archive

The primary roll of The Tocumwal Archive is to preserve and provide information regarding the moving of the Tocumwal houses into the suburbs of O’Connor Street, as stated on the Home Page: “The Tocumwal Archive is a collection of stories and photographs, about living in the houses that were moved from the Tocumwal air force base in New South Wales, to the Canberra suburb of O'Connor.” As an independent historical site, the Tocumwal Archive is not required to meet with the WCAG 2.0 standards. However, if the site wishes to gain traction and users, it should wish to do so.

**Review Process:**

The current purpose of this audit is to assess The Tocumwal Archive’s website compliance within the WCAG 2.0 Level A ruleset. All of the sites features and pages have been assessed and considered for the sake of the review process. Such things include:

* Home Page
* Heritage Listing: Gives information on the people living within the Tocumwal Houses, and their stories.
* Origins: Gives information on the origins of the Tocumwal House buildings and their move to Canberra.
* Image Sections: On each page, a table of related images appear at the bottom.

Since the site was full html, it was only examined using manual checks, as automated online evaluation tools would not examine the site. The manual checks included the following:

* Examined all page’s structure and content following the W3C’s Easy Checks guide.
* Tested every page using only a keyboard and no mouse.
* Checked color contrast using contrast radio tool.

**Findings and Recommendations:**

**Page Titles**: All pages have titles.

**Image Alternate Text**: All pages have alternate text.

**Text – Headings**: All headings are appropriately tagged with <h1>, <h2> etc.

**Text – Contrast Ratio**: The dark text successfully sticks out from the light colored background.

**Text – Resize Text**: Text can be resized to a readable state successfully.

**Interaction – Keyboard Access and Visual Focus**: All links can be accessed through keyboard alone, and every link selected has a blue box around it.

**Interaction – Forms, Fields and Errors**: There are no forms, fields, or errors on the site to worry about.

General – Moving, Flashing, Blinking Content: The navigation link changes color when hovering the mouse over it, but the color is not contrasted from the original enough to cause any serious damage.

**General – Multimedia Alternatives**: There isn’t any multimedia displayed on the page.

**General – Basic Structure Check**: The structure of the webpage stays consistent no matter the form.

**Summary:**

The Tocumwal Archive has successfully met with the WCAG 2.0 Level A. It succeeds with correct page titling, alternate image text, correct adherence to both text and interaction guidelines, and correct adherence to the general rules.

**References:**

**Evaluating Web Accessibility Overview**

W3C Web Accessibility Initiative 2017, Evaluating Web Accessibility Overview, accessed 1 May 2019, <https://www.w3.org/WAI/test-evaluate/>.

**Easy Checks - A First Review of Web Accessibility**

W3C Web Accessibility Initiative 2017, Easy Checks - A First Review of Web Accessibility, accessed 1 May 2019, <https://www.w3.org/WAI/test-evaluate/preliminary/>.