

The University of Manitoba and its partners¹⁷³ have emphasized that the centre recognizes the

paramount importance of accessibility [for] the Aboriginal survivor, family member [or] researcher, [and is] committed to recognition of Aboriginal peoples as co-creators of the IRS records, through co-curation and participatory archiving; and committed to continuing the work of the TRC of statement-gathering, public education, engagement and outreach.¹⁷⁴

The NCTR will incorporate an

archival system and approach which is devoted to “reconciling records”; [it] will ... support Indigenous frameworks of knowledge, memory and evidence, and reposition ... Indigenous communities as co-creators of archival records that relate to them, including government archives. Such approaches acknowledge rights in records that extend beyond access to working in partnership with archival institutions to manage appraisal, description and accessibility of records relating to Indigenous communities.¹⁷⁵

The centre is committed to “establish[ing] trust with Aboriginal communities by working with these communities to realize their own goals through participatory archiving.... The process of participatory archiving, interacting with as complete a record as possible, will be a powerful force for reconciliation and healing.”¹⁷⁶ As well, the Centre for Truth and Reconciliation is also committed to

personally supporting survivors, their families, and all researchers in navigating, using, and understanding the records, in a culturally sensitive environment. The support that the NRC will provide includes emotionally-sensitive support, acknowledging that accessing the NRC documents may be traumatic, difficult or otherwise emotional experiences for many users. An Elder will be present or on call (from a nearby building) most of the time the NRC is open to the public. LAC and other government departments have no mandate or capacity to offer these various supports, which are critical to relationship-building and overcoming the perception of archives as yet another mechanism of colonization, cultural appropriation by Western society and hyper-surveillance and objectification of Aboriginal peoples.¹⁷⁷

On June 21, 2013, First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Survivors, Elders, the TRC, the University of Manitoba and its partner institutions, along with other dignitaries, gathered in Treaty 1 territory of the Anishinaabe peoples and homeland of the Métis Nation for a signing ceremony at the University of Manitoba.¹⁷⁸ The signing of a Trust Deed with the university marks the transfer of a sacred trust—a solemn promise that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission made to Survivors and all those affected by the residential schools as it travelled across the country, bearing witness to their testimonies.

The NCTR is committed to making all its holdings readily accessible to Survivors, their families, and communities, as well as to the public, educators, and researchers.¹⁷⁹