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Cultural Protocols Guide

RFDS recognises the unique status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the First Australians. We acknowledge the special relationship that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have with their traditional lands and waters, as well as their unique history and diverse culture, customs and circumstances.

RFDS present this Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Protocols and Resources as a means of ensuring safety and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in all our undertakings of our workforce.

This resource has been developed for RFDS own internal use as part of our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). The content areas have been developed by our National RAP Coordinator.

RFDS seek to implement these core values at each level of engagement with staff, Indigenous community, and the industry sector, utilising an approach that respects diversity in all its configurations. An important part of showing respect for different cultures is acknowledging and accepting that we all have different codes of behaviour and ways of interacting. RFDS recognises that to consult and work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people effectively, it must show sensitivity to, and respect for, the cultural protocols of these communities. Moving forward, RFDS policies will, where appropriate, align with these protocols.

This document has been compiled using numerous resources freely available on the internet. Items are referenced accordingly where utilised below. We acknowledge those resources and authors cited, and thank the organisations that have made them available for all to use.

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PURPOSE

Cultural protocols provide guidance for RFDS staff to inform their work and practices as undertaken. The main purpose is to ensure that staff show respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural beliefs and practices in all their endeavours. We encourage staff to use these protocols and practices in their undertakings.

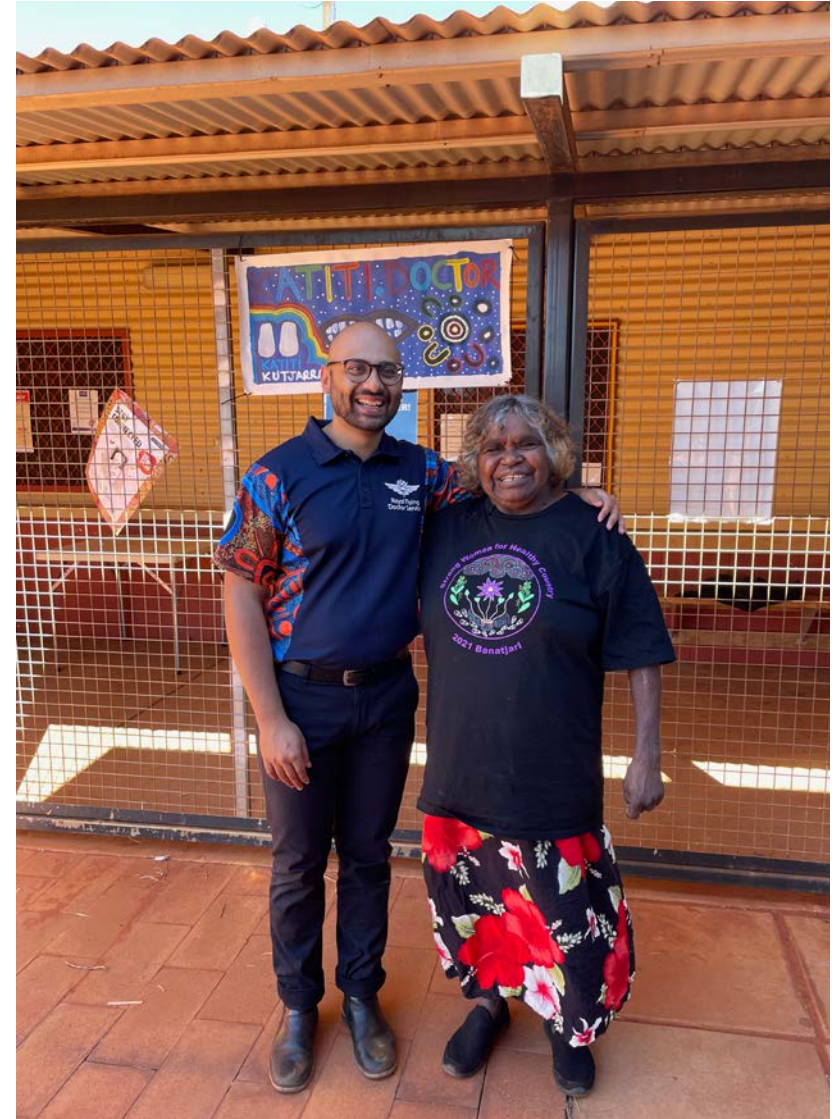
What are cultural protocols?¹

“Cultural protocols refer to principles and practices that guide the behaviour of a cultural group. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples these protocols include historic and current customs, practices, traditional lore and codes that are part of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural observances. Protocols are present in all cultures and are an important part of ensuring people interact and conduct their behaviour in an appropriate manner.”²

“The introduction of cultural protocols represents an important step towards understanding, respecting and representing Indigenous views particularly within our workforce, encouraging culturally appropriate working practices and valuing the cultural diversity that enriches, motivates and drives an organisation forward”.

RFDS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols recognise the diverse cultures and traditions that make up Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and are based on recognition, consultation, respect, and community engagement. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are complex, dynamic and evolving and therefore protocols may differ according to the particular group or community in question.³ Consultation with a particular group may need to be undertaken when developing a service or program within their local area. RFDS recognises improved outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples will only be achieved when effective and respectful partnerships are established with them, their communities, and their local organisations.

These protocols give practical expression to a fundamental human rights principle that: “Indigenous peoples have a right to own and control their Indigenous cultural and intellectual property”⁴ that is, they have a right to protect their Indigenous heritage.⁵



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The following values and principles provide a framework for implementing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols:

1. ABORIGINALITY

An Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person is someone who satisfies each of the following criteria as per the NSW Aboriginal Land Council requirements:

- > Is of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent;
- > Identifies as an Aboriginal person or Torres Strait Islander;
- > Presents documentation identifying their family's Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent;
- > Is accepted as such by the Indigenous community in which he or she lives.

It is offensive to question the 'amount' of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander blood an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person may possess. The labels "half caste", "quarter caste" and "full blood" are now considered racist terms and should not be used. It is advisable to ask people how they would like to be described. This may include where they come from or the community or clan with which they identify.

The following regional terms are used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander society to identify the people who come from a particular area of Australia:

- > New South Wales – Koori/Koorie/Goorie
- > Victoria – Koori/Koorie
- > South Australia – Nunga
- > Western Australia – Nyoongah
- > Northern Territory (top end) – Yolngu
- > Northern Territory (central) – Anangu
- > Queensland – Murri
- > Tasmania – Palawa

These terms are used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people when referring to themselves and are generally not to be used by non-Aboriginal people. It is important for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to use these terms only when they have sought permission from the relevant people in the community. An exception is when using recognised industry names such as "Koori Mail" or "Koori Radio".



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2. RESPECT⁶

The rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to own and control their cultural heritage, and their rights and interests in how they are portrayed (in images, text or the like), must at all times be respected and protected.

Proper consultation processes with appropriate cultural authorities should always be followed with approvals and permissions sought accordingly when publishing content. Respect the communal nature of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social structures, timeframes and decision-making processes: a group may have to wait for the “correct” people to be present, and meetings may need to be scheduled around cultural obligations or travel considerations (especially in remote locations). It is important to understand that the consultation process may be lengthy as each community needs time to consider and consult according to their community structure.

3. ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CONTROL⁷

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples should be consulted and involved in all decisions affecting their cultural land mass, heritage and regarding the ways in which their history, community, stories and interviews, lives and families and cultural and intellectual property are represented and used.

4. INTERPRETATION AND INTEGRITY⁸

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples should be recognised as the primary guardians and interpreters of their cultures. Representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures should reflect their cultural values and respect their customary laws.⁹

When writing about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues or choosing images to accompany text, it is important to consider how the work affects the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples who are subjects of the story and how this might be viewed by non-Aboriginal persons.

Before publishing, please ensure the material does not depict or expose confidential, personal and/or sensitive information or reinforce negative stereotypes. Where possible we must ensure the material empowers Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and reflects their cultural identity.

Permission **must** be sought from the person who owns the story and any potential issues discussed with them prior to publishing. Items should not be published without permissions.

5. REPRESENTATION OF DECEASED PEOPLE

In many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, the reproduction of a deceased person’s name and image is offensive to cultural beliefs. Consult with the deceased’s family or community so that the appropriate protocols are observed.¹⁰ Remove any references to deceased people from the public arena (e.g. websites, photographic databases, publications, community service announcements, etc.) as soon as you are alerted to their passing. If you wish to use the name, image or voice of a deceased person, you must seek permission prior. Include a reference to the permission having been granted for this particular use in a highly prominent position.

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6. CULTURAL CONFIDENTIALITY¹¹

Some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander material is unsuitable for public scrutiny.

PERSONAL PRIVACY

Privacy and confidentiality concerning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' personal affairs should also be respected. This includes reporting personal matters to an Indigenous Liaison or Coordinator where possible in the workforce. Further consultation should be conducted with Elders, Traditional owners and/or other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in authority to identify sensitive, sacred or religious issues that might prevent use of the material. Some types of personal information may require special attention.

GENDER

Some tasks, images and knowledge may be gender-specific and may only be seen by initiated men and women. Gender-based works may require the workforce to follow special communication procedures which should be discussed with the community prior to publication.

7. CULTURAL ATTRIBUTIONS¹²

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be given proper credit or appropriate acknowledgement for their achievements, contributions and roles in the development of RFDS Indigenous media, stories and/or use of cultural material.

Encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives. It is important to select Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for comment on their issues rather than relying solely on any potential self-appointed non-Aboriginal spokespeople, as worldviews can differ.

When preparing acknowledgements and attributions, ask Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees or key stake holders how they want to be described or identified. Some people may wish to be known by their clan group or by their place of origin and/or occupation – as this will ensure accuracy for the purposes of establishing an authority to speak and avoid stereotyping.

8. BENEFITS OF CULTURAL SHARING IN THE WORKPLACE¹³

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have the right to share in the benefits from use of their culture, especially where it is being commercially applied.

Consider how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples can be included in your work, for example, where possible:

- > engage with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, provide opportunities for meaningful participation and acknowledgement of contributions.
- > employ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, liaisons, managers and executive staff.
- > provide information and research to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, including copies of images or published works to the people involved
- > reimburse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants for the contributions they have made to improving the company structure, RAP plans, artworks and additional.



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9. COPYRIGHT, CULTURAL OWNERSHIP & INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS¹⁴

Cultural Respect is the: “Recognition, protection and continued advancement of the inherent rights, cultures and traditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.”¹⁶

Staff should where possible understand the local history of the area in which they work along with any Indigenous names used to identify locations or buildings. This is a good beginning to develop cultural respect and to follow cultural protocol of the local area and the Indigenous community. It is also helpful to have knowledge of the history of the Aboriginal and the Torres Strait Islander flags and to acknowledge the traditional custodians prior to all formal events.

In the context of medical services Cultural Respect is about shared respect. Cultural Respect is achieved when the service provided is a safe environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and where cultural differences are respected. It is a commitment to the principle that the services offered by RFDS should not wittingly compromise the legitimate cultural rights, practices, values and expectations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

The purpose of Cultural Respect is to uphold the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to maintain, protect and develop their culture and achieve equitable employment outcomes within the organisation.¹⁷

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander intellectual property also consists of the intangible ideas and knowledge associated with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artistic works and designs and other forms of cultural expression such as Indigenous music, dance, song and story. Copyright and the protection of intellectual property are key issues to be aware of when working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

There are no special provisions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander works in the Copyright Act and no recognition of customary or traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander laws. Copyright law applies to Indigenous artistic works in the same way as it applies to other artistic works.

Consequently:

- > Copyright in an artistic work usually lasts for the life of the artist plus 70 years.
- > Because copyright does not protect ideas, methods, or styles, it does not prevent other artists using styles belonging to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities such as dot painting or cross hatching;
- > Because copyright law applies only to works which have been “recorded” in some way, it does not protect aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture which have never been written down such as some music or stories; and
- > Under the Copyright Act there is an obligation only to get permission from a copyright owner and not from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community whose customary laws apply to the use of a work.
- > When working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people it is important that “Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property” (ICIP) rights and copyright are observed and safeguarded.

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10. WELCOME TO / ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Acknowledgement of country should at all times be conducted by traditional custodians or a local elder. If the Traditional custodians are not available to conduct 'Welcome to Country', it is appropriate for an 'Acknowledgement of Country' to be conducted. This can be done by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples would be mindful to identify their people and country and to pay respects to the Traditional Custodians.

What to say

The following is an example of what could be said when acknowledging Traditional Custodians.

"I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians on whose land this meeting takes place."

"I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of this land and pay my respects to their Elders past and present."

If you know who the Traditional Custodians are you can name them, however, check that your pronunciation of the name is correct.

Why?

Acknowledging Traditional Custodians develops a relationship with the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community members in attendance. This is a sign of respect that you value their presence and pay respect to the cultural history and culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

When?

'Welcome to Country' should be conducted at official events and may be carried out only by the Traditional Custodians of the land on which the meeting takes place. Welcome to Country is the process to welcome visitors to the land which is recognised as Aboriginal land. If the Traditional Custodians cannot perform Welcome to Country, then the next step is to ask another Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person to perform 'Acknowledgement of Country'.¹⁸

- > Official functions and activities (e.g. conferences, forums, networking events, training activities, presentations and seminars etc.)
- > Meetings held by the organisation, or various departments, teams coming together (e.g. Advisory and Reference group meetings, consultations etc.)
- > At the beginning of physically presenting RFDS senior meetings.
- > When there are special guests, visiting clients, and hosting of events.





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PROTOCOL	DESCRIPTION	WHEN TO USE
Welcome to Country	<p>Traditional welcoming ceremonies are performed at the beginning of a forum by an Elder or appropriate member of an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community to welcome people who are visiting and/or meeting on their traditional land.</p> <p>These ceremonies vary from speeches of welcome to traditional dance and smoking ceremonies.</p>	<p>Traditional Welcomes should be incorporated into the opening of major internal or public events, meetings, forums, and functions.</p>
Acknowledging Traditional Owners	<p>Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners can occur with or without a Welcome to Country and/or when a smaller or less formal gathering is taking place.</p>	<p>Traditional Owners should be acknowledged by the first speaker at any significant organisational forums with a range of internal and external stakeholders present as a mark of respect for the owners of the land on which the event is taking place. Subsequent speakers may also choose to acknowledge Traditional Owners.</p>
Acknowledging Elders	<p>The first speaker at a forum recognises and pays respect to Elders past and present.</p>	<p>Forums, presentations and other major events.</p>
Acknowledging local sites of significance	<p>The first speaker at a forum recognises cultural or historical sites of significance in the vicinity of the meeting.</p>	<p>When an event is held near a significant site.</p>

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11. CONSULTING WITH FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITIES¹⁹

- > It is important to establish who should be consulted within a particular Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.
- > Usually, the Local Aboriginal Lands Council is the first point of contact on matters of a cultural or corporate nature, but more specific issues may be clarified by an incorporated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation with carriage of that service.
- > It is best to phone ahead to ensure that the appropriate people are available and feel comfortable enough to engage with individual or group representation.
- > Be aware that some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities have an entry permit system.
- > If there are no Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to approach, make contact with the town council, hospital, police station, and local Aboriginal Service providers. Staff there will suggest the contact person for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander business.
- > In the main, English is the preferred medium of communication however in many cases is not an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander persons first language. Be aware not to sound patronising by assuming a broken English or deliberately slower speech pattern when in dialogue with representatives of the local Indigenous community.
- > Formation of relationships may take time. Initial meetings are only a starting point. Keep the lines of communication open, both orally and in writing, and be patient in building the confidence of the local Indigenous community. If you make a commitment to follow-up on an issue, ensure that you do, and provide feedback. This will assist in building relationships.

12. TERMINOLOGY

- > Most First nations Australians prefer the terms Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person or peoples; “Aborigine/s” can have negative connotations.
- > The term “Aboriginal” does not include Torres Strait Islander people, and reference should be made to both if applicable.
- > Never abbreviate the term “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander” as this may be offensive.
- > Always use a capital for Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, Indigenous and Elder. The adjective “aboriginal” refers to an Indigenous person from any part of the world and not to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Australia.
- > “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people” is a collective name for the original people of Australia and their descendants. Use “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples” in the context of a nation; formal category or to emphasise the diversity of languages, communities, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs. Both are acceptable depending on context.
- > “First Nations” is a collective name for the original people of Australia and their descendants, and can be used to emphasise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples lived on this continent prior to European colonisation.
- > Because “Indigenous” is not specific, some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people feel the term should be avoided. Preference should be given to the term “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander” as an adjective rather than “Indigenous” as this more accurately reflects their cultural heritage.

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13. PERMISSIONS²⁰

- > There are no set rules for interacting with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People. Different communities have their own protocols which should be followed, and the approach you take will often depend upon a community's location – urban, rural or remote. Every community is unique, but some general guidelines are:
 - > Seek permission from the relevant local Aboriginal Lands Council or authority to enter a community.
 - > It is considered courteous and respectful to send an initial letter of intent, stating the purpose of your visit.
 - > Check with the relevant Land Council as to whether a permit is required to enter Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lands.
 - > Always seek permission before taking any pictures and for the use of images.
 - > In remote locations, remember that English is often a second, third, fourth or fifth language. If necessary, use an interpreter, keep technical terms to a minimum, speak slowly, do not mimic Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander speech patterns and try to learn a few words of the local language to improve relations and credibility within the community.
 - > An indirect communication style is common in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, where being direct is seen as confrontational.
 - > Be sensitive of non-verbal cues. For instance, silence may mean that people are listening, remaining non-committal or waiting for community support.
- > Body language is as important in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities as it is elsewhere, and includes: lowering your eyes and avoiding eye contact with older people or authority figures; not pointing when giving directions; avoiding body contact such as friendly touching or jostling or touching the upper torso or arm; shaking hands only if initiated by the other party.
- > Dress appropriately and modestly; in many communities it is a sign of respect to cover the shoulders; it is always inappropriate to wear short dresses or revealing shorts.
- > “Why?” is virtually absent from conversations in remote Australian communities and observation is used instead, as a learning device, with people given information when they are deemed ready for it.
- > **Be aware that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Peoples kinship systems are complex and will impact on how you can interact with members of a community. It is best to ask how you should interact and confirm this prior to doing so. In some circumstances you may be invited to refer to elders as ‘Aunty’ or ‘Uncle’.**
- > “Women’s business” and “men’s business” relates to gender-specific knowledge and practices (specifically health, well-being and religious matters) that cannot be known or observed by the opposite sex. It is a mark of cultural respect not to discuss traditionally female issues (“women’s business”) in the presence of men and vice versa.
- > **Be aware that community members may prefer to deal with people of their own gender. As a mark of respect your initial approach should be to a person of the same gender. In terms of work environment it is in the best interest to follow such protocols.**
- > Choosing the right form of address is important in any relationship, so ask Aboriginal and Torres Strait Peoples how they want to be acknowledged.
- > Honour the importance of Elders; recognised Elders are highly respected people within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- > **There are many pressures on those who work in or represent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and perceived conflicts of interest may arise. Family and community are important in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Peoples’ lives and workers are often expected to help their family and community before others. This leads to stress for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees when they are required to walk a fine line between meeting the expectations of their community and the legal requirements of their employment. Be flexible in discussing such with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.**
- > Reflecting their disadvantage, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities experience high death rates, including suicides. This is a heavy load for communities to bear. It is expected that all kin, including extended family, will attend the rites associated with death. After a death, some communities will shut down for “sorry business” despite previous arrangements that may have been made for your visit. For this reason, it is advisable to contact communities immediately prior to your arrival.

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14. ENGAGEMENT WITH ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER COMMUNITIES²¹

Key initiatives that support successful partnerships:

- > long time frames for the partnerships, which enabled approaches to be developed that worked and that built Indigenous staff capacity for program management
- > willingness to share risks and to foster innovation and flexibility
- > strong, respectful and honest personal relationships between staff of the relevant organisations
- > strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership
- > shared vision, basic principles and foundations, especially respect for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients of the programs
- > partnerships based on respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander control and decision making and on priorities set by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; responsiveness to their needs and local decision making within a policy framework of human rights and respect for self determination
- > building on culture, history, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aspirations and understandings, and the detailed knowledge of the community within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation
- > using a strengths-based development approach, which builds on and helps to develop the capacities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and organisations

- > capacity development support and training that was targeted to (and specific to) the needs of the organisation and its key staff, and that provided relevant, recognised qualifications in local settings
- > linkages developed with other service providers.

Further guidelines for engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples communities specifically include:

A human rights-based approach to development

All policies and programs relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities must be based on the principles of non-discrimination and equality, which recognise the cultural distinctiveness and diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples;

- > Such participation shall be based on the principle of free, prior and informed consent, which includes governments and the private sector providing information that is accurate, accessible, and in a language the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples can understand;
- > Mechanisms should exist for parties to resolve disputes, including access to independent systems of arbitration and conflict resolution.

Representation and engagement

- > Establish transparent and accountable frameworks for engagement, consultation and negotiation with indigenous peoples and communities;
- > Design, negotiation, implementation, monitor, and evaluate;
- > Frameworks for engagement should allow for the full and effective participation of indigenous staff;
- > There should be accurate and appropriate reporting on progress in addressing agreed outcomes particularly relating to RAPS, with adequate data collection and disaggregation;
- > In engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities, adopt a long term approach to planning and funding that focuses on achieving sustainable outcomes and which is responsive to the human rights and changing needs and aspirations of indigenous communities.

Capacity building

- > Support efforts to build the capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities, including in the area of medical services so that they may participate equally and meaningfully in the planning, design, negotiation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, programs and projects that affect them;
- > Increase the organisations' knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities and awareness of the human rights based approach to development so that the organisation is able to effectively engage with these communities.

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14. HISTORICAL KEY DATES²²

What are some of the key historical events for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities?

DATE	EVENT	DESCRIPTION
1967	Constitutional amendment referendum	The Commonwealth Government acquired power to legislate for Aboriginal Australians and allowed for their inclusion in the census.
1971	The Aboriginal flag first flown	Designed by Harold Joseph Thomas, A Luritja man from Central Australia, the Aboriginal flag was first flown in Adelaide on National Aborigines Day, 12 July.
1972	Self-determination introduced into government policy	The Department of Aboriginal Affairs was established, and the Whitlam Government introduced the policy of self-determination.
1975	Racial Discrimination Act	On 11 June the Commonwealth Racial Discrimination Act came into effect.
1985	Uluru handed back	Uluru (formerly known as Ayers Rock) was handed back to the traditional owners.
1989	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission Act	The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission was established by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission Act 1989 and began operations on 5 March 1990.
1992	Native title (Mabo)	In 1992, the High Court decision on Native title (Mabo) overturned the concept of 'terra nullius' (that land belonged to no one at the time of European invasion) and established that Native title can exist over particular kinds of land. This led to the establishment of the Native Title Act 1993.

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DATE	EVENT	DESCRIPTION
1992	Torres Strait Islander Flag	Bernard Namok of Thursday Island designed the Torres Strait Islander flag.
1997	Bringing Them Home	The Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families, Bringing Them Home, was released. In 1999, the Federal Government issued a statement of sincere regret over the forced removal of Aboriginal children from their families.
1998	26 May, National Sorry Day	The first National Sorry Day was held one year after the tabling of the Bringing Them Home report which recommended that a National Sorry Day be declared.
2005	Abolition of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission	On 16 March Parliament passed the ATSIC Amendment Bill, repealing provisions of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act 1989 (Commonwealth) and thereby abolishing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission and its structures from 30 June 2005.

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14.15. STAFF KNOWLEDGE – SIGNIFICANT DATES TO ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE

DATE	EVENT
26 January	Constitutional amendment referendum
Survival Day	Traditional Welcomes should be incorporated into the opening of major internal or public events, meetings, forums and functions.
26 May – 3 June	Self-determination introduced into government policy
National Reconciliation Week	This week begins with National Sorry Day on 26 May to acknowledge the forced removal of Aboriginal Children and ends with Mabo Day on 3 June to acknowledge the high court decisions of Native Title rights.
26 May	Uluru handed back
National Sorry Day	This day marks the anniversary of the 1997 tabling of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families, Bringing Them Home (April 1997)
3 June Mabo Day	This day commemorates the anniversary of the 1992 High Court decision in the case brought by Eddie Mabo and others, which recognised the existence in Australia of Native title rights.
First full week of July NAIDOC Week	The first Sunday of July sees the beginning of a week dedicated to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people to celebrate NAIDOC (National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Day Observance Committee) Week. It is a celebration for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people of their survival. It is also a time for all Australians to celebrate the unique contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditions and cultures and to bring issues of concern to the attention of governments and the broader community.
4th August National Aboriginal and Islander Children's Day	This day was first observed in 1988 and each year it has a special theme.
October Knockout / Carnival season	Knockout/ Carnival season takes place over the October long weekend and is a modern day 'gathering'. This state wide event celebrates the heritage of Aboriginal people through sport – preferencing Football. In NSW it is known as the Koori Knockout, In QLD the Murri Carnival while in Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia it is the Football Carnival. The gathering provides participants the ability to represent only the community they live in or bloodlines originate from. Meeting places vary each year depending on the previous years winner thus providing communities the ability to boost their economic value.
November Ngan Girra Festival	Ngan Girra means 'gathering' and this local event celebrates the heritage of Mungabareena Reserve on the banks of the Murray River as a meeting place

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KEY ORGANISATIONS AND RESOURCES

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board, Australia Council
Ph: 9215 9000 Fax: 9215 9061 Toll Free: 1800 555 677
e: mail@australiacouncil.gov.au w: www.australiacouncil.gov.au

Mainstream organisations providing advice or information about copyright and the protection of intellectual property rights include:

Arts Law Centre of Australia www.artslaw.com.au

Copyright Council www.copyright.org.au

World Intellectual Property Organisation www.wipo.int

Creative Spirits. Get Aboriginal Culture; Find resources to support you
Available: <https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/history/aboriginal-calendar#toc0>

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Authors: Dudgeon P Milroy Helen & Walker R 2014, Working together: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health and wellbeing principles and practice – 2nd edition, (Australia) Government of Australia

Reconciliation Australia Old Parliament House, King George Terrace, Parkes ACT, PO Box 4773, Kingston ACT 2604

T 02 6273 9200 F 02 6273 9201 e: enquiries@reconciliation.org.au
w: <https://www.reconciliation.org.au/resources/>

NSW Office Premier and Cabinet, Aboriginal Engagement Strategies, All documents summarised can be downloaded for use from http://www.hsnet.nsw.gov.au/group_home.aspx?grpID=803 or from the original website listed against each summary. HSNet is a NSW government website that is free to join.

NSW Organisations – Available:
<http://www.healthinfor.net.ecu.edu.au/states-territories-home/nsw/organisations>

Australian Human Rights Commission 2005, Partnerships between Indigenous Peoples, governments and civil society, Available:
<https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-social-justice/publications/partnerships-between>

City of Sydney, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Protocols, Available:
http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/125020/ATSIProtocols.pdf

Department of Education and Communities, Office of Communities, Aboriginal Affairs, Aboriginal Cultural Protocols and Practices Policy:
<http://www.daa.nsw.gov.au/policies/policyreperformance.html>

04 Dovetail, 2014, Learning from Each Other: Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Young People youth alcohol and drug good practice guide, Encompass Family and Community Pty Ltd, Brisbane, Dovetail. Available:
<http://www.dovetail.org.au/media/98715/guide%2004%20learning%20from%20each%20other.pdf>

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Oxfam Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Protocols [Accessed November 2016] Available: <https://www.reconciliation.org.au/raphub/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/respect-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-protocols-oxfam-australia.pdf>

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- 3** Oxfam Australia Available: <https://www.reconciliation.org.au/raphub/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/respect-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-protocols-oxfam-australia.pdf>
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