

ENGAGING AND COMMUNICATING WITH AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PROTOCOL



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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 This protocol provides guidance in engaging with, and the appropriate language and terminology when communicating with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities. It is to be used appropriately in all relevant policies, planning, programs and resource development documents.
- 1.2 It should be noted that language and terminology may vary according to geographical location. It is best practice to consult with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, Traditional Owners or community groups to determine preferred local terminology.

2 SCOPE

- 2.1 This protocol applies to all staff and students of CQUniversity and its controlled entities. While there is no prescribed methodology for engaging and communicating with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, staff are expected to comply with the core principles described below.

3 DEFINITION OF AN ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PERSON

- 3.1 According to s51 (25) of the High Court of Australia (1983):
'An Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person, is a person of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent who identifies as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by the community in which he or she lives.'
- 3.2 The term 'Aboriginal' is not inclusive of Torres Strait Islander people, and conversely the term 'Torres Strait Islander' is not inclusive of Aboriginal people. Aboriginal Australians are of the mainland continent of Australia and Torres Strait Islander people are of the Islands in the Torres Straits in far north Queensland. It may cause offence to refer to an Aboriginal individual as a Torres Strait Islander and vice versa.

- 3.3 The use of the lowercase word 'aboriginal' refers to an Indigenous person from any part of the world, and does not necessarily refer to an Aboriginal Australian person.

4 TRADITIONAL OWNER GROUPS

- 4.1 Refer to [Appendix A](#) for the list of Indigenous groups relevant to CQUniversity's Australian campuses and study hubs.

5 CULTURAL AWARENESS

- 5.1 Cultural Awareness Training is available in different formats from many suppliers. If Cultural Awareness Training is required, please contact the local Traditional Owners of the Country where you will be working.
- 5.2 Some cultural practices to be aware of:
- cultural practices vary from place to place. What is appropriate in Cairns is not necessarily appropriate in Brisbane. It is best to check with the people with whom you will be engaging.
 - when visiting and engaging with Indigenous communities, Elders should always be treated with respect.
 - some communities do not mention the name of a deceased person or display pictures of them for some time after they have passed away.
 - appropriate and respectful clothing should be worn when in an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Community.
 - many conversations may begin with questions like – who are you, where are you from, who are your people, do you know (insert name)?

6 TERMINOLOGY WHEN REFERRING TO ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE

- 6.1 Although the word 'Aborigine/s' is grammatically correct, the term has negative connotations in Australia and should be avoided. The terms 'Aboriginal' and 'Torres Strait Islander' should be used as adjectives, not as nouns (e.g. Aboriginal person, Aboriginal people, Torres Strait Islander person, Torres Strait Islander people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities).
- 6.2 The terms 'Aboriginal' and 'Torres Strait Islander' should never be abbreviated, as to do so is considered offensive. The abbreviation to 'A & TSI' or 'ATSI' when used to describe Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is considered derogatory and should not be used in internal or external documents or discussions.
- 6.3 However, where Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander forms part of an acronym to describe entities or organisations, abbreviations are acceptable (i.e. AIATSIS for the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies).
- 6.4 It is better to write 'students who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander' rather than 'CQUniversity's Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students'. The second statement implies CQUniversity's ownership of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Written communication

- 6.5 Please note that capital letters should always be used when writing the following:
- Aboriginal
 - Torres Strait Islander
 - Indigenous
 - First Nations
 - Traditional Owners
 - Elders
 - Country

Terms associated with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities

- 6.6 The information presented below is for cultural awareness only. Common terminology includes:
- *Elder/s* - highly respected Aboriginal person/people held in esteem by their communities for their wisdom, cultural knowledge and community service. They are responsible for making decisions within the community.
 - *Traditional Owner/s/Traditional Custodian/s* – senior person/people in the community, who are responsible for their traditional land and waters, are referred to as 'Traditional Owners'. Traditional Owners may or may not live on their traditional lands but still have responsibility and cultural ownership of the place.
 - *Auntie/Aunty (name)* – term of respect used to address a female, usually an older or more senior person than the speaker – wait until invited to use this form of address as it may be interpreted as claiming a relationship that does not exist. It may be appropriate to use 'Aunty/Aunties' when referring to a third party/parties whose name you don't know.
 - *Uncle (name)* – term of respect used to address a male – as per 'Aunty' wait until invited to use.
 - *Country* - in Aboriginal English, a person's land, sea, sky, rivers, sites, seasons, plants and animals; place of heritage, belonging and spirituality; is called 'Country'. In some Indigenous groups the name for the people (tribe/clan) belonging to the particular Country is the same name as the Country itself. In other groups there is a different word for the land or territory.
 - Example 1; Darumbal people in the Rockhampton region may identify themselves as being from Darumbal Country
 - Example 2: Gimuy-Walubarra Yidindji people from the Cairns region may identify themselves as being from Gimuy Country.
 - *Sorry business* – refers to the death of a family or community member and the mourning process. It includes planning and attending funerals and other mourning activities and may take a week or more due to travel and cultural practices.
 - The Australian Museum has a more extensive glossary of words available online <https://australianmuseum.net.au/glossary-indigenous-australia-terms>.
- 6.7 The following terms are used by Aboriginal people of various states and territories.
- *Murri* – Queensland and north-west New South Wales
 - *Goori* – northern New South Wales
 - *Koori* – New South Wales and Victoria
 - *Palawa* – Tasmania
 - *Nunga* – South Australia
 - *Yolngu* – Northern Territory (north-east Arnhem Land)
 - *Anangu* – Central Australia
 - *Noongar* – south-west Western Australia

7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND WELCOME TO COUNTRY

- 7.1 All significant events arranged by CQUniversity, on campus or at other venues are to incorporate either a Welcome to Country or an Acknowledgement of Country.
- 7.2 A Welcome to Country or Acknowledgement of Country demonstrates respect for the Traditional Custodians of the land or sea country where the event is being held and acknowledges the rights of the Traditional Owners.

8 WHEN TO ACKNOWLEDGE

- 8.1 The first speaker at any event or function should give the Acknowledgement of Country.

- 8.2 An Acknowledgement of Country should be provided for:
- any situation where a Traditional Owner is not available to give a Welcome to Country,
 - any meeting or gathering where participants have travelled to attend.
 - all formal events, forums and functions such as meetings, conferences, board meetings, and official openings where a Traditional Owner is not available.
- 8.3 An Acknowledgement of Country can be performed by any event participant. It does not require permission from anyone. The speaker does not need to be an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person. Any CQUniversity staff member can offer an Acknowledgement of Country. An Acknowledgement of Country palm card is available from the [Reconciliation Action Plan Committee StaffNet page](#) (available to staff only).

9 WELCOME TO COUNTRY

- 9.1 A Welcome to Country can only be undertaken by a Traditional Owner of the specific land or sea country where the event is being held.
- 9.2 A Welcome to Country should be undertaken for:
- official ceremonies such as a graduation or the Investiture of a Chancellor
 - a national or international meeting, gathering or event e.g. Staff Conference, significant launch.
- 9.3 Welcome to Country ceremonies may include speeches in traditional language/s, traditional dance, smoking ceremonies and other cultural practices. Traditional Owner/s are invited to present the Welcome in a way that is culturally most appropriate for them.
- 9.4 The request to present the Welcome should be directed to the Traditional Owner, Native Title Representative Body or an Indigenous Organisation. Please be aware that fees may be incurred. The [National Native Title Tribunal webpage](#) can provide information on how to contact the appropriate group.
- 9.5 Where performances are requested, an invitation should be extended to the Traditional Owner dance group of that Country. Traditional Owner performers should perform first, before any other groups.

10 SIGNATURE BLOCK WORDING

- 10.1 In February 2017 the standard CQUniversity signature block was amended to incorporate an Acknowledgement of Country. All staff are required to use the standard signature block.
- I respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we work and learn, and pay respect to the First Nations Peoples and their elders, past, present and future.*

11 GIFT GIVING

- 11.1 Gifts are regularly exchanged by both visitor/guest and host when there is a significant event or occasion.

12 FURTHER INFORMATION

- 12.1 For further information refer to the [National Native Title Tribunal website](#) for the most up to date information on Traditional Owner Groups and maps, or the relevant Land Council or Government Department who has the portfolio responsibility for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in that State or Territory.
- 12.2 If clarification regarding the information in this protocol is required, please contact the Office of Indigenous Engagement by telephone on 1800 651 891 or (07) 4930 6409 or by email at OIE@cqu.edu.au

13 RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

[Protocols for the use of 'Aboriginal' and 'Torres Strait Islander'](#) (Queensland Health)
[Reconciliation Action Plan Committee StaffNet page](#) (available to staff only)

14 APPROVAL AND REVIEW DETAILS

Approval and Review	Details
Approval Authority	Vice-Chancellor and President
Advisory Committee to Approval Authority	Vice-Chancellor's Advisory Committee
Administrator	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Engagement)
Next Review Date	7/03/2021

Approval and Amendment History	Details
Original Approval Authority and Date	Vice-Chancellor and President 7/03/2018
Amendment Authority and Date	
Notes	

15 APPENDIX A: TRADITIONAL OWNERS FOR PEOPLE AND LOCATIONS LINKED TO CQUNIVERSITY CAMPUSES

CQUniversity locations where there is knowledge of the Traditional Owners:

Campus	People	
	Spelling	Pronunciation
Adelaide / Appleton Institute	Kaurna	Garna
Biloela	Gangulu	Gun-gooloo
Brisbane	Turrbal, Jagera, Yuggera and Ugarapul	Toor-bull, Jag-er-a, Yoog-er-a and Oog-ar-a-pull
Broome	Yawuru	Ya-wu-ru
Busselton	Wardandi	Wardandi
Cairns	Gimuy Walubara Yidinji	Gim-oy Wal-you-burra Yid-ing-ee
Charters Towers	Gudjal	Goodjal
Cooma	Ngarigo and Walgalu	Ng-ar-ego and Wal-ga-lu
Emerald	Western Kanagoulu	Western Cangal-oo
Geraldton	Yamaji	Yam-a-gee
Karratha	Ngarluma and Yindjibarndi	Ngarluma and Yindjibarndi
Mackay	Yuibera	Yew-wii barra
Melbourne	Kulin	Coo-lin
Noosa	Gubbi Gubbi	Gub-bee Gub-bee
Perth	Wadjuk	Wad-Juk
Rockhampton	Darumbal	Darr-um-bull
Sydney	Gadigal of the Eora Nation	Gad-i-gill of the Ee-or-a Nation
Townsville	Bindal and Wulgurukaba	Bin-dal and Wool-gar-roo-kar-bar
Yeppoon	Darumbal	Darr-um-bull
Gladstone	Byellee, Gurang, Gooreng Gooreng, and Taribelang Bunda peoples	Bi-ellie, Goorang, Goore-ang Goorang and Tar-e-bel-ang Bunda peoples.
Bundaberg	Gurang, Gooreng Gooreng, and Taribelang Bunda peoples	Goorang, Goore-ang Goorang, and Tar-e-bel-ang Bunda peoples.

Please refer to the [National Native Title Tribunal website](#) if a location is not listed.