



Yurirka: Proppa Engagement with Aboriginal Peoples



University of
South Australia



All background designs throughout this publication in part or full are from the artwork *Antara 2017*, acrylic on linen, 122x183cm.

Image courtesy of the artist and Mimili Maku Arts, University of South Australia Art Collection by the artist, **Ngupulya PUMANI**, b. 1948 Mimili, South Australia. Pitjantjatjara.

Acknowledgement

We respectfully acknowledge the Kurna, Boandik and Barngarla First Nations Peoples and their Elders past and present, who are the First Nations' Traditional Owners of the lands that are now home to the University of South Australia's campuses in Adelaide, Mount Gambier and Whyalla. We are honoured to recognise our connection to the Kurna, the Boandik and the Barngarla lands, and their history, culture and spirituality through these locations, and we strive to ensure that we operate in a manner which respects their Elders and ancestors. We also acknowledge the other First Nations of lands across Australia with which we conduct business, their Elders, ancestors, cultures and heritage.

- (i) **Yurirka** is a Kurna word meaning attentive, obedient, and is the Kurna name for the Engagement Protocols document (Kurna Warra Karrpanthi).
- (ii) Aboriginal Peoples historically have fashioned their own style of English which is a decolonising act; hence '**proppa**' and not '**proper**'.
- (iii) **Purkarninthi** is a Kurna word meaning, becoming an Elder, and is the Kurna name for the UniSA Elders in Residence (Kurna Warra Karrpanthi).

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Foreword

This guide has been prepared to assist users to engage respectfully with Aboriginal Peoples. Aboriginal Australia represents the oldest recorded histories and cultures known to the world, however, colonial histories do not acknowledge this fact. Instead, Aboriginal Peoples have been ignored and the terra nullius myth, has had a devastating impact. It is time to improve engagement with First Nations, and to redress past injustices; to decolonise.

With the aim of being the University of Choice, the University of South Australia (UniSA) recognises the importance of terminology in decolonising the narrative 'about' Aboriginal Peoples, and how we might improve that process.

This guide aims to highlight the significance of the terms and phrases we use when working with Aboriginal Peoples, and to promote a way of using language which acknowledges and honours Aboriginal Peoples, their land, culture and knowledges, and which deeply respects Aboriginal Peoples' connection to country.

This guide provides the opportunity to advance and improve the way we speak, write and think about the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Peoples.

UniSA encourages relationships which are built on respectful engagement and aspires to create an environment where Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Peoples work collaboratively in the spirit of reciprocity for mutually beneficial outcomes in research, teaching, learning and engagement. In the Kurna language Yara expresses individuality and reciprocity. Watamba in the Bunganditj language means a reciprocal exchange and in the Barngarla language the word Gagidi, means 'in two', and is also the meaning for reciprocity.

In creating a supportive and safe environment for Aboriginal Peoples, the key principles which UniSA is committed to are;

- Reciprocity.
- Respect.
- Relationships.

Specific aspirations which support these principles include;

- Embracing Aboriginal ways of being and knowing.
- Growing graduates that understand Australia's two-way history.
- Creating educational outcomes that enrich Aboriginal identity and culture.
- Fostering respectful, two-way relationships with Aboriginal Peoples that will ensure active Aboriginal engagement.

At the foundation of the University of South Australia in 1990, a commitment to Aboriginal education was written into its charter. Section 5.1 c of *The University of South Australia Act* states that one of the University's core functions is to "provide such tertiary education programs as the University thinks appropriate to meet the needs of the Aboriginal people".

This pledge follows an early commitment to Aboriginal education and the teaching of Aboriginal Studies from the late 1960s, followed by 18 years of ground-breaking educational outreach to Indigenous Australia through what was known as the Aboriginal Task Force (ATF), a group established at the SA Institute of Technology, and where graduates became advocates for the power of education to transform lives.

Building on its founding commitment, the University released the first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) in 2014. In 2018 Council approved the University's second RAP, which leverages the long history of work in this space and positions the University to embed reconciliation initiatives within business strategies and ensure they become 'business as usual'

One of the foundational principles of the 2018 RAP is the enactment of protocols of respectful engagement with Aboriginal Peoples. UniSA RAP Action: 2.1 outlines three key deliverables to enable this.

This Guide informs commitment to develop in partnership with Aboriginal Peoples, Elders and their communities an ethical framework for respectful engagement. The commitment to respectful engagement is also embedded in the University's Aboriginal Employment Action Plan (AEAP), and Aboriginal Research Strategy (ARS).

Non-Aboriginal academics, researchers, students and professional staff often seek guidance as to how to engage with First Nations Peoples. This Guide will inform the use of proper terminology and respectful engagement with First Nations Peoples.

The origins of this Guide have grown from a reflection on current practices, a series of Elders yarning workshops, and have included participant Elders, First Nations, UniSA academics, students, and professional staff.

We thank everyone who has contributed to its development.

Respectful Engagement

For thousands of years, the continent which is now known as Australia would have sustained a healthy pre-invasion population of Aboriginal Peoples, whose lives and cultures were and remain as diverse as the Australian lands and environments. More than 270 Aboriginal languages were spoken and many of those languages impacted by colonialism are being revived across the continent. The language of the Kurna, Barnjarla and Boandik Peoples, the Traditional Owners of the lands upon which the University campuses in Adelaide, Whyalla and Mt Gambier are built, were once declared extinct. But now Aboriginal languages are being revitalised and spoken again, there is a resurgence and continuity of Aboriginal culture and language.

The University of South Australia has four city campus sites: City West, City East, Magill and Mawson Lakes that live on the lands of the Kurna People.

Our Mount Gambier campus lives on the lands of the Boandik People; this place is known as Berrin.

Our Whyalla campus lives on the lands of the Barnjarla People.

Aboriginal Worldviews

Kurna Senior Elder, Uncle Lewis Yarlupurka O'Brien, when asked to speak about Aboriginal worldviews and protocols, said that, "Kurna had conferences in this area (Adelaide) called Panpapanpalya; we were a great society". It was at these conferences where Elders in community had the opportunity to discuss and work towards ethical engagement, reciprocity and consensus ways of managing and caring for Country. Panpapanpalya provided the opportunity to demonstrate the diversity of Aboriginal worldviews and was education in action.

A worldview is a set of beliefs and cultural values held by a People. In understanding the common foundations of Aboriginal worldviews, it will help to engage and communicate effectively with Aboriginal Peoples. It is important to note that while there are common principles shared by all Aboriginal Peoples, we are also diverse, just as the landscape is different, there are also different ways of being amongst First Nations.

Some of the shared principles include:

- Relationships between Kin and Country are interrelated and connected and are valued more than material possessions.
- Respect and responsibilities to kinship groups and communities are core values.
- Sharing and caring, terms frequently used amongst First Nations to highlight an Aboriginal way of life, in which obligations are just as important as rights and privileges.
- Reciprocity, the practice of exchange and the balance of all things.
- Belonging is important; it provides a sense of identity, family, culture and spirituality. We belong to the Land and the Land is sacred to our survival as Peoples.

Proper engagement with Aboriginal Peoples will promote understanding of Aboriginal worldviews. This understanding will then contribute to positive communication with Aboriginal Peoples and enable a shift from past deficit models of engagement.

Why do we need a guide?

The guide will provide advice to inform and address internal and external communication processes and activities to support a 'proper way' of engaging with Aboriginal Peoples.

Relationships are a core principle in enabling good engagement. Making time to engage is essential because it takes time to develop relationships with individuals, families and communities. Allow time for collective decision-making processes. In the past relationships with Aboriginal Peoples developed out of an imposed deficit model, and in some contemporary cases, this continues. However, this position needs to shift, and it is shifting.

Respect for Aboriginal worldviews is another core principle. Being open and honest, clear and transparent and delivering on promises made will facilitate engagement.

Listening to the advice of Aboriginal Peoples, for example, 'no means no', particularly when 'no' is coming from an Elder, or Aboriginal persons who are culturally grounded and have authority to speak for community. It is important to listen to advice and work with it, particularly when that advice is critical and may not support your position or ideas.

Obligations it is important to understand the obligations which arise from an Aboriginal worldview, for example, relationships to family and the depth and extent to which those relationships entail obligations. Obligations also extend from relationships to Country. Relationships create obligations in an Aboriginal worldview context. It is important to take responsibility to ensure that engagement and consultation is done properly and in accord with the protocols of the local First Nation.

Communication it is important to get it right, particularly communication in the following contexts: the development of research proposals, ethics applications, manuscripts, reports, publications, social media, media releases and in all general engagements with Aboriginal Peoples. It is important to understand how worldviews impact communication and that the level of trust and commitment to a relationship can determine proper engagement. In getting it right it is important to understand the significance of Elders and that their advice is critical and should always be treated with respect.

Elders

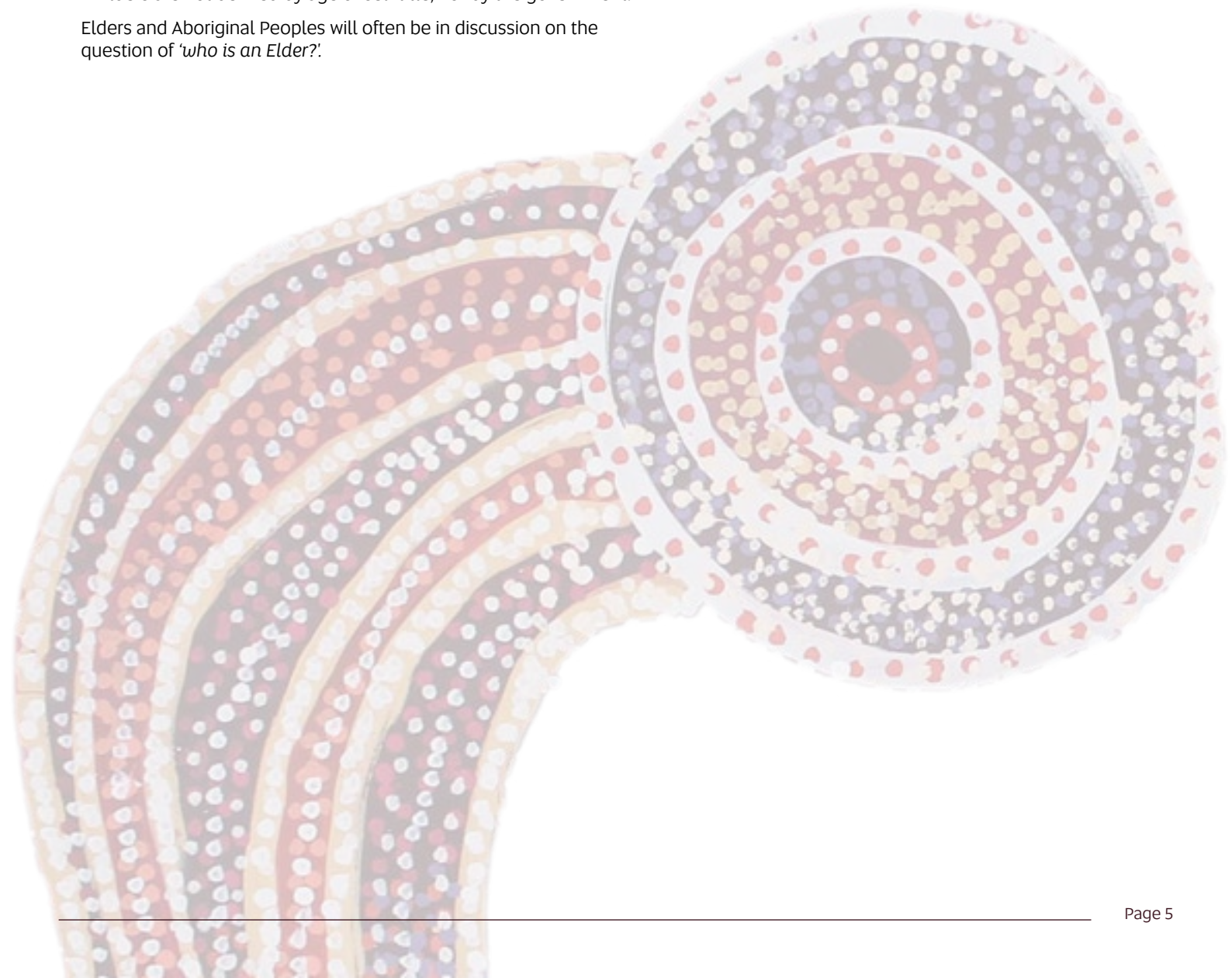
Elders are the knowledge holders of culture and are highly respected and recognised within their community for their cultural knowledge, wisdom and contributions. They are responsible for making decisions within and with their communities. Age alone does not make someone an Elder.

When negotiating with Aboriginal Peoples, ensure that Aboriginal community recognised Elders are involved.

Defining Elders

- Elders are defined by their Community or Nation.
- Elders have cultural authority.
- Elders are acknowledged for their behaviour, experience and knowledge.
- Elders often speak for their Nation and are a wise teacher.
- Elders are not defined by age or self title, nor by the government.

Elders and Aboriginal Peoples will often be in discussion on the question of *'who is an Elder?'*



Terminology

The provision of a guide on terminology is one step towards getting it right; it is also a guide to the journey ahead, building respectful engagement with First Nations.

Aboriginal

'Aboriginal' is used to refer to the original Peoples of that which we now call Australia and their descendants. When referring to Aboriginal Peoples you should always capitalise Aboriginal, never abbreviate Aboriginal, and Aboriginal should be used as an adjective not a noun. Never replace Aboriginal for any of the following; *the, they, them, their or those*, to do this is to risk objectifying Aboriginal Peoples. Peoples should also be capitalized.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

First Nations are often called Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. But there is significant diversity within these two groups and there is no single Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander identity.

There is a wide range of Nations, Cultures and Languages across mainland Australia and throughout the Torres Strait. Given this diversity, respectful language use depends on what different communities determine to be appropriate.

'Aboriginal' is a broad term that refers to Nations and Traditional Owners of mainland Australia and most of the islands, including Tasmania, Fraser Island, Palm Island, Mornington Island, Groote Eylandt, Bathurst and Melville Islands.

'Torres Strait Islander' is a broad term grouping the Peoples of at least 274 small islands between the northern tip of Cape York in Queensland and the south-west coast of Papua New Guinea. Many Torres Strait Islander Peoples live on the Australian mainland. There are also two Torres Strait Islander communities at Bamaga and Seisia, within the Northern Peninsula Area of Queensland.

All words should be capitalised, for example, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and it isn't proper to abbreviate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, for example, ATSI.

Indigenous

'Indigenous' refers to the original inhabitants and their descendants of a country and is used to refer to Aboriginal Peoples. 'Indigenous' in this context should always start with a capital 'I'.

Aboriginal Elders and their communities have been critical of the use of 'Indigenous' as a reference to the Australian context. It is suggested that this is because 'Indigenous' does not represent the cultural identity and diversity of Aboriginal Peoples. Aboriginal Peoples is the preferred term adopted at University of South Australia.

Elder

Uppercase E should always be used for "Elder".

Country

Geographic communities may also consist of Aboriginal Peoples who do not know their cultural identity as a direct result of the "policy of assimilation." Community is also about connection and belonging to country and is central to Aboriginal identity. Aboriginal Peoples may also belong to more than one Country and community.

Country is also about ancestral, cultural, spiritual and social connections to that land. Country is a place of connection and access to Aboriginal knowledge and learning. Being 'on Country' means that you are on your traditional lands. Country in this context should always start with a capital C.

Caring for Country

Aboriginal Peoples have diverse relationships and connections to their natural world. Many relationships are based on the traditional knowledge and practices passed on generationally while other relationships are affected by the negative impacts of colonisation.

The term 'Country' is often used by a First Nation to describe family origins and associations with parts of Australia and most importantly the connections of blood-lines back to these locations. Connection to Country forms Aboriginal identity and strong bonds and relationships to Country, including cultural and spiritual relationships with the land, sea and waterscapes, the seasons, the flora and the fauna.

Kinship

Kinship is a system of family and social organisation which defines where a person belongs within an extended family and community. It describes an Aboriginal person's family connections and social relations and determines their rights, responsibilities and behavioural expectations. Aboriginal values, beliefs, identity and language are developed and nurtured within the family. Keeping the family strong and healthy, both physically and spiritually, is important to the continuance of Aboriginal society. Children learn early that to refer to their 'family' is to refer to the extended family. An Aboriginal family might include mother, father, several children, numerous aunts, uncles and cousins, grandparents and several grandchildren. These family members are both real and classificatory.

Culture

Culture refers to the accepted customs, understandings and social behaviours shared by members of a group or community. Culture consists of Country, language, spirituality and relationships to the land, artistic expression, ways of living and working, relationships and identity. Aboriginal Australia has always been multicultural. It is respectful to refer to cultures in the plural as it reflects the diversity of Aboriginal Peoples. It is offensive to refer to Aboriginal culture as primitive, native, simple, pre-historic, or stone age. Those references imply inferiority to European cultures.

Dreaming – Creation

Dreaming is a European concept which has been used to explain Aboriginal worldviews and spirituality. Dreaming refers to a time, in the beginning, when ancestral beings created the natural world, but it is also an ongoing time. Dreaming – Creation stories are the basis of Aboriginal culture and law and form relationships and identities for Aboriginal Peoples. Words which translate Dreaming – Creation are embedded across all Aboriginal languages and are often the preferred reference. It is offensive to refer to Creation stories as myth, folklore, or legend; they are terms which imply the *Dreaming – Creation* is not real, occurred in the past and is not an ongoing condition.

Shame

'Shame' refers to the discomfort and sense of humiliation which Aboriginal Peoples often feel when they are singled out, feeling awkward and/or self-conscious. The experience of shame is not limited to negative causes such as being ridiculed, criticised or behaving in a foolish way. Aboriginal Peoples can also feel shame if they are publicly praised or appear to be better than other people, particularly other Aboriginal Peoples. Shame is a valid feeling and must be respected and accepted.

Deadly

'Deadly' is an in-group word used by Aboriginal Peoples in the same way as 'excellent' or 'very good'. For example, the University of South Australia holds an annual event called the *Deadly Alumni Event* to celebrate the success of all past UniSA First Nations graduates.

Individual and Collective terms



'Peoples' is used to acknowledge the plurality and diversity of Aboriginal Peoples, and that there exist hundreds of different Nations, languages, cultures and territories. 'First Peoples' is a collective name for the original Peoples of Australia and their descendants and is often used interchangeably with Aboriginal Peoples.

'First Nations' and 'First Peoples'

Are terms which recognise the international law status and the ongoing un-ceded sovereignties of First Peoples.

Traditional Owner

'Traditional Owner(s)' is an Aboriginal person or group of Aboriginal Peoples directly descended from the original Aboriginal inhabitants of a culturally-defined area of land or country, and has a cultural association with this country which derives from their connection back to Country, traditions, observances, customs, beliefs or history of the area. The University of South Australia recommends that all formal meetings, presentations and other gatherings should be opened with an acknowledgement of the Traditional Owners of the land on which the gathering is taking place.

Nation

Refers to a culturally distinct group of People associated with a culturally-defined area of land or country. Each Nation has boundaries that cannot be changed, and language is tied to that Nation and its country. 'Nation' may be used to refer to a culturally-distinct Aboriginal People and their associated country. The boundaries of some Aboriginal Nations transcend state borders. First Peoples or First Nations is used interchangeably to refer to Aboriginal Peoples both domestically and internationally. The name of language groups refers also to the Nation of Peoples.

Clan

Clan is generally accepted as a subset of Nation and refers to a local descent group, larger than a family, and is based on common ancestry.

Mob

Mob is often used to describe who you are and where you come from as a group of Aboriginal People, in relation to country. 'Mob' is generally used between Aboriginal Peoples and is considered inappropriate for non-Aboriginal people to use, unless there is consent and it is known to be acceptable. The word 'Mob' has been reclaimed by Aboriginal Peoples, as an act of decolonising a history in which Aboriginal Peoples were considered one homogeneous mob.

Community

Community can represent several perspectives on what a 'community' is. In defining a 'community', consideration is given to the survivors and descendants of the Stolen Generations. A community may comprise Aboriginal Peoples from many areas of Australia, whereas Traditional Owners of the land have a relationship with the land, one that existed prior to invasion and those same relationships exist today. Aboriginal Peoples may belong to more than one community – including where they come from, where their family is located, and what organisations they belong to.

From an Aboriginal worldview community is about relationships to country, (extended) family relationships, and shared experience. Community is about inter-relatedness and belonging and is central to Aboriginal cultures. It is generally acceptable to use the term 'community' to refer to Aboriginal Peoples living within a geographical region. However, the diversity of Aboriginal Peoples within a community should be considered, including for example mixed unions or families. The Kurna Nation for example, consists of Aboriginal People from a diversity of Nations, including Narungga, Ramindjeri, Yaraldikald, Tanganekald, Ngarrindjeri among other Nations.

Offensive terms

Inappropriate Language

The word Aborigine originates in Latin ab origine, meaning 'from the beginning/first appearance' and its first known use was in the 1500s. Aborigine was applied to describe Aboriginal Peoples, and our name as Peoples, for example, the Kurna at first contact, invasion and colonisation of South Australia. Aborigine is considered an improper word to describe and identify Aboriginal Peoples, largely because of its association with colonisation.

Savage, native, barbarian, backward and tribe, are terms that have been used across Australian history to describe Aboriginal Peoples. These terms are linked to terra nullius – the falsehood that the land belonged to no-one, and if there were occupants, they were deemed so low in the societal hierarchy that they did not exist, as Peoples. They are terms linked to social-Darwinism, and theories of natural selection. Aboriginal Peoples were discussed as being less evolved than Europeans and destined to become extinct. Terra nullius and social-Darwinism were used to justify dispossession, genocide and assimilation of Aboriginal Peoples.

Aboriginality criteria should not be based on colour of the skin, lifestyle, or social indices. Terms which are linked to Australia's colonial history and were used to categorise Aboriginal Peoples are offensive. The following terms are offensive and should not be used in any context, including social media:

'mixed blood', 'half-caste', 'quarter caste', 'full-blood', 'part-Aboriginal', 'Aboriginal blood quantum', 'Aborigines', 'Aborigine'.

Stereotypes and Myths

Stereotypes and myths about who is Aboriginal should not be used. These include:

- Aboriginal Peoples only live in remote regions of Australia.
- Aboriginal Peoples are all the same.
- Aboriginal Peoples have dark coloured hair, skin and eyes.
- Aboriginal Peoples are good at sport.

Deficit constructs of Aboriginality should not be normalised, as they contribute to a negative culture profile: For example, myths that Aboriginal Peoples:

- Have poor education outcomes, due to learning capacity.
- Are alcoholics and drug addicts.
- Are prone to family violence.
- Have poor parenting skills.
- Have sexual health issues, promiscuity and transmitted diseases.
- Have large families living in the same household.
- Are unusually prone to teenage pregnancies.
- Are incarcerated because of criminality and are generally delinquent.
- That once 'disconnected' from Country, culture is 'lost' and people are no longer 'truly' Aboriginal.

Aboriginal Identity

Aboriginal identity is both complex and diverse. It is complex due to its own internal structures, but also due to the impact of colonisation, and the consequences of dispossession and removal of Aboriginal Peoples from their lands and families. Where we belong constitutes Aboriginal identity and when an individual is unable to locate where they belong, and whom they belong to, lives may be left disrupted and traumatized.

Aboriginal identity is also diverse because there are over 500 different First Nations identities belonging to the continent.

The right to be self-determining was largely compromised and in British law removed at the arrival of Cook more than 200 years ago. Aboriginality has since then been determined by Australian law and policy, with many resulting identity problems.

Who is Aboriginal?

A three-part definition of Aboriginal identity was introduced in Commonwealth legislation: The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission Act 1989 (Cth) s 4 (1). Note also that under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act 2005 s 4 an 'Aboriginal person' means a person of the Aboriginal race of Australia, which means they:

- Are of Aboriginal descent.
- Identify as Aboriginal.
- Are accepted as Aboriginal by the community in which they live (or have previously lived).

This definition has been adopted by all federal, state and territory governments to confirm Aboriginality for access to equity-based programs and positions. It also plays a role in Land Rights and Native Title claims. Similar requirements are placed on Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

Stolen Generations

The term 'Stolen Generations' is used to describe the forcible removal of children from their families and communities. Fairer-skinned Aboriginal children were considered easier to assimilate into white Australia and were targeted by governments, churches and welfare bodies. As many as one in three Aboriginal children were stolen from their families and communities. This practice occurred between the late 1800s and in some places, was continued into the 1980s. Today the removal of Aboriginal children continues at critical levels but under the banner of child welfare policies. Children were and continue to be institutionalised under the Out of Home Care policy. The institutionalisation of children has caused the trauma of extreme physical, mental, cultural and spiritual abuse. The transgenerational effects of these policies are collectively felt by individuals, families and their communities who continue to be traumatised.

Diversity: ancient Aboriginal identities

Aboriginal Peoples have the oldest continuous living culture on earth and have the oldest systems of law and governance. These facts are contrary to colonial views at the time of invasion in 1788 and throughout the 19th and 20th century. Aboriginal knowledge is becoming more familiar to science and is now acknowledged for having records of geological events, such as sea rising and volcanism, astronomical events such as novae and meteorite strikes and many other phenomena.



Figure 1. Map showing the distribution of the Aboriginal Nations of Australia [cartographic material] by Norman B. Tindale. This map includes more than 500 Ancient Aboriginal identities, in connection to language and land. The above map is used with kind permission from the South Australian Museum.

Self-identifying terms

Aboriginal Peoples use their own language words to identify themselves, which are used by Aboriginal People from specific areas. The following are examples.

Term	Area
Nunga	South Australia
Anangu	Central Australia
Koori	South East Australia – NSW and Victoria
Palawa	Tasmania
Goori	Northern NSW
Murri	Queensland and North West NSW
Noongar	Western Australia, South West
Yolngu	Northern Territory/North East Arnhem Land

The above terms should only be used in accord with the appropriate direction and advice of Aboriginal Peoples. It should also be noted that there is a growing trend towards decolonisation and the adoption of traditional names. For example, identifying as Kurna, Boandik or Barngarla.

Protocols

Welcome to Country

Welcoming visitors to Country has been practised by Aboriginal Peoples for many thousands of years. First Nations who travelled across land into another Nation or language groups' Country were required to seek permission to enter. Once permission was granted by the Traditional Owners, a Welcome to Country would be conducted. This may have included the offering of a safe passage and protection of spiritual well-being during their journey through the Traditional Owner's Country.

While visitors were provided with a safe passage, there was also an obligation to show respect for the local protocols while on another Nation's Country. In contemporary Australia, the Welcome to Country ceremony has been adapted to suit contemporary life. However, the gesture and meaning of Welcome to Country ceremonies for example, welcoming visitors and offering safe passage, remain the same today.

Welcome to Country ceremonies are appropriate for the most important events and can be arranged for occasions, such as meetings and conferences and can involve smoking ceremonies, singing, dancing or a speech in traditional language and/or English.

A Welcome to Country should be conducted by an Aboriginal Traditional Owner and custodian of the Country on which the event is being held. Often Elders will give a Welcome to Country, and First Nations have different practices regarding who can do a Welcome to Country. Advice from Traditional Owners should be sought as to the most suitable representative to conduct a Welcome to Country.

Acknowledgement of Country

Since colonisation, Aboriginal Peoples have experienced a long history of colonialism and its impact, including social and political exclusion, and the failure to acknowledge Aboriginal Peoples existence and experiences. Recognising Traditional Owners and their connection to Country is an important and respectful protocol. An Acknowledgement of Country is an opportunity for staff and students to show respect for Traditional Owners and the continuing connection of Aboriginal Peoples to Country.

If the opening of an event does not have a Welcome to Country, a formal Acknowledgement of Country should be given. The Acknowledgement of Country protocol applies for UniSA public events, meetings, or events being held in various locations across South Australia.



Acknowledgement in written documents

UniSA Strategic Plans, Annual Reports and other official documents should incorporate an Acknowledgement of Country which identifies the Traditional Owners; the Kurna, Boandik and Barngarla Peoples.

An Acknowledgement of Country can be made by anyone and the following text is used by UniSA:

We respectfully acknowledge the Kurna, Boandik and Barngarla First Nations Peoples and their Elders past and present, who are the First Nations' Traditional Owners of the lands that are now home to the University of South Australia's campuses in Adelaide, Mount Gambier and Whyalla. We are honoured to recognise our connection to the Kurna, the Boandik and the Barngarla lands, and their history, culture and spirituality through these locations, and we strive to ensure that we operate in a manner which respects their Elders and ancestors. We also acknowledge the other First Nations of lands across Australia with which we conduct business, their Elders, ancestors, cultures and heritage.

For locations outside of Adelaide, the above Acknowledgement of Country can be used replacing the Kurna Peoples with the local and appropriate Traditional Owners and custodians for Country.

A Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country are different:

- Welcome to Country – It is both respectful and proper protocol that an Elder and/or Traditional Owner from Country provide a Welcome.
- An Acknowledgement of Country – can be provided by any other person.

Honorarium

An honorarium should be provided for all services offered by Aboriginal Elders and community. Providing a sitting fee for Elders is common practice that signals respect, and is an act of reciprocity in valuing the advice of Elders. Elders are the repository of knowledges, which holds great value, and this is a small gesture towards an acknowledgement of their input and support.

Payment to an Elder or Traditional Owner for a Welcome to Country is usual and will be at the discretion of the Elder or Traditional Owner themselves. Payment should be made promptly on the day or as soon as possible.

Other examples of services include: cultural or musical performance, smoking ceremony, presentation, talk, lecture, key note address, walking tour and cultural activity.

Use of Aboriginal Language

The speaking of Aboriginal languages was impacted by colonial laws and policy which prohibited Aboriginal Peoples from speaking their languages. Colonial policies targeted the speaking of language to assimilate Aboriginal Peoples. There were hundreds of Aboriginal languages originally spoken at the time of colonisation, and as a result of colonialist policies, the numbers were drastically reduced.

Today there is a movement to revitalise Aboriginal languages, and that is happening amongst our host nations Kurna, Boandik and Barngarla. We frequently engage with the language committees of our host Nations and follow their protocols as to the use of language, particularly in the naming of our University buildings, scholarships and awards. The permission and use of Aboriginal languages should be negotiated with authorities such as Elders and/or the language committees of First Nations Peoples.

Sorry Business

'Sorry Business' is a term sometimes used by Aboriginal Peoples to describe the passing or death of an Aboriginal person. Aboriginal Peoples often have a cultural obligation to attend funerals of family, relations and Elders. It is important for the University and its staff to recognise that the poor health status of Aboriginal Peoples coupled with the wide kinship networks that constitute family will mean that Aboriginal Peoples will attend and be involved in many funerals, with varying degrees of obligation.

These obligations may require support and understanding of the responsibilities Aboriginal staff and students have. Aboriginal staff might require support and time to participate and to meet cultural obligations involving Sorry Business.

Some Aboriginal Peoples may have a protocol for when someone passes, that is, the use of their name, image and voice may no longer be used. Families may retract this at a time appropriate to them. Compliance with Aboriginal protocols should be respected and followed.

In the event of a death, it is important to acknowledge that Aboriginal Peoples have different practices for Sorry Business. It is important that the University acknowledge different practices and should consult with Traditional Owners for the most appropriate and respectful response to the passing of an Elder or significant community member.

Smoking Ceremonies

Aboriginal Peoples have a holistic view of health and wellbeing. The health of an Aboriginal person's connection to Country, community, culture, kinship, spirituality, as well as their physical and mental health, contribute to their wellbeing. Smoking ceremonies are used by Aboriginal Peoples for cleansing and renewing People and the Land. Smoking ceremonies should be conducted by Traditional Owners who have specialised cultural knowledge. It is important to seek appropriate advice and assistance from Traditional Owners.

Men's and Women's Business

'Men's and Women's Business' is commonly understood as the practice of men and women discussing gender-specific issues separately. This is only one aspect of Men's and Women's Business. In Aboriginal cultures there are certain knowledges, practices, customs and places which are gender specific.

Men's and Women's Business refers to these gender-based practices collectively. Respect for gender balance, and men's business/law and women's business/law should be acknowledged and not trivialised. A form of Aboriginal authority is aligned with the maintenance of non-hierarchical processes where men and women are equal, and Elders have authority.

Aboriginal Flags

The Aboriginal flag was designed and first flown in Adelaide in 1971 and it continues to hold great symbolic meaning for Aboriginal Peoples and their identity. There are three colours in the flag: red, black and yellow.

- Black represents the Aboriginal Peoples of Australia.
- Red represents the earth.
- Yellow represents the sun.

The Torres Strait Islander flag was first flown in 1992. There are four colours: green, white, black and blue.

- Green represents the land.
- Black represents the Torres Strait Islander Peoples.
- Blue represents the sea.
- White represents the Nations.

Flying the Aboriginal and the Torres Strait Islander flags demonstrates respect and recognition of the First Peoples of a place we now call Australia. As a sign of respectful engagement with Elders and other Aboriginal Peoples, UniSA should fly the flags all year round and in particular during NAIDOC and Reconciliation Week. At the time of Sorry Business for Elders and significant Aboriginal persons, the flags should be lowered to half-mast until the conclusion of Sorry Business.



Ownership of Aboriginal Knowledge and Intellectual Property

Aboriginal knowledge systems are the first knowledge systems of Australia. It is important for the University to recognise and respect that Aboriginal knowledges continue as living systems. Aboriginal knowledge systems are complex and provide deep understandings of the world, both physical and spiritual, and are maintained through story, law, song, dance and ceremony, and other contemporary ways.

A key aspect of Aboriginal knowledge systems is that such knowledges are communally held, and the sharing of knowledge is based on a system of relationships which have been established since the beginning of time. For this reason, Aboriginal knowledges cannot be owned or licensed by any one person.

Access to Aboriginal knowledges is framed by Aboriginal protocols and ethics which may run counter to non-Aboriginal systems of intellectual property, ethics and protection. The University should respect the communal nature of Aboriginal knowledge systems.

The University should ensure copies of research data and outputs produced are stored, archived, published and made available to the public strictly in accordance with the terms agreed to by the Traditional Owners of Aboriginal knowledge.

Research

Research is an activity undertaken by the University for producing new knowledge. Aboriginal Peoples, communities and societies have historically been viewed as a source of research for non-Aboriginal researchers. This has not always benefited Aboriginal Peoples. To obviate harmful practices, research conducted by University staff and students should be respectful, and ethical. The University of South Australia's *Aboriginal Research Strategy* provides guidance on engagement with Aboriginal Peoples and their communities. In addition, The *Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies* and the *National Health and Medical Research Council* have produced guidelines for ethical research:

1. [AITATSI Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies](#)
2. [NHMRC Ethical Conduct in Research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and Communities](#)

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- Communications and Marketing Unit, UniSA
- Office of Aboriginal Leadership and Strategy (ALS, UniSA)



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