



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY
—
Library



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University of Sydney Library

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Protocols

The University of Sydney Library: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Protocols

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Contents

Purpose statement	5
Scope	5
Principles	6
Self determination	6
Responsibility	6
Reciprocity	6
Truth telling	7
Protocols	8
1. Attribution	8
1.1 Acknowledging cultural custodianship	8
1.2 Promoting citation guides that cite First Nations knowledges	8
2. Interpretation and representation	10
2.1 Context	10
2.2 Terminology	11
2.3 Right of reply	11
2.4 Exhibitions	11
2.5 Collection development and publishing – balancing perspectives	12
3. Access	13
3.1 Balancing access and ethical reuse – the CARE and FAIR Principles	13
3.2 Collection survey	14
3.3 Identifying potentially sensitive First Nations cultural material	14
3.4 Access to material	15
3.5 Restricted access	15
3.6 Takedown requests	16
3.7 Conscious collecting, disposal and preservation	16
3.8 Classification and description	17
3.9 Copying works	17
3.10 Handling materials containing sensitive information	18

3.11 Care and sensitivity notices – Systems	19
4. Engagement	20
4.1 Inviting First Nations voices	20
4.2 Contradictory advice	21
4.3 Staffing – Indigenous Engagement Officer	22
4.4 Staffing – cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.....	22
4.5 Spaces	23
4.6 Promoting ethical research	24
4.7 Staff engagement in cultural competence training	24
4.8 Acknowledgement of Country	24
5. Benefit sharing	26
5.1 Respecting and valuing First Nations input – financial compensation and terms.	26
5.2 Increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Library staff.....	26
6.0 Reference group	27
Appendix I: Terminology guide	28
Preferred terms.....	28
Non-preferred terms	29
Terminology to consider.....	30
Additional terms.....	32
References.....	34

Purpose statement

The University of Sydney Library is committed to embedding culturally competent practice in what we do. We will work to ensure that all staff, students and community members with whom we interact feel safe, respected and valued. As a site of knowledge production and custodian of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, and the knowledges of other First Nations peoples, we are mindful of Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property (ICIP) and encourage ethical use of the First Nations cultural knowledge and culturally appropriate research practices. As part of this commitment, the University of Sydney Library Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Protocols aim to guide Library staff in promoting culturally safe practices across services, spaces and resources.

Scope

The University of Sydney Library Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Protocols are intended as a set of principles and guidelines to enhance and embed culturally competent practice within an Australian academic library context. The protocols are aspirational in nature. The authors recognise that the implementation of the protocols will be an ongoing process, and that this document will be revised over time in response to changing community perceptions and feedback.

In alignment with Article 31 of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (2007), the Library recognises that:

Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports and traditional games and visual and performing arts. They also have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions.

The intended scope of these protocols is the protection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander “cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions” (as described in the above Declaration), and the promotion of culturally competent practice and cultural safety within the University of Sydney Library.

The location and context of the University of Sydney gives the Library a unique opportunity to focus on developing competent practice in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage and people, and that is the focus of these protocols. The Library’s vast collection also includes cultural content from other First Nations communities, primarily from other nations of the South Pacific. It is therefore intended that principles and recommended practices contained in these protocols could, where appropriate, be extended to other First Nations contexts.

Given the focus of these protocols, where the term *First Nations* is used within this text, it is generally intended as an alternative collective term for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Principles

Self determination

The University of Sydney Library respects the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and other Indigenous peoples to determine use and access provisions for materials which reflect their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions.

The University of Sydney Library recognises the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to access, maintain, control and benefit from their cultural knowledge – also known as Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property (ICIP).

Responsibility

The University of Sydney Library has a responsibility to care for, preserve and share the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural knowledges within its collection in a manner that is secure, trusted, respectful and in accordance with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community wishes.

The University of Sydney Library has a responsibility to inform Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples about the collections it holds that relate to them, their culture, language and heritage.

The University of Sydney Library has a responsibility to maintain the moral rights of the original researcher or creator as per the intent of the *Australian Copyright Act 1968*, specifically:

- The right of attribution of authorship
- The right not to have their authorship falsely attributed
- The right to have the integrity of their work respected and not subjected to derogatory treatment.

Reciprocity

The University of Sydney Library strives to ensure ongoing and timely access to materials containing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural knowledges for the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities from which the knowledges originate.

The University of Sydney Library works to ensure the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander projects and research it engages in are mutually beneficial to the relevant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and the University of Sydney.

The University of Sydney Library encourages and promotes the use of its collection to stimulate new research ventures and insights that benefit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

communities, as well as facilitating opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members to reinterpret their cultural heritage within the collection.

Truth telling

The University of Sydney Library encourages the use of its collection to tell the truth of Australian history and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' experiences.

The University of Sydney Library advocates for greater understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, culture and experiences among its staff and clients.

The University of Sydney Library recognises and acknowledges that its buildings, collections and operations exist and take place on unceded Aboriginal lands. It respects the ongoing connection Aboriginal people have to these lands, and their legacy and history before the University of Sydney was established.

Protocols

1. Attribution

The University of Sydney Library acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the custodians of their cultural heritage and Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property (ICIP). This includes but is not limited to ecological knowledge, language, sustainable relationship information, oral stories, cultural songs, cultural dances, genealogical information, and histories of places of cultural significance. This custodianship is acknowledged even when it contradicts Western frameworks of copyright. As part of this acknowledgement, the University of Sydney will work to fulfil the below protocols.

1.1 Acknowledging cultural custodianship

The University of Sydney Library will work to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander custodianship is acknowledged for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage materials entering its collections. This includes encouraging researchers and publishers to attribute authorship to any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge holder and/or community that has assisted in the creation of new material.

The University of Sydney Library will not knowingly add any newly authored material to the collection that contains Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditional cultural knowledges that has been authored by people outside that First Nations community and for which free, prior and informed consent was not given by the relevant First Nations community. Acquiring such material may violate ICIP.

The University of Sydney Library will also work to ensure that where legacy material in the collection contains Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural knowledges, that wherever possible, the relevant First Nations community is identified and attributed as owner. This should be done by adding a note in the 500 MARC field in the catalogue such as the following example: "The knowledge contained in this book originated from the Wiradjuri people. This knowledge is their cultural and intellectual property."

1.2 Promoting citation guides that cite First Nations knowledges

The University of Sydney Library will create and promote referencing and citation guides that acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander custodianship and attribute Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the source of their cultural knowledge. The creation of the guides should be done in collaboration with First Nations academics, and these recommendations for how these principles might work within widely accepted referencing styles could be submitted to the bodies such as the American Psychological Association for possible inclusion in their referencing style guides.

Suggested principles for the citation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural content within the APA referencing style (American Psychological Association, 2020) are presented in the University of Sydney Library's *Examples of First Nations Referencing in APA* document (2021).

Where appropriate, the Library will also promote First Nations referencing guides available from external institutions.

The promotion of either newly created referencing styles that acknowledge ICIP, or adaptations of existing referencing styles should be embedded in the Library's referencing workshops and courses, and citation guidance provided to clients on the Library website.

As a matter of practice, Library staff should include examples First Nations cultural content in presentations about referencing and citation and in external communications (such as collection highlights on the Library website, Rare Books & Special Collections talks or suggested citations for items).

2. Interpretation and representation

The University of Sydney Library recognises that Western academia has contributed to a representation of First Nations people, history and culture often without the free, prior consent of First Nations people themselves, and has excluded First Nations peoples and knowledges from crucial scholarly and historic discourse. This has led to a largely distorted, Eurocentric representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, history and culture. To address this, and to enrich the information provided to clients, the University of Sydney Library will actively seek to include and promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in its collection. It will also provide spaces and privilege activities that encourage self-representation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

2.1 Context

The University of Sydney Library acknowledges that the early accounts and studies of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' experience and culture held in its collection are fragmentary, often superficial and largely from the Eurocentric perspective of the outsider and occupier rather than the First Nations peoples themselves. These accounts and studies therefore contain inaccuracies and distorted, outdated views regarding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and culture. The Library will strive to provide clients with opportunities to learn about and recognise this context, to raise their critical awareness and to minimise the potential for unintentional reproduction of problematic and harmful ideas.

The Library will create a notice that is displayed to the user of its online systems and services either on screen, in metadata or in document footers. This notice could read:

Material in the collection regarding First Nations peoples and cultures has historically been created and recorded by non-Indigenous people and may not have had the input of First Nations peoples themselves. As a result, this material may contain inaccuracies and misinterpretations, or words and descriptions which could be considered insensitive, outdated and/or offensive in today's context.

It is also recommended that contextual information is incorporated into resources the University of Sydney Library provides to students. This could include materials provided in physical and online workshops relating to research and information literacy. These resources could be developed to help students question power dynamics in materials written about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, history and culture and to recognise the perspectives of the author and subject.

2.2 Terminology

The University of Sydney Library acknowledges that discrimination and prejudice are expressed through language, and that attitudes and cultural values are evident in the way we choose words and structure our communications. Hence, the University of Sydney Library will work to ensure the language used in its internal and external communications is inclusive and appropriate. A 'Terminology guide' is provided as an appendix to this document.

2.3 Right of reply

To challenge historical misrepresentations and to centre Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices in discussions around their culture and history, the University of Sydney Library will investigate and create options for First Nations community members to respond to collection material through written, oral or visual mediums, and to provide commentary, corrections, counterpoints and reinterpretations of the material's content. The Library recommends that First Nations replies are linked digitally to the material that is being reinterpreted or replied to through metadata.

2.4 Exhibitions

As sites with high visitation, and being a repository for cultural content, Library spaces can serve as an entry point for many non-Indigenous people to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and history. There are therefore opportunities for the Library to become a space for truth telling regarding the history of ongoing colonisation and the brutality that accompanies it.

The Library will aim to host an annual book display/exhibition that highlights Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and history. These could be curated by a First Nations University of Sydney student, academic or a guest curator, or could be a collaboration between the Library and relevant First Nations community members, and/or the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Indigenous Strategy and Services (DVCISS) and Chau Chak Wing Museum staff.

In addition to temporary exhibitions and book displays, the Library will support semi-permanent displays within its spaces that acknowledge the Aboriginal Country they are on, and that highlight, celebrate and recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, knowledges, communities, achievements, and political and social history. These semi-permanent displays should also be viewable on the Library's website and be preserved in the Library's digital archives.

2.5 Collection development and publishing – balancing perspectives

The Library's collection contains important information regarding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, history, and culture. However, like many historical collections, this information is predominantly from the perspective of non-Indigenous settlers. To expand the representation of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples within its collections, and to provide a greater diversity of perspectives to our clients, the Library will seek to increase acquisition of material authored by Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people and communities. This should be done in collaboration with DVICSS and First Nations academics.

The Library should actively avoid accessioning new material if it is known that it contains Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander cultural information that should remain secret. Acquisitions should also be carefully considered where the material contains private information about Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people (individual identities, medical histories, etc.) or discusses Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage or traditional knowledge without sufficient collaboration with the relevant communities, as the material could contain ICIP.

If possible, before acquiring or publishing any new material containing Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander cultural information, the publisher or author should be asked:

- Whether they have free, prior, and informed consent from the relevant First Nations community to publish this information. Any affirmative response should be supported with written proof.
- How the relevant First Nations community benefits from this material and whether it is a benefit they have asked for (economic benefits, royalty sharing, having the information preserved, getting the information to wider audience, etc.).
- Whether the relevant First Nations communities has been appropriately attributed, and whether shared authorship has been considered.

It may not be possible to investigate all material entering the collection. It may become known later that newly acquired material contains First Nations secret or sacred cultural information, or traditional knowledge that has been unethically recorded or that infringes on Indigenous intellectual and cultural property. In that scenario, the Library will inform the publisher and may restrict access to the material. Any restriction should be documented.

If Library staff are uncertain about accessioning or publishing material containing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural information, the Reference Group will be consulted (Protocol 6.0).

3. Access

The University of Sydney Library strongly supports *The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (2007) and will work to fulfil article 13 of the Declaration:

Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons.

The Library will facilitate this by ensuring the First Nations cultural heritage in its collection is more accessible and discoverable to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members, now and in the long term. The University Library will also work to fulfil article 31 of the Declaration:

Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports and traditional games and visual and performing arts. They also have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions.

Where possible, the Library will collaborate with Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander communities, to negotiate who can access collection materials that contain ICIP and specify the purpose of that access. In its management of the collection, the Library will also seek to minimise harm to First Nations peoples and maximise collective benefit.

3.1 Balancing access and ethical reuse – the CARE and FAIR Principles

The Library supports the CARE principles for Indigenous Data Governance (Global Indigenous Data Alliance, 2019). The CARE principles were developed in response to the FAIR principles (Wilkinson, M., Dumontier, M., Aalbersberg, I. *et al.*, 2016) associated with the open data movement, in recognition that the principles of findability, accessibility, interoperability and reusability do not necessarily engage with the rights and interests of Indigenous peoples.

The CARE principles complement the FAIR principles by mitigating the tensions between greater sharing and the concept of Indigenous data sovereignty, articulating the concurrent need for:

- Collective benefit for Indigenous peoples in the use of their data
- Authority of Indigenous peoples to control their data
- Responsibility to exercise care in how Indigenous data is used; and
- Ethical use of Indigenous data, which is fundamental to minimising harm and ensuring the rights and wellbeing of Indigenous peoples.

3.2 Collection survey

The Library will undertake a survey of its collections to identify materials containing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage. This will assist the Library to better serve First Nations communities and will provide a basis for consultation around access provisions relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage material.

This survey should be done in collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. All material containing traditional cultural information and ICIP should be documented, and notes made on the catalogue record, with a special emphasis on material containing:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages
- Multiple images of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people
- Descriptions of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander cultural practices
- Multiple images of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander cultural objects
- Images or descriptions of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander ceremonies or gendered cultural information (men's business, women's business)
- Multiple images or descriptions of sites of cultural importance
- Images or descriptions of deceased bodies of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people or images or descriptions of their human remains
- Detailed depictions of colonial violence toward Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people.

The collection survey may be a multi-year process. Firstly, a survey will be undertaken of the catalogued legacy theses held in Rare Books & Special Collections. Adjacent to this initial survey, those staff undertaking cataloguing of works in Rare Books and Special Collections should also flag any material that contains Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander cultural information.

3.3 Identifying potentially sensitive First Nations cultural material

Library staff may incidentally encounter previously unidentified sensitive Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander cultural information when interacting with the collection during their day-to-day duties. The Library will promote awareness among its staff about the type of cultural content they should seek to identify, including:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages
- Multiple images of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people
- Descriptions of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander cultural practices
- Multiple images of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander cultural objects
- Images or descriptions of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander ceremonies or gendered cultural information (men's business, women's business)
- Multiple images or descriptions of sites of cultural importance

- Images or descriptions of deceased bodies of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people or images or descriptions of their human remains
- Detailed depictions of colonial violence toward Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people.

In instances where Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander cultural content is identified within the collection, the material should be redescribed using the AIATSIS Subject Thesaurus in accordance with Protocol 3.8 'Classification and description'.

3.4 Access to material

To facilitate access to information for all clients and to foster Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural revitalisation and the use, development and transmission of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges to future generations, the Library will promote appropriate access to material containing First Nations cultural information as detailed in Protocol 3.8 'Classification and description'. It is especially important that the Library encourages access to these materials by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Where possible, material will be digitised to facilitate access by those not based in Sydney. Digitisation work should emphasise material containing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages, songs, pictures of First Nations community members, and family histories.

3.5 Restricted access

Excluded from Protocol 3.4 'Access to material' is anything that is known to contain secret or sacred cultural information. This extends to images or descriptions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ceremonies or gendered cultural information (men's business, women's business), detailed descriptions of scarification practices, information about traditional childbirth practices and sites, detailed descriptions of circumcision practices, or material containing images of deceased bodies of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people (particularly dissection of First Nations bodies post-mortem), or any published monograph that has been restricted on the AIATSIS catalogue. Access to this material should ideally be restricted until it has been negotiated with the relevant First Nations community.

Restricted access items should be documented internally. Catalogue records for restricted material will remain openly accessible online unless advised otherwise by the relevant Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community.

When restricted material is identified, the Library should consult with the relevant First Nations community to negotiate appropriate conditions of access. The Library recommends using its *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Engagement Framework* (2021) as a guide.

Negotiation with community will determine who they want to access the material, under what conditions, and for what purposes (e.g. for gendered protocols such as women's business, an image may be accessed physically to be used only for research, but it is

not to be duplicated), and if there is a later date or event when the access conditions should be renegotiated. These access conditions should be documented, including who from the First Nations community was part of this process. If the community in question does not provide any specific timeframe for review, restrictions should ideally be revisited every 10 years.

If it is difficult to determine the community from which the cultural information originates because of lack of description and vague geographic references, then the Reference Group should be consulted about what should be done with access to the material (see Protocol 6.0).

Clients may be able to access restricted Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander cultural information if they are a member or descendant of the community from which the cultural information originates. Additionally, non-Indigenous clients may gain access to restricted Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander cultural information if they provide written permission from an organisation or member of the First Nations community from which the cultural information originates.

Library staff should never question or ask for verification of a person's Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander identity and their claims to a First Nations clan/tribe/language group/nation.

3.6 Takedown requests

To fulfil Article 31 of *The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (2007), the Library will respond promptly to any requests from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members to restrict access to material containing their cultural and intellectual property. The Library will:

- Temporarily remove material from access (ideally within two business days after receiving the request), with the material remaining restricted until a formal decision has been made.
- Bring the request to the attention of the Reference Group (see Protocol 6.0) which should assess the risk of cultural harm, consider the advice contained within these protocols, seek appropriate guidance as necessary and decide next steps.

The Library will include an option for a request to remove ICIP in its public-facing copyright takedown request form.

3.7 Conscious collecting, disposal and preservation

The Library commits to the ongoing acquisition of resources containing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives. Because there can be many valuable First Nations resources published and made available outside mainstream and conventional academic publishing systems (particularly automated systems), the Library will make a concerted effort to find and acquire these resources, including looking to individual

publishers and other unconventional sources of material. The Library will focus on acquiring First Nations resources related to Sydney Aboriginal languages, songs, culture and history.

The Library has a responsibility to care and preserve the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage in its collection. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander resources already within the collection may be part of a limited production and of high cultural value. Availability and cultural value should be considered before deselection and disposing of physical material. It is recommended that this material is transferred to Rare Books & Special Collections.

To ensure the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage in the collection can be accessed in the long term, it must be maintained and preserved. In order to meet minimum preservation requirements, multiple backup copies of digital content should be stored, managed and maintained, using the Library's and/or University of Sydney's ICT infrastructure, systems and services.

3.8 Classification and description

To ensure First Nations perspectives are reflected in the cultural heritage collection, and to improve its accessibility and discoverability, the Library will continue to add descriptive metadata to items containing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural materials. Descriptive metadata may include AIATSIS subject thesaurus headings, Austlang codes, cultural care notices and other contextual notes. The Library will add Austlang codes and AIATSIS headings to new acquisitions, and where appropriate, and re-catalogue those items that have been recorded with unsuitable subject headings. The Library will seek to work with relevant communities to ensure that their knowledges are reflected in the classification and description of these materials. The Library will also promote appropriate classification and description in discussions with researchers, HDR students and potential authors who are working with First Nations communities and intending to deposit material into the collection.

3.9 Copying works

Copyright applies to First Nations works in the same way it applies to other works. However, works by or about First Nations peoples and their knowledges may have additional legal and cultural issues, and or may require additional clearances. For example, works may contain Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property (ICIP), secret or sacred information, or information obtained without free and prior consent. In instances where it is necessary to seek cultural clearances from the relevant Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community, family or individual, the Library will assist clients to understand their obligations.

To support clients and to fulfil Article 31 of The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007), the Library will raise awareness of ICIP by providing information on the University of Sydney Library website. Copying and reuse

conditions should be part of the negotiation whenever the Library negotiates access with an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community for materials containing their cultural information.

In addition to the exceptions to infringement contained in the Copyright Act 1968 (*Cth*), copying and communicating First Nations cultural information and intellectual property is subject to Protocol 3.4 'Access to material', and Protocol 3.5 'Restricted access'.

Clients wanting to copy and communicate Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander cultural information held in the Library's collection for commercial purposes should not only seek copyright permission (from the publisher of the work), but also gain the permission of the relevant First Nations community. Before proceeding, clients should provide written permission from an organisation or member of the relevant First Nations community. A copy of the written permission should be acquired, recorded, and preserved in the University's internal records.

3.10 Handling materials containing sensitive information

If a staff member or client must handle material that is known to contain restricted, secret or sacred cultural information, they should maintain confidentiality by:

- Working in a private space if possible
- Displaying signs to warn co-workers that they are working on sensitive material
- If material is on a computer screen, they should have the screen facing in a way that it is not visible to other people
- If the material is known to contain cultural information that is gendered, then only staff members that identify as the appropriate gender should handle and work with the material. For example, staff members who identify as men should be the only ones allowed to work on material containing men's business.

Sensitive cultural information can have an emotional effect on both First Nations and non-Indigenous people. Staff members working with material containing restricted cultural information should take regular breaks, and managers should be aware that staff working with material containing restricted cultural information may need time to recover after the work is completed.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members can potentially have cultural obligations or personal reservations when working with material containing restricted cultural information. They should be asked if they feel comfortable working with restricted material before commencing and be provided the agency to refuse to work with certain materials.

This protocol should also be discussed with external vendors who handle collection material and should be a consideration in future negotiations with vendors.

3.11 Care and sensitivity notices – Systems

The Library's public-facing online systems and services should contain a cultural warning that displays as clients enter, and states the following:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that the collection contains images, voices, or names of deceased persons in photographs, audio-visual or printed material.

This warning should coincide with the context statement described in Protocol 2.1.

4. Engagement

The University of Sydney Library is committed to establishing and maintaining strong reciprocal relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities by creating supportive spaces and services for its First Nations clients. It will also seek to develop strategies to recruit and retain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

4.1 Inviting First Nations voices

To promote First Nations self-representation, the University of Sydney Library should budget to invite Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people into Library spaces for a diverse range of public programs (workshops, talks, tours and other events). This will allow students, staff and other Library clients to engage with First Nations cultures in nuanced ways that challenge stereotypes and misconceptions and provide a better understanding of history and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander viewpoints and knowledges, particularly in a library context.

Elements to be considered when organising First Nations programs include:

- Researching the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander artist, academic, cultural practitioners you intend to invite, and consulting with First Nations staff and the Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor Indigenous Strategy and Services (DVCISS) about their invitation.
- Undertaking the program, where possible, in collaboration with other parts of the University, for example, DVCISS, the Chau Chak Wing Museum or University Archives.
- Ensuring any recording of a First Nations program is done with the free, prior, and informed consent of the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people involved.
- Ensuring that any external promotional communication for a First Nations program is done in consultation with the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person/people involved so that it accurately represents the content and people in the program.
- While compromises may be necessary due to resources and equipment, under no circumstances should the Library tell the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander presenters what topics they cannot talk about or ask for language to be softened regarding colonisation.
- Unless otherwise agreed, all information provided by the invited Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander guest remains their cultural and intellectual property and does not belong to the University of Sydney.

4.2 Contradictory advice

The Library may face situations where it receives a request or advice from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community member or organisation that contradicts guidance the Library previously received from a different First Nations community member or organisation. For example, the Library may receive contradictory advice regarding access to certain cultural information. When this occurs, the Library should consult the Reference Group (Protocol 6.0) about how to proceed.

In situations of contradictory advice, the Library will follow the guidance of the **Senior Traditional Custodians** from where the cultural information originates – particularly from community organisations such as Land Councils and Elders Groups. The below scenarios are included below to demonstrate how this might work in practice.

Scenario 1: If a student who is Wiradjuri takes offence to particular Whadjuk Noongar material being accessible, but the Library has previously negotiated access with Whadjuk Noongar community members, it should follow that previous advice. The Library should inform the student that this is the case.

Scenario 2: If a Whadjuk Noongar student lodges a take-down request in relation to material about their community, and the Library has previously negotiated access with Whadjuk Noongar community members for that material, the Library should inform the community members with whom it previously negotiated access of the new request (if possible). The Library would then contact the person or organisation making the request to inform them that the Library has previously received permission from senior Whadjuk Noongar Elders / community members or organisations, naming the person / group / organisation with whom access had been negotiated. The Library may invite the requestor to reply to the material in question, potentially in oral or written form and, with their permission, have that reply become part of the collection by linking it digitally to the material in question through metadata (see Protocol 2.3 'Right of reply').

Scenario 3: Similar action should be taken regarding a request from a senior Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community member that contradicts advice the Library has received from a community organisation such as a Land Council or Elders Group representing the community from which the cultural information originates. In this scenario, contacting and consulting with the community organisation should be paramount as they need to be informed of the situation. This may be a circumstance where the senior Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community member who has raised the concern should speak directly to the community organisation. However, unless informed otherwise by the First Nations community organisation, the Library should continue following the original advice.

Scenario 4: If the person who is making the request is a descendant of a named source from which the cultural material originates, their request should

take precedence over any previous advice received. For example, if in a thesis it is documented that secret or sacred cultural information came from interviews from Noongar Elder Mary Smith and Mary Smith's descendants' request access restriction for the material, this should override previously received advice that access to the material should remain open, as this is a privacy and cultural concern for the family.

In no circumstances should the Library question or ask for verification of person's First Nations identity or their claims to a First Nations clan / tribe / language group / nation.

4.3 Staffing – Indigenous Engagement Officer

To better facilitate and navigate relationships between the Library and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and to coordinate engagement with these communities between the Library and other areas of the University (DVCISS, the Chau Chak Wing Museum and University Archives), it is recommended that the Library establish an Indigenous Engagement Officer position within the Library. This position should be a First Nations identified role.

This position would be the key contact for consultation with First Nations communities, would also facilitate collaboration on projects with the Museum and Archives on projects the Library may undertake involving cultural collections. This position would also contribute to the strategic directions of the Library regarding culturally competent practice and embedding First Nations worldviews.

4.4 Staffing – cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff

The University of Sydney strives to provide a workplace that is culturally safe for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. To achieve this, the Library should adhere to University of Sydney policies and guidelines relating to embedding cultural safety and staff retention such as [the University of Sydney – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategic Framework 2019–2021](#)

The University of Sydney Library should also

- Ensure all managers and people leaders have undertaken cultural competence training.
- Make certain that any reports by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff regarding racist or culturally unsafe behaviours by other staff are taken seriously, and lead to change.
- Create space for organisational critical self-reflection about its practices.
- Ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff working in the Library have opportunities to connect with broader First Nations networks within and external to the University of Sydney.
- Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to attend cultural events and professional development opportunities.

- Ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff are not, due to their cultural background, pressured into tasks outside their role description unless they have expressed a desire to be involved (for example, organising NAIDOC Week events).

The Library adheres to the principle of ‘nothing about us without us’ – while it is important to not add work unrelated to requirements laid out in staff’s official position descriptions, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff working for the Library should be kept informed about any First Nations-related work and events that are occurring and seek their input where they are willing to contribute.

4.5 Spaces

The Library aims to develop a visible First Nations presence within Library spaces, in order to increase cultural safety and promote a greater sense of place and understanding of First Nations cultures. This includes extending the visual representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language, art, and history within Library spaces in different mediums. Key considerations include:

- Ensuring, where possible, that projects involving space foreground the Country they sit on and the culture and history of its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander custodians
- Consulting with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and DVCISS before undertaking a project
- Adhering to University of Sydney protocols and guidelines such as the [Wingara Mura design principles](#) and confirming they are current
- Ensuring, where possible, that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academics and students are part of any user experience testing of Library services
- Budgeting to financially compensate any external Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists or consultant Elders engaged on projects
- Considering whether resources used for a project are environmentally sustainable and not damaging to Country
- Complimenting any resources that are about First Nations culture but by a non-Indigenous creator, (e.g. a quote or an image from a rare book), with a reinterpretation by an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person
- Avoiding the perpetuation of stereotypes of First Nations peoples and culture for non-Indigenous audiences
- Considering how each space could incorporate reciprocity and sharing
- Considering how space could facilitate truth telling.

These considerations extend to the Library’s digital spaces such as the Library website.

Thought should be given to whether any Library spaces may be too Western. Things to consider include:

- An overabundance of colonial artworks or portraits of colonial figures

- Historical references which do not include any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, and
- Messaging that dismisses First Nations history.

The Library will investigate and determine capacity for a First Nations dedicated study space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. This should be done in collaboration with Mana Yura Student Support Officers. This space could potentially also be used when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members visit the Library.

4.6 Promoting ethical research

To support all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers and those undertaking First Nations research, Library staff will maintain awareness of and promote current best practice guidelines, such as the AIATSIS [Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research](#) (2020).

4.7 Staff engagement in cultural competence training

To enhance staff cultural competence, the Library Cultural Competence Community of Practice will develop a diverse range of opportunities for staff to improve their understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and history. The Community of Practice will also identify and communicate ways in which the Library can promote this understanding among Library clients.

Cultural competence training should be part of Library induction, and a requirement for directors and managers. Engagement with cultural competence training should be regular and diverse. All staff should also be encouraged, at a minimum, to complete the online cultural competence training modules provided by the University's National Centre for Cultural Competence.

4.8 Acknowledgement of Country

The University of Sydney Library operates on unceded Aboriginal lands. To demonstrate dedication to fostering an environment of respect and truth telling, the Library and its staff acknowledge and respect the ongoing connection Aboriginal peoples have to these lands, and the knowledge and practices that have allowed them to be holistically and sustainably maintained.

Library staff are encouraged to deliver an Acknowledgement of Country before meetings, gatherings or events, even if the content of the proceeding event does not relate to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture or history. An Acknowledgement of Country is a statement of awareness and respect for the Traditional Custodians of the land a person is on, and the continuing relationship those Custodians have with the land. Whereas a Welcome to Country is delivered by someone who is an Indigenous Traditional Custodian, an Acknowledgement of Country can be delivered by any member of staff, Indigenous or non-Indigenous. In many cases it may be better if non-

Indigenous person delivers the Acknowledgement – especially if they are a senior Library staff member or the Chair of the meeting.

In formal meetings or in situations where a person is unsure about what to say when delivering an Acknowledgement, the University of Sydney's official Acknowledgement can be used. A copy of the University's Acknowledgement can be found below.

In less formal settings such as internal meetings or gatherings, an Acknowledgement should be personalised. This provides an opportunity for the person delivering it to share what it means to them to work on Country. Doing this can demonstrate their genuine respect for Country.

Before delivering any Acknowledgement, the person delivering it should also learn what Country they are on, who its Traditional Custodians are, and how to pronounce the name of their community.

It is considered best practice for organisations to display an Acknowledgement of Country in their public-facing spaces such as in foyers. The Library commits to visibly displaying an Acknowledgement of Country in its physical spaces and on its website.

A Welcome to Country is different to an Acknowledgement of Country. A Welcome to Country is a ceremony performed by a prominent member of the local Aboriginal community, usually an Elder. It is a practice that has existed since before the arrival of Europeans to Australia and its purpose is to acknowledge and provide consent for events taking place on their traditional lands. The difference between a Welcome to Country and an Acknowledgement, which can be delivered by someone who is not a Traditional Custodian, is important and should be observed carefully.

At larger events such as a conference organised by the Library or at a formal event with First Nations visitors, an Elder or appropriate representative from the local First Nations community should be invited to deliver a Welcome to Country. (Please note that this is a paid service. A Welcome to Gadigal Country can be organised through the [Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council](#) website.)

The University of Sydney's formal Acknowledgement of Country

Before we begin the proceedings, I would like to acknowledge and pay respect to the traditional owners of the land on which we meet: the [Gadigal] people of the [Eora] Nation. It is upon their ancestral lands that the University of Sydney is built.

As we share our own knowledge, teaching, learning and research practices within this university may we also pay respect to the knowledge embedded forever within the Aboriginal Custodianship of Country.

5. Benefit sharing

The University of Sydney Library recognises the value of First Nations knowledge and how offering culturally safe services, collections, and spaces is of benefit to all clients. The Library also acknowledges that the benefits academic institutions have gained from First Nations knowledges have not always been shared with the communities from which this knowledge originated. The Library is committed to working reciprocally with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and knowledge holders to realise the mutual benefits of knowledge sharing.

5.1 Respecting and valuing First Nations input – financial compensation and terms

To demonstrate that it values First Nations knowledges, the Library will budget for the time of First Nations peoples where their expertise is being shared – especially that of senior First Nations community members. If seeking or receiving any important cultural intellectual property that will be added to the collection, the Library website, or Library spaces (such as creation stories, or stories about kin relationships to Country, or private cultural information), the Library will negotiate an appropriate licence fee for the use of the information. Consultation with DVCISS is recommended to establish an appropriate rate or licence fee prior to negotiations.

Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members operate as freelancers or small businesses. Wherever possible, seven-day payment terms are recommended.

If a Library project requires external consultants to advise on or share Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural knowledge but there is no budget to compensate the First Nations community for their time and expertise, then the project should be reconsidered.

5.2 Increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Library staff

The inclusion of First Nations peoples within an organisation can change its culture to the benefit of all clients and staff. The University of Sydney Library has an aspirational goal to increase the proportion of First Nations staff in the Library to approximate parity with the broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population of Australia. To achieve this, the Library will work towards four percent of its staff being Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander by 2023. This will be done in consultation with the Office of DVCISS and University HR.

6.0 Reference group

To assist with decision-making processes relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage within the collection, the Library will convene a reference group whose expertise can be called upon when needed. It is envisaged that the group will provide advice and facilitate consultation with relevant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders in matters such as responding to takedown requests and determining access to materials.

This group will be composed of Library staff with strong cultural competence awareness and have representation from each of the Library divisions. The group should also include a First Nations Library staff member. The Library will additionally consider including other University stakeholders on the group, such as an expert from University Archives, a curator from the Chau Chak Wing Museum who works with First Nations cultures, a staff member from DVCISS, a First Nations academic, and a First Nations student.

Appendix I: Terminology guide

The following guide is a reference for University of Sydney Library Staff to support their use of appropriate First Nations terminology. It is important to note that preferences in terminology will vary across Australia for individuals, communities, and agencies. Furthermore, these preferences may change over time. This is based on the University of Sydney's [Guidelines for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communication](#).

Preferred terms

- **Aboriginal:** This is a preferred term when referring to the First Peoples of this land. It should be used only as an adjective, never a noun (e.g. “She is an Aboriginal woman”, “This was made by an Aboriginal person”) and should always be capitalised.

Please note that the adjective “Aboriginal” does not include the Torres Strait Islands. The Torres Strait Islands are distinct and separate, both physically in land mass and culturally. It is a group made up of many distinct groups which prefer to be identified as such.

Be mindful that there has been criticism of the word “Aboriginal” as potentially having a homogenising effect and there are generational differences in preference for its use. Many organisations and community groups are moving towards using “First Nations” as an adjective, instead of “Aboriginal”, because of the implications of grouping many different cultural groups under a single heading. Once one is aware of a person’s specific Nation or Clan, it is often more appropriate to refer to them in this way, e.g. “a Wiradjuri man”.

- **First Nations:** This is a preferred term when referring to the First Peoples of this land as well as cultural and contemporary objects, heritage, land and cultural practices. Because this land mass is made up of many different Nations and no single homogenous culture ‘First Nations’ is more accurate and respects the understanding that many different culturally diverse cultural groups exist. First Nations is a term that is being used globally, and resonates internationally with Indigenous peoples, especially in America and Canada.
- **First Peoples:** This term can be used similarly to ‘First Nations’ however it is less commonly used in Australia.
- **Nation group:** The University’s First Nations staff come from many different nations and like to be identified as such. A person’s nation is often included in their introduction, otherwise it is also appropriate to ask.

For example, a First Nations person may introduce themselves by stating: “My name is Nathan and I’m a Wiradjuri man”

It is common for Aboriginal people to introduce both their Nation and their clan group.

For example: “My name is Nathan and I’m a Wiradjuri man from the Mowgee Clan.”

By comparison, for example, someone from Italy would be unlikely to introduce themselves as European. Instead, they would likely indicate that they are from Italy as this has its own language, customs and culture. In this same manner, the term ‘Aboriginal’ is very general and ignores the diversity and sovereignty of individual nation groups, which is why many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people prefer to identify with their specific Nation group.

- **Indigenous:** Similar to the term Aboriginal, Indigenous is still used quite widely but can have a homogenising effect. The term is still employed by the Australian Commonwealth Government and sometimes in international contexts when referring to First Nations people across the world (for example, the “United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples” or the “International Year of Indigenous Languages”). If used when referring to the First Nations people or culture of Australia, Indigenous must be capitalised. Please note: unlike the term “Aboriginal”, this is a term that is inclusive of the Torres Strait Islands.

Non-preferred terms

- **Aborigine:** The term 'Aborigine' was commonly used up until about the 1960s but is now generally regarded as outdated and inappropriate. It must NOT be used unless directly quoting.
Alternative: Aboriginal, First Nations or the specific Nation would be preferred.
- **First Australians:** This term is generally not preferred, as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people predate 'Australia' by thousands of years. The terminology is not accurate, and many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people do not identify as Australian at all.
Alternative: First Nations, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, or the specific Nation would be preferred.
- **ATSI:** This acronym for “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander” should be avoided. Using this term is homogenising and disrespectful.
Alternative: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.
- **Blood quantum terminology:** This is terminology like part-Aboriginal, mixed blood, full-blood, half-caste, quarter-caste. Referring to someone as part/half/a percentage

Aboriginal can be offensive. You should never quantify to what degree a person is Aboriginal based on their bloodline or skin colour.

Alternative: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, First Nations or the specific Nation would be preferred.

- **Native:** Avoid using this term to describe First Nations people, communities, and practices as it has been historically used as a pejorative and can be dehumanising as it is generally a term to used describe flora and fauna.
- **Prehistoric/primitive:** Avoid using prehistoric/primitive and similar terms when describing First Nations cultures as it can be highly offensive because they imply First Nations societies are not as 'advanced' as European societies and can dismiss that they are living cultures.
- **Our First Nations Peoples/First Peoples/Indigenous Peoples:** When referring to First Nations people, refrain from using possessive terms like 'our' as First Nations people do not belong to anybody. This extends to our collections and services. Try to avoid phrases like "our First Nations material" when talking about collection items.

Alternative: First Nations people of Australia; the First Nations cultural heritage in the Library's collection; The First Nations students at the University of Sydney.

- **Lower case:** When referring to the First Nations people of Australia and their culture, objects or languages, all the terms MUST be capitalised. It is disrespectful to treat Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, land, and cultures as non-proper nouns. For example, the words Australia, Australian, Europe, and European are all capitalised.

Example: **A**boriginal, **I**ndigenous, **B**undjalung, **F**irst **N**ations.

Terminology to consider

- **Urban/remote:** Consider terms like urban or remote, especially when referring to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people or communities, before using them. There is a longstanding implication that 'urban' Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and culture are 'less Aboriginal' than 'remote' people and culture, which is offensive. The idea that 'real' Aboriginal people live in Arnhem Land or the Central desert, and that only 'remote' First Nations people and cultures are 'really Aboriginal' is highly problematic and offensive. Because of this, you should only use terms such as 'remote' to refer to geographical location and access to services.
- **Traditional Owner:** It is common to hear the term 'Traditional Owner/s' used to refer to a First Nations person or community that is directly descended from the original First Nations inhabitants of an area and is culturally connected to their Country. The term

'Custodian' over 'Owner' is preferred by some First Nations people as it is more reflective of their philosophy. Many First Nations people see their connection as working conjointly with the land rather than 'owning' it in the Western sense, whereas some First Nations people prefer 'Owners' to assert sovereignty and dispel terra nullius.

- **Knowledges:** Note that when discussing First Nations science or epistemology, unless referring to specific element of First Nations knowledges, that knowledge should be pluralised. It is purposely expressed in this way to reflect diversity by acknowledging the existence of more than 'a single homogenous body' of Indigenous-derived information.
- **Discovery:** Consider implications when using the terms discovery or discover, especially in discussing the exploration of First Nations lands by Europeans as many First Nations peoples have occupied these lands for thousands of years before being visited by Europeans. Instead of James Cook discovering Australia, say "James Cook was the first Englishman to map the east coast of the lands now known as Australia". This advice extends to 'firsts' as well. For example, instead of saying "Matthew Flinders was the first person to circumnavigate Australia", say that he was the "first European to circumnavigate Australia [according to colonial accounts]".
- **Ancient/traditional:** Be cautious when using this terminology because it implies First Nations culture is only correct when in the past and can create a false dichotomy of only never-changing cultural practices as being 'correct'. Western scientific practices are rarely referred to as "traditional Western science".
- **Settlement/encounters:** Be cautious when using these terms as it can minimise the brutality of colonisation on First Nations peoples and lands and can ignore that Australia was not settled peacefully and there was continuous First Nations resistance.
- **Paternalistic framing:** This is less about particular terms and more about the framing of what is being communicated. Avoid phrasing like "the University of Sydney Library is preserving First Nations languages" as it dismisses the agency and effort of the First Nations people working hard to preserve their languages. If working on a project related to First Nations people and culture, when communicated, the emphasis should be placed on the collaboration between the Library and the relevant First Nations community if it complements the work the community is already doing.
- **Deficit discourse:** Like paternalism, although this is less about specific terms and more about the framing of what is being communicated. 'Deficit discourse' refers to disempowering patterns of language and practice that represent people in terms of deficiencies and failures. It particularly refers to discourse that places responsibility for problems with the affected individuals or communities, overlooking the larger socioeconomic structures in which they are embedded.

- **Mythology:** Terms such as 'myth', 'mythology' or 'story' conveys the impression that information from the Dreaming is not true or is trivial, only happened in the distant past, or are fairy tales rather than creation stories which we do not do with other religions. Consider using preferred alternate terms such as 'Creation Time' or 'Dream Time'.

Additional terms

- **Country:** The term 'Country' describes the area of land associated with an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander nation, clan or culturally distinct group. In addition to referring to a physical location, Country can also infer the cultural relationship a group has with the land, and its responsibilities to care for the land. Country when used in this context should always be capitalised.
- **Elder:** A First Nations Elder is someone recognised within their community as a custodian of cultural knowledge and law. A recognised First Nations community leader could also gain Elder status within their community. It should be noted that age isn't a prerequisite and doesn't automatically make someone an Elder. The important thing is that the community recognises the individual as an Elder. Elder used in this context should always be capitalised.
- **Uncle and Aunt:** The title Uncle or Aunt is often bestowed by a First Nations community on their Elders. Some Elders may choose to be known by this title publicly, while others might reserve it for use in personal settings. Its best practice to ask an Elder if they wish to be referred to as Uncle or Aunt before adopting these titles. When using these terms, always capitalise Uncle and Aunt and Aunt should always be spelt with a 'y' not an 'ie'.
- **Murri, Goori, Koori, Palawa, Nunga, Yolngu, Anangu, Noongar:** These terms are often used by First Nations people from different areas to describe themselves. For example, many First Nations peoples from other areas of Australia live in Queensland and they would continue to refer to themselves using the term that best describes their original geographic identity. For example, someone from New South Wales living in Queensland would still consider themselves to be a Koori.
 - Murri – Queensland, north west New South Wales
 - Noongar/Nyoongah – south west Western Australia
 - Koori – New South Wales
 - Goori – north coast New South Wales
 - Koorie – Victoria
 - Yolngu – Arnhem Land, Northern Territory
 - Anangu – Central Australia

- Palawa – Tasmania
- Nunga (not always a more appropriate term) – South Australia

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