

# Charter for Research with Indigenous Knowledge Holders <sup>1</sup>

The Institute seeks to work in equal partnership with communities of Indigenous knowledge holders and adopts the following principles, which are in alignment with Article 8 (j) of the Convention on Biological Diversity<sup>2</sup>, to recognise the rights of Indigenous knowledge holders:

1. We aim to respond to the needs and interests of Indigenous people, including those who participate in research projects and others in the community

Our research will seek to provide a tangible benefit to Indigenous communities who may be affected by our research. We commit to ensuring that Indigenous people involved in research should benefit from, and not be disadvantaged by, research we undertake.

2. We acknowledge and respect Indigenous knowledge practices and innovations.

We recognise Article 31 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People and aim to work in accordance with the principle that Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their intangible heritage, including their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, traditional cultural expressions and intellectual property.<sup>3</sup>

3. Free, prior and informed consent is the foundation for our research with or about Indigenous peoples.

Free, prior and informed consent means that agreement is obtained free of duress or pressure and that Indigenous people are fully cognisant of the details and risks of the proposed research. Informed consent of people as a group, as well as individuals within that group, is important.

4. We undertake to respect the confidentiality of any information collected, recognise the right of Indigenous knowledge holders' access to information collected during our research, and we acknowledge the co-ownership of content and research output.

We seek to work as equal collaborative partners on research and we recognise the issues of confidentiality, access to information and co-ownership of content, including co-authorship of work.

5. We welcome the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of research.

Indigenous people who contribute traditional knowledge, practices and innovations, cultural expressions and intellectual property, skills, know-how, cultural products and expressions, and biological and genetic resources will receive a fair and equitable share of benefits arising from the use and application of their knowledge, innovations and practices.

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<sup>1</sup> This charter draws upon existing policies and best practice adopted by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, other Australian Universities, and the Centre for Indigenous Natural and Cultural Resource Management.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cbd.int/traditional/>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS\\_en.pdf](https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf)

## **Accompanying note to the Charter – guidelines for researchers working with Indigenous knowledge holders**

*This accompanying note offers practical suggestions on how to apply the Charter principles.*

### **1. We aim to respond to the needs and interests of Indigenous people, including those who participate in the research project and others in the community**

Co-design the research project with the community to ensure it meets the needs of the community.

Incorporate research outcomes specific to the needs of the Indigenous knowledge holders and the local community, and other individuals as appropriate.

### **2. We acknowledge and respect Indigenous knowledge practices and innovations.**

Researchers have a good understanding of the nature of Indigenous traditional knowledge systems, traditional cultural expressions and intellectual property.

Acknowledge the ongoing Indigenous ownership of the cultural and intellectual property rights in the material collected for research or teaching.

Acknowledge the assistance of participating Indigenous communities, and individuals and organisations which have assisted with the research, in publications arising from the research and ensure the appropriate use of research results and/or publication of material as agreed with the community or community representatives.

### **3. Free, prior and informed consent is the foundation for our research with or about Indigenous peoples.**

Ensure that Indigenous people are equal participants in the research process.

Ensure appropriate negotiation and consultation about the aims and objectives, and to ensure meaningful negotiation of processes, outcomes and involvement.

Conduct all research on the basis of free, prior and informed consent.

### **4. We undertake to respect the confidentiality of any information collected, recognise the right of Indigenous knowledge holders' access to information collected during our research, and we acknowledge the co-ownership of content and research output.**

Respect the confidentiality of individuals and organisations (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) where information collected is regarded by the relevant individual or organisation as sensitive.

Consult the informants in order to identify any confidential, sensitive or restricted material and to determine the conditions of access and other restrictions on the use of this material. The issue of confidentiality will be determined by the informants and respected by the researcher.

Make available to the relevant Indigenous knowledge holders' copies of any information or materials (including recordings, photographs, and literature) collected during the course of our research as requested, and subject to imposition of confidentiality or privacy.

Copyright in interviews (in any material form) with Indigenous knowledge holders is jointly owned by participating Indigenous knowledge holders and us. Either party, that is, the relevant Indigenous knowledge holder and us, may use interviews as they think fit, but each must consult the other party and acknowledge the other party's assistance in doing the interview.

Prior to completion of the final draft of research outputs seek the views of relevant Indigenous knowledge holders concerning portions of the work which draw upon material that they have contributed and comply with any reasonable directions given by them.

Either party may use the research outputs and any related reports as they think fit but must consult the other party and acknowledge the other party's assistance in any such use. Comply with any reasonable directions from the Indigenous knowledge holders relating to any proposed public use of all or any part of the research.

Take responsibility for the appropriate archiving, storing and conservation of any data collected during our research. Any destruction or disposal of research material must be done in consultation with the other party.

**5. We welcome the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of research.**

Ensure any Indigenous people involved in the research benefit from it, and are not disadvantaged by, the research project.