



# ETHICAL REVIEW FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING INDIGENOUS PEOPLE –

## *IREAP Guidelines - ACU Human Research Ethics Committee*

---

### **Preamble**

ACU supports the values outlined in the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)* and is committed to quality research conducted sensitively and ethically and in a culturally appropriate manner and in the spirit of Reconciliation. This is in line with the *ACU Statement of Commitment to Reconciliation* approved by Senate in March 1998.<sup>1</sup>

### **ACU requirements**

ACU Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) will refer all research conducted by ACU staff or students which involves Indigenous people to the ACU Indigenous Research Ethics Advisory Panel (IREAP) for consideration.

IREAP is convened by Associate Professor Nerida Blair (Faculty of Education and Arts). The Panel members are experienced external Indigenous Researchers who cover a breadth of research discipline areas relevant to ACU, and the University's Research Ethics Manager.

### **ACU Process**

When researchers indicate on the online ethics form that their research involves Indigenous participants, they will be asked to attach an additional document to their application.<sup>2</sup> This document will give researchers the opportunity to explain how they have ensured that their research is culturally appropriate, and how they have addressed the following issues:

- community approval/access (where appropriate)
- reciprocity and feedback to participants/community
- awareness of local issues

---

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix B



- additional local ethics/other approval requirements (if required)
- consent
- archiving material (where appropriate)
- Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property Rights

The application including this support material will be referred to the ACU Indigenous Research Ethics Advisory Panel (IREAP) who will either make a recommendation to the ACU Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) for approval, with or without amendments, or who will refer the application back to the researcher for more information or to request changes.

### Relevant guidelines

There are a number of excellent resources informing research with Indigenous Australians. All research involving humans in Australia is subject to the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)* (National Statement). The National Statement is upheld by the values of:

- Research merit and integrity
- Justice
- Beneficence
- Respect

Section 4 of the National Statement addresses ethical considerations specific to participants, with Chapter 4.7 specifically addressing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

The NHMRC has also produced two other relevant documents:

- *Keeping research on track: a guide for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples about health research ethics*<sup>3</sup>
- *Values and Ethics - Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research*<sup>4</sup>

These documents outline 6 core values:

- Reciprocity
- Respect
- Equality
- Responsibility
- Survival and protection

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines/publications/e65>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines/publications/e52>



- Spirit and integrity

These core values are in turn demonstrated through evidence of:

- community engagement
- community support
- feedback to the community
- value added to the community

The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) produced the valuable *Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies (2012)* (GERAIS)<sup>5</sup>. It has 14 principles which are grouped under the following broad categories:

- rights, respect and recognition;
- negotiation, consultation, agreement and mutual understanding;
- participation, collaboration and partnership;
- benefits, outcomes and giving back;
- managing research:
- use, storage and access; and
- reporting and compliance

ACU recognises that innovative research often involves film, media or communication outcomes and encourages researchers to explore the relevant protocol documents in framing their proposals including:

- [New media cultures : protocols for producing indigenous Australian new media](#): Protocols for producing Indigenous Australian new media by Terri Janke.<sup>6</sup>
- Pathways and Protocols, [a filmmaker's guide to working with Indigenous people, culture and concepts](#) by Terri Janke.<sup>7</sup>

Researchers wishing to conduct research with Indigenous participants and communities are expected to demonstrate their respect and care through familiarity with these documents.


## Local requirements

In addition to ACU approval, some research may have local requirements requiring specific approval. Where such local requirements apply, ACU researchers will not be

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/files/research/GERAIS.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/resources/reports\\_and\\_publications/artforms/digital/media\\_arts\\_protocols\\_for\\_producing\\_indigenous\\_australian\\_media\\_arts](http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/resources/reports_and_publications/artforms/digital/media_arts_protocols_for_producing_indigenous_australian_media_arts)

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/filmmaking/Indigenous\\_protocols.aspx](http://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/filmmaking/Indigenous_protocols.aspx)



required to complete a full ACU ethics application form in addition to local HREC approval. Rather, they will be able to register their external ethics approval, together with supporting documents.

The following states have HRECs for local health research involving Indigenous people:

- NSW - Aboriginal Health & Medical Research Council of NSW Ethics Committee<sup>8</sup>
- NT - Central Australian Human Research Ethics Committee
- NT - Top End Human Research Ethics Committee<sup>9</sup>
- SA - SA Aboriginal Health Research and Ethics Committee
- WA - Western Australian Aboriginal Health Ethics Committee<sup>10</sup>

In addition, individual communities and organisations may have their own requirements for access and approval to conduct research. Researchers should ensure that they have allowed sufficient time to build respectful relationships with communities and individuals, so as to enable proper engagement and obtain necessary approvals and consent.

## Enquiries

If you would like to discuss your research before you submit your application, please contact:

### **Associate Professor Nerida Blair**

Convenor, Indigenous Research Ethics Advisory Panel (IREAP)

Ph: 02 9739 **2875**

[Nerida.Blair@acu.edu.au](mailto:Nerida.Blair@acu.edu.au)

### **Susanna Gorman**

Research Ethics Manager

Ph: 02 9739 2519

[ResEthics.Manager@acu.edu.au](mailto:ResEthics.Manager@acu.edu.au)

---

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.ahmrc.org.au/ethics2.php>

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.health.nt.gov.au/Agency/Advisory\\_Groups\\_and\\_Taskforces/Human\\_Research\\_Ethics\\_Committee/index.aspx](http://www.health.nt.gov.au/Agency/Advisory_Groups_and_Taskforces/Human_Research_Ethics_Committee/index.aspx)

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.ahcwa.org.au/index.php/programs/ethics>



## Appendix A

### ACU Statement of Commitment to Reconciliation

Australian Catholic University in making this Statement of Commitment to Reconciliation draws its inspiration from the historic message of Pope John Paul II to the Indigenous peoples and the Australian Catholic Church in Alice Springs on 29 November 1986. To Indigenous peoples, he said:

*"For thousands of years you have lived in this land and fashioned a culture that endures to this day.... Your culture which shows the lasting genius and dignity of your race, must not be allowed to disappear. Your songs, your stories, your paintings, your dances, your languages must never be lost".*

To all Australians Pope John Paul II said:

*"What can now be done to remedy the deeds of yesterday must not be put off till tomorrow.... The establishment of a new society for Aboriginal people cannot go forward without just and mutually recognised agreements with regard to these human problems, even though their causes lie in the past. The greatest value to be achieved by such agreements, which must be implemented without causing new injustices, is respect for the dignity and the growth of the human person".*

We at Australian Catholic University wish to state our support for the Australian reconciliation process by acknowledgement that:

- the Indigenous peoples of Australia are the original inhabitants of this country;
- the imposition of Non-Indigenous settlement has had and continues to have a devastating impact on the lives and cultures of Indigenous peoples;
- the effects of dispossession and loss of their cultures are ongoing and significant.

In view of this reality, Australian Catholic University makes a commitment to the following goals:

- each campus will endeavour to involve the Indigenous people of the region in the life of the University;
- each year the University through its campuses will recognise Indigenous culture with activities involving the University community;



- the University through its policies and practices will encourage greater participation of Indigenous people in tertiary education;
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives will be integral to the curriculum of the University;
- the University will join with other universities and institutions of higher education to achieve reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

Title: Statement of Commitment to Reconciliation  
No: 1.3

Approved By: Senate  
Date: March 1998

Officer Responsible: Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)

Contact Officer: Executive  
Officer (Academic)





## Appendix B – Supporting information to Indigenous Research Advisory Panel (IREAP)

---

The ACU Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) would like more information in support of your application because you have indicated that your research involves Indigenous people. This is because research with Indigenous people can involve sensitive areas that require extra thought and attention. The information you provide will be sent to the Indigenous Research Ethics Advisory Panel (IREAP) together with your ethics application. IREAP will either:

- forward your application to the HREC with a recommendation for approval. (Note: this does not mean that the HREC might not have other questions for you.)

or

- return your application to you and ask you for more information. (Note: once you have addressed the issues to their satisfaction, IREAP will then forward your application to the HREC for consideration.)

---

Please attach an additional document answering the following questions:

1. Tell us how you intend to obtain community approval or access? If you can attach a Letter of Support from the community/communities your research engages with this will be helpful. If you are unable to show evidence of support for your research from the local community please explain why.
2. Tell us how you intend to obtain consent from participants.<sup>11</sup>
3. Show us how you will demonstrate reciprocity to the participants/community.<sup>12</sup> If you do not believe this is appropriate for your research, please explain why not.
4. Please demonstrate your awareness of local issues that might impact upon your research.
5. Please indicate whether you will require additional approvals to conduct your research.<sup>13</sup> If yes, attach a copy of the approval(s) or indicate when you will be able to provide evidence of approval.
6. Tell us what you plan to do with the data after you have completed your research.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> See Appendix C for a sample Consent Form and Participant Information letter.

<sup>12</sup> For example, are you training other Indigenous researchers to assist you in your research? Are you engaging Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people at all stages of your research process? Are you returning any transcribed material to people for their editing? Are you acknowledging the input of community members in any publications? Are you arranging payment in recompense for time spent by someone helping you with your research?

<sup>13</sup> For example, Aboriginal Health & Medical Research Council of NSW Ethics Committee requires ethics applications be submitted for health related research involving Aboriginal people in NSW.

<sup>14</sup> For example, have you considered archiving material, such as tapes of interviews?



7. Tell us how will you inform people in the community/communities you have engaged with about your research outcomes and the final report/product?
8. Who owns the Intellectual Property (IP?) relating to the research? How will you identify this and advise people in the community/communities you are engaging with?
9. Please provide any other information you feel should be considered in support of your research.







## Appendix C

### Sample Participant Information Sheet & Consent Form

In the Information Letter please introduce yourself to the people you will be engaging with for your research.

For example:

My name is Nerida Blair. I am a Wakka Wakka woman from south-west central Queensland. My father was Harold Blair, an Aboriginal singer and activist. I live in Darkinjung country on the Central Coast of NSW and work in Dharug country in the Faculty of Education and Arts, Australian Catholic University (ACU) in Strathfield, NSW. I have worked in Aboriginal education for over 30 years, mostly in NSW in universities but also in the public service.

My name is X... I am a Dharug man living in Sydney and working at the Australian Catholic University in Strathfield, NSW.

My name is Z... I am a Professor. I have developed curriculum in higher education over the past thirty years in developing countries as well as in Australia. My passion is in curriculum development, pedagogy and assessment. I am a scholar of higher education leadership in the academy. In the different roles I have had in education I have been fortunate enough to have collaborated with Indigenous peoples for many years.

### IREAP Artwork and Letterhead

The ACU HREC commissioned local ACU artists Danielle Dent and Cassandra Gibbs to produce an artwork explaining the aims of IREAP. The six circles represent the values of Spirit & Integrity, Reciprocity, Respect, Equality, Survival & Protection, and Responsibility<sup>15</sup>. The seven circles represent the ACU campuses. All these circles sit alongside rivers of knowledge. The campsites between the rivers represent the people engaged in learning, teaching and researching, and the flow in and out represents the importance of continual engagement. The ripples in the river represent the ripple effect of learning and research. The four campsites represent the four key values of respect, justice beneficence and research integrity.

This artwork has been adapted with the permission of the artists to provide templates for use in consent forms, information sheets, PowerPoint presentations etc. These templates can be downloaded from the [Ethics Webpage](#).

<sup>15</sup> Taken from [Keeping Research On Track: A guide for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples about health research ethics](#).

