

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies

Handbook | 2010



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Handbook

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Queensland Studies Authority
154 Melbourne Street South Brisbane
PO Box 307 Spring Hill
QLD 4004 Australia

Phone: (07) 3864 0299
Fax: (07) 3221 2553
Email: office@qsa.qld.edu.au
Website: www.qsa.qld.edu.au

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Foreword

In keeping with its Indigenous perspectives affirmation, the Queensland Studies Authority is committed to reconciliation in Australia. As part of its commitment, the QSA affirms that:

- Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people are the Indigenous peoples of Australia.
- Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people speak diverse languages and dialects, other than English.
- All students within Queensland schools should have access to the valued Indigenous knowledges that exist throughout Australia.
- Professional learning is a critical element of developing an understanding and appreciation of Indigenous perspectives and their application within educational contexts.
- QSA's products and services aim to provide a balanced representation of cultural, social, spiritual and political beliefs, respectful of the diversity of Indigenous histories and peoples.
- Success of Aboriginal students and Torres Strait Islander students is supported by successful embedding of Indigenous perspectives into the curriculum and assessment of student achievement.

This handbook is a product that reflects this commitment to a balanced and respectful representation of Indigenous histories and peoples. It contains the following sections:

1. Considerations when offering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
2. Establishing a supportive climate
3. Local area studies
4. Managing and processing information.

The handbook can be a resource and guide for schools:

- offering the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies senior syllabus
- embedding Indigenous perspectives across the curriculum
- implementing a whole-school policy on Indigenous education.

The handbook informs local area studies and community engagement that are fundamental to Aboriginal studies and Torres Strait Islander studies. It provides guidance on how content can be selected, framed and transformed in ways that render meaningful learning experiences for students. It also provides further ideas and elaborations on material to support delivery and assessment of the study encompassed by the senior syllabus.

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1. Considerations when offering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies

This section of the handbook provides advice on offering the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies senior syllabus so that a course is responsive to various social, cultural and political factors.

1.1 Protocol for consultation

Protocol for working with the local community should be observed by both teachers and students.

1. Extensive consultation must take place before students go into the community to research. Part of this process should be detailed briefings on how to interact with, and conduct interviews with, community members. The briefings should be conducted by community members with a teacher present. Be aware that protocols may vary from group to group and from one island group to another.
2. A crucial ethical question is, “Who owns the information?” The information the students gain from Indigenous people is intellectual property owned by those community people — it is their cultural information they are sharing. If inappropriate assumptions are carried into interactions with the local community, unintentional offence may occur.
3. The school should ensure that the community is well informed about the purposes of any research, and how the information will be stored or used after the research is concluded. As part of their local area project in Year 12, students could present the results of their research to the community, provided both the school and the community are in agreement. This can be done in a number of ways, e.g. with a performance or a research document. The nature of presentation should be negotiated between the student, teacher and community.
4. All parties should be mindful that ideas are likely to change as knowledge and understanding grow. Flexibility and guidance are important. It is advisable not to change what has been approved without taking the proposed changes to the community for consultation.
5. Payment for interviews and/or presentations is a matter for consideration by the respective local communities. Schools may need to budget accordingly and negotiate payment before activities start.
6. Reference should be made to the publications in this handbook.

The following websites provide information on social, cultural and language protocols to consider when engaging with Indigenous communities.

Australia Council (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Board) Indigenous Culture Protocols

www.copyright.org.au/specialinterest/indigenous.htm

This website contains information for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and arts organisations, and others interested in Indigenous culture, Indigenous intellectual property and traditional knowledge.

Australia Council for the Arts — Indigenous Arts Protocols

www.australiacouncil.gov.au/research/aboriginal_and_torres_strait_islander_arts

The website outlines protocols in Indigenous literature, visual arts and craft, music, performing arts and new media. Each protocol or “culture” is one in a series of five Indigenous protocol guides published by the Australia Council’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board. The guides reflect the complexity of Indigenous Australian culture, and provide information and advice on respecting Indigenous cultural heritage.

Australian Film Commission: Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property Rights and Protocols: Protocol for Filmmakers Working with Indigenous Content and Communities

www.afc.gov.au/funding/indigenous/icip/default.aspx

This section of the Australian Film Commission website contains the working documents as they develop protocols for filmmakers working with Indigenous content and communities.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services

www.atsip.qld.gov.au/everybodys-business

Queensland Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy — includes *Protocols for Consultation and Negotiation with Aboriginal People* and *Mina Mir Lo Ailan Mun: Proper Communication with Torres Strait Islander Peoples*. It provides a series of resources for communication and consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

FATSIL Guide to Community Protocols for Indigenous Language Projects 2004

www.wipo.int/export/sites/www/tk/en/folklore/creative_heritage/docs/fatsil_protocol_guide.pdf

This protocols guide, provided by the Federation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages (FATSIL), is for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and their consultants. The FATSIL guide covers protocols for producing language materials at a local level.

Indigenous Portal — Federal Government

www.indigenous.gov.au

A collection of cultural protocols.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Library and Information Resources Network (ATSILIRN) protocols

www1.aiatsis.gov.au/atsilirn/home/index.html

This site provides protocols that are intended to guide libraries, archives and information services in appropriate ways to interact with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the communities which the organisations serve, and to handle materials with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content.

Listen, learn and respect: Indigenous cultural protocols and radio

Janke, Terri and Guivarra, Nancia

<http://aftrs.edu.au/explore/library.aspx>

The Australian Film Television and Radio School offers this paper which sets out some of the major Indigenous cultural protocols that require consideration in radio practice. The issues discussed include interviewing Indigenous people, reporting the news, relevant codes of practice and the use of Indigenous cultural and intellectual property.

Message Stick: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Online (Australian Broadcasting Commission) Cultural Protocol

www.abc.net.au/indigenous/education/cultural_protocol.htm

Message Stick has produced this Indigenous Protocol site to assist journalists, filmmakers, producers and documentary makers in understanding the importance of abiding by Indigenous Protocols.

NAVA (National Association for the Visual Arts) Indigenous Visual Arts Protocols

www.visualarts.net.au/advicecentre/protocols

This website provides a document titled *Valuing art, Respecting culture* which offers protocols for working with the Australian Indigenous visual arts and craft sector.

NSW Government Policy Guidelines for Aboriginal Cultural Performance

www.daa.nsw.gov.au/policies/policyreperformance.html

The website features guidelines developed by the NSW State Government for agencies to consider when engaging Aboriginal people in cultural performances, or when conducting a Welcome to Country or other Aboriginal cultural protocol.

Protocols for Native American Archival Materials

www2.nau.edu/libnap-p/protocols.html

The website gives valuable advice regarding research protocols that can be found in the publication *Guidelines for Ethical Research in Indigenous Studies*, from the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Studies.

Respecting Cultures, Working with the Tasmanian Aboriginal Community and Aboriginal Artists

www.arts.tas.gov.au/textonly.aspx?id=499

The Arts Tasmania website offers a publication, *Respecting Cultures*, which promotes cultural harmony and goodwill through best practice methods in communication and interaction.

Australian Government Screen Australia

www.screenaustralia.gov.au/documents/SA_publications/Indig_Protocols.pdf

Pathways and Protocols: A filmmaker's guide to working with Indigenous people, culture and concepts can be downloaded from the Australian Government Screen Australia website.

Victorian Local Government Association Consultation and Engagement with Indigenous and Aboriginal People

www.vlgaconsultation.org.au/indigenous.shtml

This website provides some useful consultation guidelines, with links to further information.

Western Australia Heritage and Culture Protocols

<http://pals.dia.wa.gov.au/protocols.aspx>

The website contains communication and social protocols developed by the Western Australian State Government.

1.2 Sensitive issues

The following information is not meant to instruct a teacher on what to do in a given situation. It may be better to interact with one community in one way and with another community in a different way. Some problems will have more than one answer, and some problems may have no obvious answer. However, the guidelines will assist teachers in making decisions about the best way to approach a negotiation or consultation.

As the syllabus suggests, Aboriginal studies and Torres Strait Islander studies are not only concerned with historical events and contemporary happenings, but more important, they are concerned with people. Consequently, consideration of and sensitivity towards Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples are essential in the delivery of a subject in classrooms, and in the collaboration with local communities that is fundamental to the success of the subject.

The teaching of culture is the responsibility of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples only. Teachers, however, need to be aware of these issues and practices, as circumstances may arise in classroom management where adhering to the protocols of one (or more) of these issues is required, e.g. student relationships, absenteeism, content etc.

Cultural practices and issues that are sensitive to Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples may include:

- Men's Business
- Women's Business
- Death
- Language avoidance / avoidance behaviour
- Kinship
- Secret/sacred knowledge
- Traditional adoption
- Identity
- The Dreaming
- Before Before Time
- Before Time
- Kulai Tonar
- Zogo Time.

Because of the diversity within and between Aboriginal cultures and Torres Strait Islander cultures, protocols will vary and teachers are encouraged to be aware of the sensitivity surrounding these issues and to consult with appropriate local Aboriginal community members and Torres Strait Islander community members to discuss any matters that arise.

1.2.1 Sensitive issues in Aboriginal cultures

Teaching aspects of "culture", namely traditional practices, spiritual and sacred knowledge, is the responsibility of Aboriginal people only.

The organising principle of "cultures" refers to a broad understanding of Indigenous cultural diversity that exists throughout Australia. This understanding of Indigenous culture can be viewed as outside knowledge.

Although specific "cultural teachings" will be conducted through guest speakers, community visits and senior people, teachers need to be aware of sensitive issues and practices. In

certain circumstances, Western education inquiry methods may intrude into what is regarded as inside knowledge.

When dealing with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge, it is imperative that clear and open communication is initiated, instigated and renewed each year. This should be part of the planning and implementation cycle. When planning classroom activities, teachers may need to follow a particular protocol that relates to, for example, student relationships or curriculum content. There are implications for planning cycles.

When students take cultural leave, there may well be an impact on a school's teaching plan. When this happens, to avoid disadvantaging either the students or a student's work group, teachers may need to adjust their teaching practices, especially during practical activities and assessment.

Key concepts	
Inside knowledge — secret and sacred knowledge Outside knowledge Business Men's Business Women's Business	
Cultural understandings	Implications
Ceremonies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rites of passage • initiation • education • increase (to do with food sources / sustenance) Sacred sites (protocols for accessing sites) Forbidden images Lore	<p>Inside knowledge is knowledge (beliefs, customary practices and spiritual understandings) that is known, taught and passed down within an Aboriginal community. This knowledge is not to be shared with people outside of a defined group, which may be the immediate language group, family or community.</p> <p>Outside knowledge refers to knowledge that may be shared outside these communities for a specific purpose or context. For example, a traditional artwork may have many layers of knowledge. Outside knowledge may be shared with viewers of the artwork, but inside knowledge will never be explained to people out side of the group from which the art originated.</p> <p>Specific terms related to cultural knowledge (e.g. initiation) should not be discussed in a classroom situation.</p> <p>The term "business" describes the relational processes associated with specific patterns and movements within and between communities. It is used to describe the responsibilities and obligations of both men and women.</p> <p>At all times, the practice relating to Men's Business and Women's Business is divided. Both Men's Business and Women's Business are valid and are an integral part of the balanced Aboriginal life.</p> <p>The interrelationships between Men's Business and Women's Business substantiates the completeness of community.</p> <p>In Aboriginal communities there are certain sanctions for dealing with people who breach protocols for Women's Business and Men's Business, or who share inside knowledge inappropriately. Specific actions may include punishment by spiritual and local lore.</p>

Key concepts	
Cultural knowledge	
Cultural understandings	Implications
Cultural knowledge could relate to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • special places • texts both written and non-written created by Aboriginal people • ceremonies • paintings (ground/bark/cave/traditional) • texts created by Aboriginal people for Aboriginal people • body design • texts by Aboriginal people for Aboriginal people belonging to “the now” • art symbology • carved trees / scar trees 	<p>Cultural knowledge refers to the body of knowledge that is maintained and continued through Aboriginal communities in modes and mediums that community members see fit. In the Aboriginal worldview there are restrictions on who can access knowledge (see inside/outside knowledge).</p>

Key concepts	
Sorry Business	
Cultural understandings	Implications
Mourning Grief Loss	<p>Sorry Business — people who are related to the deceased are required to fulfil certain obligations in the funerary ceremonies. These obligations vary from group to group.</p> <p>The time and length of mourning periods and ceremonies differ from community to community, and family to family. Indigenous students may be absent for days or weeks during these periods and guest speakers may not be available.</p> <p>Using images of deceased people and using the names of deceased people breaches cultural protocols for some Indigenous communities. Please take care. In published materials, you will notice that there are disclaimers that reflect this cultural practice, e.g. ABC and SBS Indigenous programming protocols.</p> <p>An Aboriginal student or other individual in the community may change his or her name after the death of an individual in their community who shared the same name. There are many variations of how Sorry Business may be dealt with.</p>

Key concepts	
Living patterns of relationships	
Cultural understandings	Implications
Position of relations and relationships, e.g. mother-in-law / son-in-law avoidance Body language	<p>Embedded within Aboriginal cultures are certain terms, behaviours and protocols that outline specific obligations, responsibilities and actions towards family members and others.</p> <p>Every community has different protocols for relating to members of that community, and these must be acknowledged. In some Aboriginal communities, a man may not talk directly to his mother-in-law; in other communities, a young woman may not talk directly to a senior man, but must communicate through a senior woman.</p> <p>Non-Indigenous teachers and students need to understand whether they should follow a particular process to meet with senior people or knowledge holders within the community.</p> <p>An important part of living relationships is reciprocity; instigating or maintaining a healthy relationship between school and community is an active reciprocal arrangement.</p>

Key concepts	
Kinship Language terms	
Cultural understandings	Implications
Use of kinship terms Totemic relationships Cultural and spiritual obligations	<p>Kinship is a term that describes family relationships and ties within a community. Aboriginal kinship rules and lore are diverse and they are rooted in history and traditions. Some communities maintain strong traditional kinship ties, while others maintain strong kinship ties based on social and family histories. Principles of kinship, community connectedness and obligation continue despite policies of colonisation, assimilation and protection.</p> <p>Teachers need to be aware of each student's kinship and how they relate within their families, in terms of reference, obligations and language use.</p> <p>For example, a student may have a significant role within a mourning ceremony because of their kinship with the deceased, although the family relationship may not seem immediate as defined in a Western legal sense, e.g. it may be the cousin's cousin's brother who passed away. Respect needs to be accorded to these relationships.</p>
Language names / special expressions for particular terms of kinship are specific to each family / clan group. These can include matters relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • skin • moieties. Language protocols	<p>Language terms for describing kinship are often complicated. It is important to show respect for naming and reference protocols.</p> <p>In some Aboriginal communities there are no terms such as "uncle" or "cousin"; the terms used are "mother's brother", "brother", "sister". Relationships may be either actual (blood relations) or classificatory. Teachers should understand that these terms belong to the relational context and are not for general use.</p> <p>Aboriginal traditional language terms may be used to describe family relationships. These will differ between communities.</p> <p>Aboriginal kinship ties relate to patterns of people and how their relationships form and move. They may highlight kin</p>

	<p>relationships that may be named through animal, plant or spiritual totems. They are regarded as important “inside knowledge” for the particular community.</p> <p>These naming rights carry cultural obligations for protecting and maintaining totems, practices and stories. Although this may be shared within a learning context, advice should be sought on how to share this in other contexts.</p> <p>Moieties, sections and subsections determine an individual’s position in the community and the behaviours expected of that individual.</p>
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Key concepts

Identity

Cultural understandings	Implications
<p>Aboriginal peoples</p> <p>Indigenous Australians</p> <p>Personal and family histories</p> <p>Certificate of Aboriginality</p> <p>Choice of identities</p>	<p>Identity comes from one’s own self-awareness and self-image. Identity links with the connections of place, people, histories, language(s) and time.</p> <p>Identity is a sensitive issue pertaining to Australian history and the dispossession of Aboriginal peoples. Teachers need to be aware that dispossession of identity is a core component of the colonising process and leads to definitions that are not natural. Be cautious that classroom language does not use identity terminology that dilutes self-awareness and self-image and diminishes the Aboriginal voice.</p> <p>Many Aboriginal people do not like to be referred to as either Aboriginal or Indigenous, as their identity is based on language, land and clan relationships. Language names (e.g. Gungarri, Kooma, Tjabakui and Wiknatanja) or regional names (e.g. Murri, Goori and Bohmah) may be preferred. It is best to consult with the local community for their preferences for identifying people within the area.</p> <p>The Federal Government definition of an Aboriginal person, as defined by the <i>Aboriginal Lands Rights Act 1983</i>, is a person who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is of Aboriginal descent • identifies as an Aboriginal person • is accepted by the Aboriginal community in which they live. <p>All of the criteria must apply.</p> <p>For educational materials and teaching, it may be relevant to use different names when identifying people, depending on the context. For example, the term “Indigenous” may be required in a national/international context, whereas “Aboriginal” may be used for national and state perspectives. Local and regional names may be used when outlining specific cultural, social and land connections of people. Students need to be aware of the different contexts and appropriate use of words and languages.</p> <p>Identification of Aboriginality is a sensitive issue but it provides vital information for governments to provide basic human rights and services in what is the most disadvantaged group of Australians. As a result of (legal) definitions of Aboriginality, government departments now require Aboriginal people to provide “proof of Aboriginality” to be eligible for financial or other assistance. Many Aboriginal people disagree with this imposed government control, believing this is a continuance of colonisation processes.</p> <p>Proof of identity should not be requested within a classroom</p>

	<p>context — this is a school and community decision.</p> <p>The <i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act</i> also applies to people who identify themselves as Torres Strait Islanders.</p>
<p>Questions and statements such as the following are inappropriate, particularly from teachers or in a class setting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “How much Aboriginal blood do you have?” • “You’re not a quarter-caste.” • “You’re not a real Aborigine.” • “You’re not even black.” • “You’re so exotic.” • “Your family must be really spiritual.” 	<p>It is important to avoid making assumptions about cultural knowledge based on physical appearance, as this can introduce or perpetrate stereotypes and generalisations.</p> <p>For example, do not assume that an individual with dark skin and hair has an intimate knowledge of traditional cultural practice — nor that someone with fair skin lacks Indigenous cultural knowledge and experiences. Knowledge, experiences and cultural histories are based on personal and family histories and individual experiences.</p> <p>It is also important to note that some Aboriginal people identify as having bilingual or multilingual and cultural backgrounds. This is as a result of the impact of colonisation, the slave trade and intermarriages with other nationalities, including Torres Strait Islanders, South Sea Islanders and Chinese.</p>

Key concepts	
Knowledge management	
Cultural understandings	Implications
<p>Intellectual rights</p> <p>Cultural rights</p> <p>Social and cultural conventions</p>	<p>Australian Aboriginal communities maintain specific protocols and lores for managing and maintaining knowledge. Specific family, kinship and social relationships help to determine the roles and responsibilities of managing knowledge on behalf of the family, community or language group.</p> <p>Knowledge management includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sharing and trading knowledge • rights, responsibilities and relationships (who can teach or pass on certain knowledge, and who can receive that knowledge) • gaining and maintaining the right to certain types of knowledge, and being able to pass this knowledge on • learned knowledge and shared knowledge (some knowledge may be known but must not be discussed) • private and public knowledge (what stays within a community and what can be discussed freely). <p>Knowledge management varies from community to community. Conventions, sanctions and punishments (for breaching conventions) may exist. The implications for teachers and students are that they need to be aware and follow the protocols for managing knowledge.</p> <p>Within one community, one particular family may hold the knowledge for a set of secret and sacred art symbols, and other members of the community may know them but may neither paint with these symbols nor teach others about them. Certain dances and stories may be held with other members of the community, while another story might be shared and made public.</p>

Source: Adapted from the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Teacher Handbook 2001*.
 Additional contributors: the Queensland Studies Authority’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies sub-committee 2007, Vicki Turner, Michael Mace, Michael Williams, Terry Green, Robert Ahwing, Billie Scott, Erin McDonald, Education Queensland’s Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives in Schools (EATSIPS) committee 2007, Will Davis.

1.2.2 Sensitive issues in Torres Strait Islander cultures

This section is for teacher reference only and is not recommended for student use.

Teaching aspects of “culture”, namely traditional practices, spiritual and sacred knowledge, is the responsibility of Torres Strait Islander people only.

The organising principle of “cultures” refers to a broad understanding of Indigenous cultural diversity existing across Australia. This area focuses on facilitating learning experiences that provide a rich understanding of the diversity of Australian Indigenous cultures and their position within Australian society, in the past, the present and the future.

Although specific “cultural teachings” will be conducted through guest speakers, community visits and senior people (such as Elders and Lore people), teachers need to be aware of sensitive issues and practices.

In certain circumstances, teachers may need to follow particular protocols that relate to sensitive areas, for example, student relationships, absenteeism or certain curriculum content. Students who take cultural leave may impact on a school’s teaching plan. In this event, teachers may need to adjust their teaching practices, especially practical activities and assessment, to avoid disadvantaging either the students or a student’s work group.

Due to the diversity within and between Torres Strait Islander cultures and Aboriginal cultures, protocols will vary. Teachers need to be aware of sensitive issues and to consult with appropriate local Torres Strait Islander community members and Aboriginal community members to discuss any matters that arise.

Knowledge

There are two traditional languages in the Torres Strait Islands: *Meriam Mer*, of the Eastern Islands, and *Kalaw Lagaw Ya*, of the Near Western Islands. There are three other dialects — *Kalaw Kawaw Ya*, of the top Western Islands; *Mabuaig*, from the near Western Island of Mabuaig; and *Kulkai Gai*, of Central Islands — but they are barely spoken today.

Note for the tables: Cultural and/or language terms are marked according to language.

Meriam Mer = MM, spoken in Eastern Islands

Kalaw Lagaw Ya = KL, spoken in Near Western Islands

Mabuaig = Mab., spoken in near Western Island of Mabuaig

Kalaw Kawaw Ya = KKY, spoken in the top Western Islands

Kulkai Gai = KG, spoken in Central Islands

Creole = cr

Pidgin = pg

Key concepts	
Secret and/or sacred knowledge — <i>Gumik Lu</i> (MM) <i>Gumi Ngulayg</i> (Mab. & KKY)	
Cultural knowledge — <i>Gumik-Zogo Pardar</i> (MM) (knowledge)	
Cultural understandings	Implications
<p>Secret and sacred cultural knowledge could relate to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • social law • special places • ceremonies. 	<p>Secret and sacred knowledge refers to the body of knowledge that is maintained and continued through the oral tradition, and which is apparent during ceremonies.</p> <p>As a key cultural protocol this knowledge is “inside knowledge” that is not publicly shared with people outside of the specified family group in which it is contained and maintained. It is inappropriate to ask about this knowledge or to discuss it outside the context where the knowledge is used.</p> <p>Where this knowledge has been shared within specified contexts it may not be transferred into another context, e.g. represented within an assessment item.</p> <p>Cultural knowledge refers to the knowledge that is shared within a Torres Strait Islander community for the maintenance of stories, beliefs and lore systems. Some of this knowledge may not be sacred or secret and may be shared amongst people outside of the group, whilst some of this knowledge is protected through rights of access, passage and kinship relationships.</p> <p>Historical, social, anthropological and scientific research over the history of Australia has seen the removal of both secret and sacred knowledge and cultural knowledge from Indigenous communities. This may be found within books, particularly historical texts. Following community protocol, this material should be restricted from student use and, when appropriate, returned to the local community from where the material was sourced. If identifying the community of origin is not possible, it is recommended that the resource be deposited in the National Association for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.</p>

Key concepts	
Men’s Business — <i>Kimiar Dorge</i> (MM)	
Women’s Business — <i>Koskir Dorge</i> (MM)	
Cultural understandings	Implications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ceremonies • rites of passage • initiation • education • increase (to do with food sources / sustenance) 	<p>“Business” is used to describe the responsibilities and obligations of both men and women.</p> <p>In the literature there is a dichotomy between Men’s Business and Women’s Business. Both are valid and are an integral part of the social framework.</p> <p>At all times the practice relating to Men’s Business and Women’s Business should be seen as separate. However, these roles, responsibilities and relationships within the community are balanced, and should be expressed as equally valid and integral parts of the social and cultural lives of peoples of, and from, the Torres Straits.</p> <p>The relationships between Men’s Business and Women’s Business are underpinned by a central ethos that validates and substantiates the completeness and wholeness of Torres Strait Islander ceremonies.</p>

Key concepts	
Death — <i>Eud</i> (MM), <i>Um</i> (Mab. & KKY) Mourning Phases of mourning	
Cultural understandings	Implications
Bad or sad news — <i>Okasosok</i> (MM) Tombstone openings — <i>Kulaw Gudpuday</i> (Mab. & KKY) Special roles for people to coordinate the tombstone opening, e.g. <i>Gizu Mabaig</i> (Mab. & KKY) Tombstone feasts — <i>Bakir Auskir</i> or <i>Bakir leuer</i> (MM)	People related to the deceased are required to fulfil certain obligations in the funerary ceremonies. These vary from group to group. Time and length of mourning periods and ceremonies differ from community to community, and family to family. Indigenous students may be absent for days or weeks during these periods, and guest speakers may not be available. Tombstone openings and associated ceremonies are sacred to the Torres Straits. <i>Marigadth</i> (Mab. & KKY), <i>Nauet</i> (MM) refers to a person or people related to the deceased by marriage who is given the honour to perform certain duties in the funerary ceremonies — before, during and after the funeral.

Key concepts	
Language avoidance — <i>Mir Mamorser</i> (MM), <i>Ya Uradhan</i> (Mab.) and <i>Ya Wardhan</i> (KKY) Avoidance behaviour — <i>Ake'ker-Ake'ker</i> (MM)	
Cultural understandings	Implications
Taboo relations, e.g. mother-in-law / son-in-law avoidance Avoidance behaviour	Embedded within Torres Strait languages are particular terms that imply certain obligations, responsibilities and actions toward family and others. Every community has different protocols for relating, and these must be acknowledged. For example, in some Torres Strait Islander communities a son-in-law may not talk directly to his mother-in-law. Similarly, non-Indigenous teachers and students may need to go through a particular process to meet with senior people or knowledge holders within the community.

Key concepts	
Kinship — <i>Nosik</i> (MM); <i>Kulka</i> (Mab. & KKY)	
Cultural understandings	Implications
Preferred specific names or classificatory terms, e.g. mum, dad, sister, brother — <i>Kus</i> (affectionate term, MM)	Kinship describes the family relationships and ties within a community. Kinship rules and lores in Torres Strait communities are diverse and rooted in history and traditions. Some communities maintain strong traditional kinship ties, while others maintain kinship ties based on social and family histories. Some kinship ties are a product of protection and assimilation policies. For example, people who were removed to a mission or government-run settlement may have spent a lifetime in a dormitory together. Although they may not be related by blood, these relationships have responsibilities and obligations similar to blood-related and traditional kinship ties. Teachers need to be aware of each student's kinship and family relations, including terms of reference within the family, other language use, and family and community obligations. For example, although a family relationship may not seem “close” in a Western frame of reference — it may be the cousin's brother who passed away — the student's kinship tie to this person may determine a significant role within a mourning ceremony. Respect needs to be given to these relationships.

<p>Language names / special expressions for particular terms of kinship are specific to each family/clan group</p>	<p>Language terms for describing kinship are often complicated. It is important to show respect for naming and reference protocols.</p> <p>In some communities there are no direct references to relations such as “uncles” or “cousins”: the terms used are “mother’s brother”, “father’s brother”, brother, sister, etc. The relationships may be either actual (blood) or classificatory.</p> <p>Each term or classification carries with it expected behaviour and/or responsibility towards that particular kin term. Moieties, sections and subsections determine one’s position in society and thus manifest in expected behaviours.</p> <p>There are certain differences for referring to people within the family, e.g. <i>Aka</i>, grandmother, or <i>Athe</i>, grandfather.</p>
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Key concepts	
Identity — <i>Mabu</i> , <i>Batomer</i> (MM); Lagoelayg (Mab. & KKY)	
Cultural understandings	Implications
	<p>The <i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act</i> applies to people who identify themselves as Torres Strait Islanders.</p> <p>The definition of a Torres Strait Islander person by the Federal Government (for example, as defined by the <i>Aboriginal Lands Rights Act 1983</i>), is a person who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is of Torres Strait Islander descent • identifies as a Torres Strait Islander person • is accepted by the Torres Strait Islander community in which they live. <p>All of the criteria must apply. Neither a person’s physical appearance, nor the way that they live are requirements.</p> <p>“Identity” comes from one’s own self-awareness and self-image. Identity is connected with place, people, histories, language(s) and time. Some Torres Strait Islander people identify strongly with their “Island” roots, including Papua New Guinea. Some Torres Strait Islander people identify with the mainland or home country when discussing their identity.</p> <p>How to refer to people will change depending on the circumstances and personal choices. Some people prefer to be called “Torres Strait Islanders” — others prefer “Islanders”. Some people prefer local Island names and language names to be used in recognising themselves and their identity. These might include <i>Badulaig</i>, which refers to the people and not their link to the land.</p> <p>It is also important to note that some Torres Strait Islander people identify as having bilingual or trilingual backgrounds. This is because of the impact of colonisation, the slave trade within South Sea Islanders and intermarriages with other nationalities, including Torres Strait Islander, Samoan and Chinese.</p> <p>Many students and community people speak Torres Strait Islander Kriol and one or more home Indigenous languages. The maintenance of these languages is important for Torres Strait Islander people and their use should be respected as they are intrinsically linked to the identity of Torres Strait Islander peoples.</p> <p>Within educational materials and teaching it may be relevant to use different names when identifying people, depending on the context being discussed. For example, a national/international context may require the use of the term “Indigenous”, whereas “Torres Strait Islander” may be used for national and state perspectives and local and Island names may be used when outlining specific cultural, social, Island and sea connections of people. Students need to be aware of the different contexts and appropriateness of the use of language within these contexts.</p> <p>As a result of (legal) definitions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander</p>

	<p>people, government departments now require Torres Strait Islander people to provide “proof of Torres Strait Islander ancestry” to be eligible for financial or other assistance, e.g. public housing and ABSTUDY. Many Torres Strait Islander people object to this imposed government control, seeing it as a contemporary form of colonisation. Proof of identity should not be requested in a classroom context; this is a school and community decision.</p> <p>It is important not to make assumptions about cultural links and knowledges, e.g. assuming that Torres Strait Islander people who are urbanised or living on the mainland are not practising their cultural heritage. To make assumptions about cultural knowledge tends to strengthen stereotypes and generalisations.</p> <p>Identity is about choice, as well as about bloodlines, personal histories, accountabilities and responsibilities.</p> <p>In some families, different family members may embrace different cultural identities, even though they share the same bloodline, e.g. a woman and her family may not identify as being Torres Strait Islanders, while the woman’s sister may not only identify as being a Torres Strait Islander, but may be an active community member. Choices about identity are bound by more than history and must be respected.</p> <p>The impacts of invasion, colonisation, the slave trade, and intermarriages with other nationalities, including Aboriginal, Samoan and Chinese, have resulted in some Torres Strait Islander people identifying as having bilingual or multilingual cultural backgrounds.</p>
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Key concepts	
Kinship — <i>Nosik</i> (MM); <i>Kus</i> (MM), <i>Kulka</i> (Mab. & KKY)	
Family	
Cultural understandings	Implications
Traditional adoption — <i>Gobar Ataruk</i> (MM); <i>Thoerdhay Dagam</i> (Mab.); <i>Kazi Pulgay</i> (KKY)	<p>In the Torres Straits traditional or customary adoption practices exist.</p> <p>To fully comprehend the intricate nature of customary adoption practices in Torres Strait Islander cultures, it is vital to have an understanding of the wider family structures of both traditional and contemporary societies.</p> <p>The family formed the basis of social organisation — land ownership, trade, warfare, social status, division of labour, marriage and social interaction were defined on the basis of family. This form of social cohesion was strengthened by the practice of traditional adoption. Adoption practices took on a number of different forms and roles that varied from island to island throughout the Torres Strait.</p> <p>In Before Time, customary adoption was always conducted within the extended family so that the adopted child had the same bloodline as the adoptive parents. Adoptions were primarily conducted on one island and took place for a variety of reasons, the common link being to maintain social harmony by the mutual exchange within the extended family.</p> <p>A variety of reasons for adoption exist. The underlying principle of Torres Strait Islander adoption is that giving birth to a child is not necessarily a qualification for nurturing that child.</p>
	<p>Some of the reasons that may underline customary adoption for Torres Strait Islanders are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintain family bloodlines and/or family name by adopting a child from a “blood” relative • give a childless family member (married or otherwise) an opportunity to raise their own child • strengthen bonds between two families • distribute boys and girls evenly between families who may only have children of one sex

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • replace a child who has been adopted out to another family • provide company and care for an older relative. <p>For further information on traditional adoption, contact your local Torres Strait Islander community or organisation. It is preferred that traditional adoption processes not be discussed in classes where Torres Strait Islander children are present.</p>
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Key concepts	
Time Augadth/Zogo Time — <i>Zogo Kerker</i> (MM) Shared	
Cultural understandings	Implications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time periods • Spiritual links to land and sea • Legends of the Torres Straits • Adhiw/Zogo Time — <i>Zogo Kerker</i> (MM); <i>Adhiw Thonar</i> (Mab. & KKY) • <i>Bipo Bipo Taim</i> (Before Before Time) — <i>Au Emeret Kerker</i> (MM); <i>Mina Mina Kulkub Thonar</i> (KKY); <i>Mina Mina Kulba Thonar</i> (Mab.) • <i>Bipo Taim</i> (Before Time) — <i>Emeret Kerker</i> (Mer); <i>Mina Kulkub Thonar</i> (KKY); <i>Mina Kulba Thonar</i> (Mab.) 	<p>Augadth/Zogo Time is a worldview only used amongst Torres Strait Islander language groups. It is important to treat the concepts associated with Augadth/Zogo Time with respect.</p> <p>Augadth/Zogo Time affects Torres Strait Islander values and beliefs and their relationship with every living creature and feature of the land, sea and air.</p> <p>Understanding the relationships between land, sea, air and Torres Strait Islander peoples is an essential part of understanding Augadth/Zogo Time and the cultures of Torres Strait Islander peoples.</p> <p>Augadth/Zogo Time continues to relate to the values and beliefs of Torres Strait Islanders in all Australian lifestyles, e.g. urban, rural and Torres Strait Islands.</p> <p>Augadth/Zogo Time is linked with the present.</p> <p>All Indigenous cultures of the world have similar links with spiritual beliefs that determine their actions.</p> <p>Involvement of Torres Strait Islander peoples is essential when discussing Augadth/Zogo Time. If this is not possible, use appropriate resources written by Torres Strait Islander peoples.</p> <p>Consult with local community leaders and advisers of the Torres Strait Islander community in case there are some aspects of Augadth/Zogo Time that are secret/sacred and should not be mentioned.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Athe Time — <i>Ataiba Kerker</i> (MM); <i>Popuya Thonar</i> (KKY); <i>Athen Thonar</i> (Mab.) 	<p>This time period represents the recorded and popular history of the Torres Strait Islander peoples.</p> <p>Totems determine:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identity — <i>Batomer</i> (MM); <i>Lagoelayg</i> (Mab. & KKY) • behaviour — <i>Akeker</i> (MM); <i>Pawa</i> (Mab. & KKY) • relationships — <i>Tebud'le</i> or <i>Tebud'ea</i> (MM); <i>Yabugub</i> (KKY & Mab.). <p>Totemism is still a valid part of Torres Strait Islander identity and today is observed from the old times to our grandfather's time.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Time — <i>Meriba Kerker</i> (MM); <i>Ngalpan Thonar</i> (KKY); <i>Kedha Thonar</i> (Mab. & KKY) 	<p>This time period represents the living history of the Torres Strait Islander peoples.</p>

Sources: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies subcommittee 2007, TSIREC, Romina Fujii, Bua Mabo (Meriam Mer terms), Henry Neill (NATSIEP Resource Officer, Peninsula Region) and Torres Strait Islander community members, including Gabriel Bani, Ned David, and Steve Foster.

1.3 Language use and terminology

Guidelines on appropriate terminology

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies focus on understanding the complexity and diversity of the respective cultures and their lived experiences. Consideration of, and sensitivity towards, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the use of language and terminology facilitates these understandings.

Aboriginal studies and Torres Strait Islander studies are not only concerned with historical events and contemporary happenings; more important, they are about people. Consequently, consideration of, and sensitivity towards, Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples are paramount.

When referring to the lives, cultures and histories of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, using preferred terminology demonstrates respect for, and an acknowledgment of, their rights and expectations.

Teachers are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the language suggested in the appropriate terminology matrix and to regularly consult with their local Aboriginal community and/or Torres Strait Islander community for the preferred terms to be used in their school.

The following advice about preferred terminology is based on consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education communities.

Appropriate Aboriginal terminology

What constitutes preferred terminology can only be suggested as generally representing Aboriginal peoples. Many groups constitute Aboriginal Australia and as more voices are listened to, and enter into, a national conversation regarding Aboriginal issues and situations, so too does terminology change according to these movements.

What constitutes a commonality of experience across Australia is the distinct lack of Aboriginal input into terminology of the past and sometimes the present. As a people living under the trauma of invasion and colonisation, terminology is heavily influenced by the belief systems, goals and future of non-Indigenous people on Aboriginal land and consequently terms have often favoured non-Indigenous society over Indigenous peoples. Terms regarding Aboriginal peoples are layered and intertwined with a history of domination, misunderstanding and misrepresenting Aboriginal knowledge and actions.

The following table is an attempt to summarise contemporary general positioning and the journey of terms that are used in relation to Aboriginal peoples. This terminology has had major input from Aboriginal peoples. Despite this, a key Aboriginal principle of community engagement is that all voices must be heard in a community and that no one voice dominates. Thus, a school site must engage with the local Aboriginal community to ensure terminology validity and variance within Aboriginal Australia — never assume this text can fully unpack an Aboriginal worldview or be the seminal resource for such terms, although it does represent a satisfactory start.

Teachers are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the language suggested in the following tables and to consult regularly with their local Aboriginal community for the preferred terms to be used within their schools. Use varies widely, and it is vital to respect the preferences of the local community. It is important to explain this to students, so that they are aware if local use might be offensive in other contexts.

This document groups terms under broad concepts, and more specific contexts. It sets out terms that are preferred, acceptable and non-preferred in the classroom, and reasons for these preferences.

The document groups shared concepts between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal societies that are commonly used or avoided by either group. The concepts covered, however, all have a presence in an Aboriginal conversation and dialogue with mainstream Australia.

The table is divided into three parts that represent different domains in which concepts can be explored. These divisions are purely for organisational and pedagogical ease in which to quickly identify areas and associated terminology. The divisions are for use in a Western system. It is far outside the realm of this handbook to define Indigenous cultures and knowledge systems that are organised holistically.

Concepts and contexts	Terms	Rationale
<p>Concepts</p> <p>Use of the term “Dreamtime”.</p> <p>Defining Aboriginal spirituality.</p> <p>The holistic interconnectedness of the Aboriginal paradigm means that descriptions of spirituality will always fail to capture its density. It is difficult to define a worldview from a Western perspective that carries within its definition resonance of objectivity and disconnectedness, especially to a concept that clearly is imbued with values of dense connectedness. What is essential is that the Aboriginal world is one of actually being in a world of deep spiritual connections and signs, quite the opposite to traditional Western concepts of Aboriginal spirituality and fixation on the “Dreamtime” concept.</p> <p>Contexts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • spirituality • religious beliefs • Aboriginal worldviews 	<p>Preferred terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Dreaming /Dreamings • Dreaming/Dreamings • spirituality • local language terms — interact with your local community for further exploration of Aboriginal spirituality. One could ask for an appropriate term to use in this context <p>Non-preferred terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dreamtime — if this term is used in local Aboriginal communities this use should be respected, but it is still preferred for teachers to use Dreaming in the classroom • religion 	<p>The terms “The Dreaming” and “Dreamings” have broadly come to mean the spirituality of Aboriginal peoples of Australia.</p> <p>The Dreaming pervades every aspect of Aboriginal culture and society. To confine what The Dreaming represents to religion in the Western sense diminishes its complexity.</p> <p>Spirituality, which relates to physical and metaphysical connection and belonging, is another appropriate term for referring to the holistic way of life and beliefs of Aboriginal peoples. The word “religion” tends to refer mainly to formalised religions, and for this reason is not preferred.</p> <p>Teachers should be aware of the concerns associated with general terms and use them in a respectful manner. There is no single term that can be used appropriately in all situations — the best term to use is usually the term used by the group that is being discussed. These localised terms can be clarified through negotiation and consultation with local Aboriginal community members.</p> <p>“Dreamtime” is a non-Aboriginal anthropological term that has become debased as non-Aboriginal interpretations of this word often ignore the complexity of beliefs and worldviews it encompasses. “Dreamtime” has gained currency among non-Aboriginal Australians and is often used in contexts that have no relationship to Aboriginal spirituality and do not acknowledge the diversity among Aboriginal language groups. Although “Dreamtime” was not used by many Aboriginal language groups in the past, due to colonisation and language shift within communities, it is becoming more widely used by Aboriginal peoples.</p> <p>Although “Dreamtime” is used widely, it is preferred that “The Dreaming” or “Aboriginal spirituality” is used in the classroom to describe the complexity and diversity of Aboriginal belief systems to children. These</p>

Concepts and contexts	Terms	Rationale
		terms are more useful in developing awareness that these beliefs are current today and that they are not situated in the past.
<p>Concepts</p> <p>Use of the terms “lore” or “law”.</p> <p>The term “lore” can be used in reference to the authority of Aboriginal cultural practice system. The concept of lore is difficult to explain because of the holistic reality of being Aboriginal.</p> <p>The Aboriginal worldview is one of interconnections with deep spiritual resonance across from what a Western perspective may term different social, political, economic, religious institutions.</p> <p>The authority of practice, movement and action of an individual within this complex system is often referred to as “lore”, but by no means is the term adequate to fully unpack its meaning.</p> <p>Contexts</p> <p>The term “lore” is used in relation to Aboriginal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lore • law • Aboriginal cultural practices. 	<p>Preferred terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lore • local language terms <p>Acceptable terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • traditional lore <p>Non-preferred terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • traditional law • law 	<p>Aboriginal lore describes the body of knowledge and practices that have the weight of Western laws within an Aboriginal community. Lore varies from group to group, just as laws vary between countries. The individuated reality of Aboriginality means that an individual has greater input to the lore, its regulation, correction, definition and actioning than from a traditionally Western society perspective of citizenship and law.</p> <p>The preferred use is “lore”, as described above; use “laws” to refer to Australian law. Care must be taken to avoid confusion between the two terms when speaking. For this reason, the term “traditional law” is not recommended.</p>
<p>Concepts</p> <p>Use of the term “myth” or “legend”.</p> <p>Cultural stories and oral traditions.</p> <p>Contexts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cultural stories • oral traditions • oral histories • stories • storytelling • spiritual narratives 	<p>Preferred terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cultural stories <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – cultural narratives – oral stories – (Aboriginal) Dreaming stories – spiritual narratives – (Aboriginal) creation stories – stories <p>Acceptable terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • social stories • ceremonial stories • historical stories • life stories • spiritual stories 	<p>Stories and storytelling are useful general terms suitable to describe transmission of a wide range of information.</p> <p>Dreaming stories or Spiritual narratives inform about law, family relationships, relationships to the land and sea, food gathering etc.</p> <p>Creation stories are spiritual narratives positioned within the time of creation of life, form and the environment.</p> <p>From a current Aboriginal perspective, words such as “myth” or “legend” convey the impression that information and beliefs surrounding The Dreaming are untrue, trivial or that these events only happened in the distant past and stories about them may have changed over time. Such terms can convey the impression that some Dreaming stories are fairy tales rather than Creation stories. The term “make-believe”, of course, devalues stories even further and should</p>

Concepts and contexts	Terms	Rationale
	<p>Non-preferred terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • myths • legends • Dreamtime stories • make-believe 	never be used.
<p>Concept</p> <p>Use of the term “corroboree cultural practices” — ceremony and celebration</p> <p>Contexts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal dance • sacred/secret ceremonies • social gatherings 	<p>Preferred terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [local dance or dance group’s name] dance, e.g. <i>Wakka Wakka</i> dance, <i>Turrabul</i> dance • ceremony • celebration <p>Acceptable terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal dance <p>Non-preferred terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • corroboree 	<p>Local consultation is critical, both to determine events that are suitable for discussion, and to clarify acceptable terms to use.</p> <p>“Ceremony” and “celebration” are useful general terms to use in the context of the classroom.</p> <p>Wherever possible, specific local Aboriginal language group names should be used, such as <i>Wakka Wakka</i> dance. However, when making points that refer to several Aboriginal groups, terms such as “Aboriginal dance” may be acceptable.</p> <p>“Corroboree” is a term adopted from a specific Aboriginal language group. It has been generalised amongst non-Aboriginal peoples to explain all Aboriginal dance/gatherings, and it therefore does not acknowledge the diversity amongst Aboriginal groups. Many Aboriginal people use this term and such use needs to be respected. However, within this educational context “corroboree” should only be used when explaining these terms. Local consultation is vital.</p>
<p>Concept</p> <p>Use of terms “nomad” and “walkabout”</p> <p>Contexts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seasonal occupation • land use • inside knowledge • subsistence • sustainability • protection of the environment • land knowledge • spiritual connectedness to the land • lore • Dreaming • dance 	<p>Preferred terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seasonal and purposeful movement that demonstrates a deep understanding of the land and relational patterns and processes • movement to ensure sustainability of local resources <p>Acceptable terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seasonal movement • communal movement <p>Non-preferred terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nomad, nomadic • walkabout 	<p>The purposeful and seasonal movements of Aboriginal peoples have long been inaccurately portrayed as being random wanderings, rather than the expression of an intimate knowledge of, and spiritual connectedness with, their land. Terms such as “nomad” and “walkabout” are deeply associated with this inaccurate view.</p> <p>The European belief that all land was the same to the Aboriginal groups “wandering” across it, rather than specific areas belonging to particular Aboriginal groups, also served to justify the invasion and appropriation of lands.</p> <p>For many Aboriginal language groups, an abundance of resources meant that there was little need for seasonal movement and established camps were created.</p>

Consult your local community to check what terminology they would prefer used in your school.

Aboriginal identities

Concept and contexts	Terms	Rationale
<p>Concept</p> <p>Using terms that describe Aboriginal identities such as Aboriginal peoples and Aborigines, <i>Murri</i> has changed in mainstream society due to society listening more closely to how Aboriginal people define themselves.</p> <p>Context</p> <p>The context is one of time and current use of terms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identity • place • social groups • lore 	<p>Preferred terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal people(s) • Aboriginal Australians • Australian Aboriginal peoples • appropriate regional terms, used with permission of local groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Murri</i> (some areas of Queensland, northern NSW) – <i>Nyoonga/Nunga</i> (WA) – <i>Koorie</i> (NSW, Victoria, Tasmania) – <i>Yolngu</i> (NE Arnhem Land) – <i>Anangu</i> (Central Australia) – <i>Noonga</i> (South Australia) <p>Spelling may differ because of the translation from oral to written forms.</p> <p>Acceptable terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous peoples • Indigenous Australians • Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples • First Nations peoples <p>Non-preferred terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • aborigines (with no initial capital) • Aborigine, Aborigines • aboriginals (with no initial capital and no noun) • Aboriginal (with no noun) • ATSI • “you people” 	<p>Consult your local Aboriginal community to check what terminology they would prefer to be used in your school.</p> <p>It is generally desirable to use regional terms such as “<i>Murri</i>”, but these are area-specific, so it is necessary to consult with the local community about their use.</p> <p>In addition to regional names, there are local names for particular Aboriginal language groups of the area. The use of these names recognises and respects the differences between Aboriginal language groups and cultures. In consultation with the local Aboriginal community, local language name/s can be recognised and used in the class context.</p> <p>For general discussions, terms such as “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders” or “Australian Indigenous people(s)” are acceptable, but their use should be minimised in favour of more specific terms where possible.</p> <p>For example, in discussing government legislation it may be appropriate to use “Aboriginal peoples”; however, when discussing a massacre the local language group involved should be recognised.</p> <p>“Aborigine”, “Aborigines” and “Aboriginals” are terms widely used within historical texts and have, to a degree, become a part of common Australian use. Although nouns in their own right, these terms do not adequately describe the complexity and diversity of Indigenous Australians.</p> <p>The preferred terminology for an educational context is to use compound nouns to describe people, places, objects and beliefs of Indigenous peoples. For example, “Aboriginal peoples” is a compound noun that collectively describes the complex groups of Aboriginal Australians. “Aboriginal Australians” is also a suitable compound noun.</p> <p>Similarly, terms such as “Aboriginal beliefs”, “Aboriginal languages”, “Aboriginal sites” may be used in further descriptions for general classroom discussions.</p> <p>Generally, acronyms should not be used or modelled within a class context, whether verbally or in writing. If an abbreviation is really needed (e.g. on the school timetable), use A&TSI studies, never ATSI studies. The use of either of these acronyms to describe Indigenous people in ordinary speech or text is offensive and inappropriate.</p> <p>The use of an initial lower case “a” in “Aboriginal” does not respect Aboriginal peoples. The use of an upper case</p>

Concept and contexts	Terms	Rationale
		recognises Aboriginal cultures and groups in the same way as other cultures and groups are recognised (e.g. Russian, Samoan, European or Chinese).
<p>Concepts</p> <p>Aboriginal identities</p> <p>Collective and group identities — use of terms such as “half-caste”, “quarter-caste”, “full-blood”</p> <p>Contexts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • colonisation vocabulary, definitions of identity according to government systems of controlling Aboriginal people • Aboriginal societies • Aboriginal kinship relationships • Aboriginal social organisation 	<p>Preferred terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • language terms that define groups — it is important to engage with your local community and use language appropriate to your context • clan or group names • clan • family groups • skin groups • kin <p>Acceptable terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • countryman, countrywoman • names that show relationships, e.g. sister/tidda, uncle, aunt, brothers, brother <p>Non-preferred terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • part-Aborigine • full-blood/half-caste and similar terms • Aboriginal descent • tribe • mob 	<p>The preferred terms listed here are suitable for use in a classroom context when it is useful to generalise. It is important to limit such use in favour of specific terms to describe specific groups. This will ensure that students gain a full and rich understanding of the complexity and diversity of Aboriginal peoples across Australia.</p> <p>When discussing an event or community, it is always preferable to use local language group names and family grouping names to describe the people involved. Once someone has been identified as being from a specific group, terms such as “countryman” or “aunt” may be used to identify others in relation to the person. Governments used terms such as “full-blood”, “part-Aboriginal” and “half-caste” to classify Aboriginal peoples according to skin colour and parentage. “Tribe” is a Western term that was introduced from North America and Africa and is no longer acceptable terminology in Australia.</p> <p>These terms may be found in texts, and teachers should discuss their use in the context of the time period and author bias. However, teachers should avoid using these terms in a classroom context, ensuring that appropriate terminology is modelled and taught instead.</p> <p>Some Aboriginal people also use terms that are not preferred in the classroom, and such use needs to be respected, understood in its historical context, and explained to students. Local consultation is critical.</p>
<p>Concepts</p> <p>Aboriginal leadership based on Aboriginal values and principles is group based. It is for this reason that leadership in the community will not be autocratic but based on respect, cross-generational resonance, community responsibility, knowledge management, interconnectivity and individuation.</p> <p>Use of terms such as “king”, “queen”, “prince”, “princess”</p> <p>Contexts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • knowledge management • interaction with community 	<p>Preferred terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elders • senior people • community leaders • community Elder • traditional custodians (collective leadership) • traditional owners • historical custodian • historical Elder • senior lore person <p>Acceptable terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • community spokesperson • community Elder • community leader 	<p>The use of the terms “Elders” and “senior people” is changing, so that both currently have two senses. In the classroom, it is recommended to use “Elders”, meaning people in an Aboriginal community who are respected for their wisdom and cultural knowledge. Always speak with your local community about the terms that have resonance with them.</p> <p>“Senior person” is best used to describe someone with a high level of knowledge in a particular area. For example, a senior lore person holds specific spiritual and cultural knowledge for a community; a senior dance person knows the community’s dance steps, styles and their significance. Neither “Elder” nor “senior person” necessarily refers to someone’s age, though they are often linked.</p> <p>Teachers need to be aware that local use</p>

Concept and contexts	Terms	Rationale
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> research practices 	<p>Non-preferred terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> chief king, queen, prince, princess 	<p>may have adopted the trend to use these terms to refer to older people whether or not they hold specific knowledges or leadership roles. If this use is prevalent, it must be respected, and the role of knowledge-holders explained to students in appropriate language for the context.</p> <p>The terms “traditional owner” and “traditional custodian” provide a historical language group link to land and land rights.</p> <p>“Historical Elder” is often used to describe an Aboriginal person who has lived in an area for many years but may not have traditional ties to the area. “Historical custodians” are those Elders who have been given appropriate rights and responsibilities to cultural knowledge of a traditional area that may not be their traditional lands.</p> <p>Aboriginal peoples did not have royal families so terms such as “king” and “queen” are inappropriate. Non-Aboriginal peoples incorrectly assumed that respected community members belonged to a royal family. Some Aboriginal people use these terms to refer to their ancestry, having been brought up with non-Aboriginal terminology. This use should be respected, but not modelled by the teacher.</p>
<p>Concept</p> <p>Use of racist terminology sometimes slips into mainstream vocabulary</p> <p>Context</p> <p>Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal identities and peoples</p>	<p>Preferred terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aboriginal peoples non-Aboriginal peoples non-Indigenous peoples <p>Acceptable terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> describing people based on their cultural or geographical backgrounds, e.g. European peoples <p>Non-preferred terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> blacks/black fellas whites/white fellas “you people” describing peoples using social Darwinism or “evolutionary” terms, e.g. Caucasian, Negroid 	<p>Preferred terms for referring to people who are not Aboriginal Australians may vary depending on contexts. Generally “non-Aboriginal peoples” or “non-Indigenous peoples” are used to describe groups other than Aboriginal Australians.</p> <p>While the terms “blacks” and “whites” should be avoided in a school (because such language describes people by the colour of their skin and is therefore considered racist terminology), the terms “blacks”, “black fellas”, and “white fellas” are used by some Aboriginal communities and the acceptance and use of these terms should be respected by teachers.</p> <p>“Whites” can be perceived as a racist term, depending on the context used. It is also inaccurate in the current multicultural context of Australia, as it is only descriptive of a particular segment of Australian society.</p> <p>Avoid terms that polarise your class into “us” and “them”, including “you people”, or “blacks and whites”. Avoid all slang terms, unless their use is embraced by the local community.</p>

Consult your local community to check what terminology they would prefer used in your school.

Australian history

Concept and contexts	Terms	Rationale
<p>Concept</p> <p>Unpacking the Aboriginal worldview of Australian history.</p> <p>The sense of always having lived on this continent shapes ideas and understandings of what is history. History is non-linear in both its progression and meaning. This means that inquiry topics cannot be decontextualised or disconnected from the Aboriginal ways of acquiring knowledge. It is about treating information with integrity, respect and a shared pursuit of a knowledge.</p> <p>Contexts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one history • Australian history • Aboriginal Australian history • ancient history • invasion history • occupation • colonisation • dispossession • land rights • war 	<p>Preferred terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • invasion/invade/invader • Aboriginal lifestyles — traditional and historical • Aboriginal societies before contact • Aboriginal communities • complexity • diversity • subtlety <p>Acceptable terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous peoples • colonisation • exploration/explore/explorer <p>Non-preferred terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prehistory • pre-invasion • pre-settlement • pre-European history • (peaceful) settlement • discovery/discover • pioneer(s) • simple, unsophisticated • native • prehistoric or Stone Age 	<p>“Prehistory” is a term used by archaeologists and historians to describe the time period before history was recorded in writing.</p> <p>However, in common use, prehistory suggests that Aboriginal Australia did not have a history before European invasion. It thus denies knowledge of Aboriginal history recorded and transmitted in non-written forms, suggests that Aboriginal history is not “real” history and implies that in order to be valid, history has to be written and recorded.</p> <p>Terms such as “simple”, “unsophisticated”, “native”, “prehistoric” and “Stone Age” reflect ethnocentric worldviews that are inaccurate, outdated and racist. They imply that Aboriginal societies are culturally inferior to European societies.</p> <p>From an Aboriginal perspective, Australia was invaded; it was not settled peacefully. Settlement ignores the reality of Aboriginal peoples’ lands being stolen from them under the legal fiction of “<i>terra nullius</i>”, and negates the resistance of Aboriginal peoples.</p> <p>Some communities prefer the use of “colonisation” as a way to refer to the invasion of Australia. As this is factually correct, it is an acceptable use for teachers.</p> <p>Aboriginal people were living in Australia before Captain Cook; hence, it was impossible for Cook to be the first person to discover Australia.</p> <p>“Exploration” is preferred as a term to describe non-Indigenous scientific and social investigation of Australia. Use of “discovery” denies Aboriginal knowledge of Australia.</p> <p>Captain Cook was the first Englishman to map the east coast of New Holland. Some describe him as an explorer, others as an invader. Governor Phillip is seen to have colonised the country; hence he is often described as an invader rather than an explorer.</p>

Consult your local community to check what terminology they would prefer used in your school.

Reconciliation

Concepts and contexts	Terms	Rationale
<p>Contexts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • self-determination • self-management • resilience • invasion • land rights • stolen generation • justice and equity • dispossession • deaths in custody • citizenship • reconciliation and action — protests, celebrations • understanding country • connection to country • Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation 1991–2000 • Reconciliation Australia 2001–current • Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) 1990–2005 • practical reconciliation • symbolic reconciliation • treaty 	<p>Preferred terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conciliation • healing • resilience • social justice <p>Acceptable terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reconciliation <p>Non-preferred terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • black armband • culture wars/history wars • land grab • blacks/black fellas • whites/white fellas • political correctness • white guilt • shame • reconciliation agenda • Aboriginal reconciliation 	<p>“Reconciliation” is a contested concept when examining the relationships between Aboriginal peoples, Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous peoples. Various Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people have debated the meaning of the word. For example, reconciliation “refers to the process of parties negotiating their differences, inferring that both parties come from an equal standpoint with equal power at the negotiating table”.</p> <p>In common use, “reconciliation” refers specifically to the Commonwealth initiative to promote reconciliation between Aboriginal peoples, Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous peoples.</p> <p>However, it cannot be assumed that both parties come to the negotiating table with equal power. For this reason, some people view reconciliation as a term that does not address the history of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples.</p> <p>When teaching this concept it is important to examine and discuss the debate surrounding reconciliation.</p> <p>It should also not be assumed that “reconciliation” and “sorry” are interdependent concepts.</p>

Consult your local community to check what terminology they would prefer used in your school.

The following advice about preferred terminology is based on consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education communities.

Appropriate Torres Strait Islander terminology

This section is for teacher reference only and is not recommended for student use.

Torres Strait Islander studies are not only concerned with historical events and contemporary happenings; more important, they are about people. Consequently, consideration of, and sensitivity towards, Torres Strait Islander peoples are paramount.

When referring to the lives, cultures and histories of Torres Strait Islander peoples, using preferred terminology demonstrates respect for, and an acknowledgment of, their rights and expectations.

Teachers are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the language suggested in the following table and to consult regularly with their local Torres Strait Islander community for the preferred terms to be used within their schools. Use varies widely, and it is vital to respect the preferences of the local community. It is important to explain this to students, so that they are aware if local use might be offensive in other contexts.

The following tables group terms under broad concepts, and more specific contexts. It sets out terms that are preferred, acceptable and non-preferred, and reasons for these preferences.

Note for the tables: Cultural and/or language terms are marked according to language.

Meriam Mer = MM, spoken in Eastern Islands

Kalaw Lagaw Ya = KL, spoken in Near Western Islands

Mabuaig = Mab., spoken in near Western Island of Mabuaig

Kalaw Kawaw Ya = KKY, spoken in the top Western Islands

Kulkai Gai = KG, spoken in Central Islands

Creole = cr

Pidgin = pg

Torres Strait Islander knowledges

Concept and contexts	Terms	Rationale
<p>Concept</p> <p>Spirituality</p> <p>Contexts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> spirituality religious beliefs Torres Strait Islander worldviews 	<p>Preferred terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Before Before Time — <i>Au Emeret Kerker</i> (MM) Before Time — <i>Emeret Kerker</i> (MM) <i>Kulay Thonar</i> — <i>Keuged</i> (KL, KK), <i>Ab'le Kerker</i> (MM) Zogo Time — <i>Zogo Kerker</i> (MM) <p>Acceptable terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Bipo Bipo Taim</i> (cr: Before Before Time) <i>Bipo Taim</i> (cr: Before Time) <p>Non-preferred terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Dreaming — <i>Geim'u</i> 	<p>“Before Before Time” (referring to the Creation Period) and “Before Time” (referring to time after the Creation Period but before European contact) are Creole terms that Torres Strait Islanders use to refer to the spiritual aspects of these times.</p> <p><i>Kulay Thonar</i> (meaning “the first people”) is one of a number of terms used by <i>Kala Lagaw Ya</i> speakers. “Zogo Time” relates to spiritual matters in the <i>Meriam Mir</i> language.</p> <p>“The Dreaming” is associated with Aboriginal spirituality.</p>

<p>Concept Land, water, star constellations and seasons</p> <p>Contexts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> place names 	<p>Preferred terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> when referring to the Islands, use the Indigenous names (such as <i>Mer, Ugar, Erub, Saibai, Badu, Mabuiag, Poruma, Warraber</i>) <p>Non-preferred terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> avoid non-Indigenous names that are rarely used by Islanders (such as Talbot, Musgrave, Cornwallis) 	<p>In the Torres Strait today the traditional names of islands are preferred to the European place names.</p>
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Consult your local community to check what terminology they would prefer used in your school.

Torres Strait Islander identities

Concept and contexts	Terms	Rationale
<p>Concept Torres Strait Islander peoples</p> <p>Contexts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Australian Indigenous peoples Torres Strait Islander peoples <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eastern Islanders Central Islanders Western Islanders 	<p>Preferred terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Torres Strait Islander peoples Torres Strait Islanders Island peoples <p>Acceptable terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (A&TSI) Indigenous people/s Islander the name of Island peoples as a group, such as: <i>Ugarem Le; Ugaram (MM), Saibailgal (KK); Dauanegal (KK)</i> — see “Collective and group identities” (below) for further details <p>Non-preferred terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ATSI Aboriginal and Islander Aboriginal 	<p>“Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders” or “Indigenous people(s)” are acceptable terms where appropriate, but their use should be minimised in favour of more specific terms. If the first-named term must be abbreviated, use A&TSI, never ATSI. The use of either of these acronyms to describe Indigenous people in ordinary speech or text is offensive and inappropriate.</p> <p>It is generally acceptable for Torres Strait Islanders to use the term “Islander” when referring exclusively to Torres Strait Islanders, but it is important that the term “Islander” is not confused with other nationalities. Teachers are encouraged to use the full term “Torres Strait Islander people(s)” or “Torres Strait Islanders” consistently.</p> <p>Within educational materials and teaching it may be relevant to use different names when identifying people depending on the context being discussed, e.g. a national or international context may require the use of the term “Indigenous”, whereas “Torres Strait Islander” may be used for national and state perspectives, and local and Island names may be used when outlining specific cultural, social, Island and sea connections of peoples. Students need to be aware of the different contexts and appropriateness of language use within these contexts.</p> <p>The terms “Aboriginal” and “Islander” do not convey a sufficiently clear meaning regarding the relationship of Torres Strait Islanders to their land.</p> <p>The term “Aboriginal” on its own denies the existence and separateness of the two Indigenous peoples of Australia.</p>

<p>Concept</p> <p>Collective and group identities</p> <p>Contexts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Torres Strait Islander clans and groups 	<p>Preferred terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • collective Torres Strait Islander terms, e.g. <i>Ugarem Le, Masigeg, Kulkalgal, Badulgal</i> • collective terms for clans, e.g. <i>Samuaugadalgal, Koedalaugadalgal</i> <p>Acceptable terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eastern Islanders • Central Islanders • Western Islanders <p>Non-preferred terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mob • tribe • full-blood • half-caste, quarter-caste • part-Torres Strait Islander • blacks • natives • bingai 	<p>Because some island groups have separate identities within their clan, e.g. <i>Samuaugadalgal</i>, meaning “cassowary clan”; some smaller islands refer to themselves as an island group, e.g. <i>Kirriiri</i>, also known as “Hammond Island”.</p> <p>Governments used terms such as “full-blood” and “half-caste” to classify Torres Strait Islander peoples according to skin colour and parentage. While the term “half-caste” is inappropriate, it is used in some Torres Strait Islander communities and this use should be respected.</p>
<p>Concept</p> <p>Significant Torres Strait Islander peoples</p> <p>Contexts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elders • Torres Strait Islander societies, clans and groups 	<p>Preferred terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elders • language terms for clan leaders, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Mamoose</i> (MM) – <i>Gulayg</i> (KG) – <i>Kuyku Mabayg</i> (KLY, Mab. KKY) • senior people • chief <p>Acceptable terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • traditional owners • community representative • community spokesperson <p>Non-preferred terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • king, queen, prince, princess 	<p>“Elders” are people in a Torres Strait Islander community who are respected for their wisdom and knowledge of their culture. “Elder” is usually written with a capital letter as a mark of respect.</p> <p>Language terms, such as <i>Mamoose</i>, which refers to the leaders of a clan, are also a good choice.</p> <p>The term “traditional owners” provides a historical link to land and land rights.</p> <p>Torres Strait Islander peoples did not have monarchies, so terms such as “king” and “queen” are inappropriate. Non-Torres Strait Islander peoples incorrectly assumed that respected community members belonged to a royal family.</p> <p>Some Torres Strait Islander peoples use these terms to refer to their ancestry, having been brought up with this terminology. This use should be respected, but not modelled by the teacher.</p>

<p>Concept Australian people</p> <p>Contexts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Torres Strait Islander and non-Torres Strait Islander peoples 	<p>Preferred terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> non-Torres Strait Islander person/people(s) non-Torres Strait Islanders non-Indigenous <i>Zarze Le, Lamar</i> (MM) and <i>Markay</i> (KLY) are commonly used throughout the Torres Strait to refer to non-Torres Strait Islanders who are pale-skinned <p>Non-preferred terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> blacks / black fellas / black mun whites / white fellas / white mun describing people based on cultural background, e.g. European 	<p>Preferred terms for referring to people who are not Torres Strait Islanders may vary depending on contexts.</p> <p>Use “non-Torres Strait Islanders” when comparing the Australian population with the Torres Strait Islander population.</p> <p>While the terms “blacks” and “whites” should be avoided in a school (as such language describes people by the colour of their skin and is considered racist terminology), the terms “blacks”, “black fellas”, “black mun”, “white mun” and “white fellas” are used by some Torres Strait communities and the acceptance and use of these terms should be respected by teachers.</p> <p>“Whites” can be perceived as a racist term depending on the context used. It is also inaccurate in the current multicultural context of Australia, as it is only descriptive of a particular segment of Australian society.</p> <p>Also avoid terms that polarise a class into “us” and “them”, including the term “you people”. Avoid all slang terms referring to Torres Strait Islander peoples, unless their use is embraced by the local community.</p>
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Consult your local community to check what terminology they would prefer used in your school.

Australian history

Concept and contexts	Terms	Rationale
<p>Concept Australian history</p> <p>Contexts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> one history Australian history Torres Strait Islander Australian history 	<p>Preferred terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Torres Strait Islander people(s) <p>Acceptable terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indigenous peoples <p>Non-preferred terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> prehistory pre-invasion pre-settlement pre-European history 	<p>“Prehistory” is a term used by archaeologists and historians to describe the time period before history was recorded in writing.</p> <p>However, in common use prehistory suggests that the Torres Strait did not have a history before European invasion. Thus, it denies knowledge of Torres Strait Islander history recorded and transmitted in non-written forms, suggests that Torres Strait Islander history is not “real” history, and implies that in order to be valid, history has to be written and recorded.</p>
<p>Concept Ancient history</p> <p>Contexts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traditional knowledges in historical contexts 	<p>Preferred terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> complexity diversity subtlety <p>Acceptable terms</p>	<p>Terms such as “simple”, “unsophisticated”, “native”, “primitive”, “prehistoric” and “Stone Age” reflect ethnocentric worldviews that are inaccurate, outdated and racist. They imply that Torres Strait Islander peoples are</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indigenous peoples <p>Non-preferred terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> simple, unsophisticated native primitive prehistoric or Stone Age 	culturally inferior to European societies.
<p>Concept</p> <p>Contact history</p> <p>Contexts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> invasion history intrusion history occupation colonisation dispossession land rights war 	<p>Preferred terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> invasion/invade/invader intrusion/intrude/intruder <p>Acceptable terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> colonisation exploration/explore/explorer <p>Non-preferred terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (peaceful) settlement discovery/discover pioneer(s) mission 	<p>Torres Strait Islanders, like Aboriginal peoples, experienced non-Torres Strait Islander occupation of the Torres Straits after 1788 as an invasion, not as a peaceful settlement. Settlement ignores the reality of Torres Strait Islanders' lands and waters stolen from them under the legal fiction of "<i>terra nullius</i>", and negates the resistance of Torres Strait Islander peoples.</p> <p>Before 1788, the sporadic contact with non-Torres Strait Islanders since the mapping of the Torres Strait waters in 1606 is viewed as intrusion.</p> <p>Some communities prefer to use "colonisation" as a way of referring to the invasion of Australia. It is acceptable for teachers to use this term because it is factually correct.</p> <p>"Exploration" is preferred as a term to describe non-Indigenous scientific and social investigation of Australia. Use of "discovery" denies Torres Strait Islanders' knowledge of Australia.</p> <p>Torres Strait Islanders used outriggers to sail throughout the Torres Straits and had intimate knowledge of the surrounding waterways.</p> <p>They traded extensively with their neighbours. People were there before Captain Torres, hence it was impossible for Torres to be the first person to discover the islands of what is now called the Torres Strait.</p> <p>It is acceptable to say "Captain Torres was the first European to chart the waters of the Torres Strait". However, it is inappropriate to say, "Captain Torres discovered the Torres Strait".</p>

Consult your local community to check what terminology they would prefer used in your school.

1.4 Sharing knowledge about sacred sites and ceremonies

Because of their sensitive and sacred nature, most ceremonies practised in Aboriginal communities and Torres Strait Islander communities cannot be discussed fully in this paper. However, there are protocols that exist in communities for transferring information about these ceremonies. Although Indigenous communities may share some information about a certain ceremony, this may only provide a basic level of understanding (“outside knowledge”) that may be shared in a broad context outside of the family and community context. This shared information will generally not include the private and sacred details (“inside knowledge”) understood by the family and community who practise the ceremony.

Within a classroom context, information shared about Aboriginal ceremonies or Torres Strait Islander ceremonies should be brief and involve a general explanation of the various ceremonies practised, without giving details of any particular ceremony. When it is beneficial to discuss a specific ceremony in a learning context, it is necessary for a local Aboriginal person or Torres Strait Islander person to explain the knowledge, or to be present when the information is being discussed in the classroom.

Students should also be aware that visiting sacred sites involved in ceremonial practices is generally unacceptable, even if the site is not currently being used by Aboriginal peoples or Torres Strait Islander peoples. In some areas, such visits are conducted by local Indigenous peoples; however, this may occur through commercial and business ventures and may not be accepted by all members of the local community. It is important to consult with the families of the local school community on these issues, and respect the decisions made by parents of students. Over time, positions about access to sacred sites and even the viewing of ceremonies may change within a community. Regular contact and consultation with the community will ensure an understanding of these changing practices and the required protocols.

Following community protocols is culturally and spiritually significant for Indigenous peoples. Breaches to the protocols of accessing sacred sites may cause considerable harm to the Aboriginal communities or Torres Strait Islander communities involved. For example, many Aboriginal people believe that ancestral spirits still guard these sacred areas; these spirits protect the sites and have the power to harm any person who disturbs, destroys or disrespects them. Many people have fallen ill after visiting sacred sites without having sought appropriate permission or an understanding of the area. There are some sites, however, that are not viewed as sacred. These may be visited with the discretion, approval and guidance of significant members of the local Aboriginal community or Torres Strait Islander community.

Regardless of the approach taken for teaching about ceremonies and sacred sites, it is important to consider the sensitive nature of the information being discussed, particularly if Aboriginal students and Torres Strait Islander students are present in the class.

2. Establishing a supportive climate

This section of the handbook provides advice on inclusivity of Aboriginal students and Torres Strait Islander students.

2.1 Welcome to Country and Acknowledgment of Country

Recognising Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples as traditional custodians of the land is an important part of showing respect for the Indigenous peoples of Australia. There are various ways to acknowledge Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander traditional custodians. They fall into two categories:

1. Welcome to Country
2. Acknowledgment of Country.

In the context of Australia's Indigenous culture "Country" refers to a specific place within Australia and not Australia itself. More than 260 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander countries and language groups are represented across Australia. Country refers to "this" place, the traditional language group of the area where an event is held. The welcome follows a traditional protocol for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians where people entering another's Country (language area) seek permission from the traditional owners and they are then welcomed to the area through ceremony. Today, non-Indigenous populations who are not originally from Australia are also welcomed to Country for the purpose of an event, and as a part of a continuing protocol that is maintained and observed throughout Indigenous communities across Australia.

Practices such as Welcome to Country and Acknowledgment of Country enable the wider community to share in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, and lead to better community relationships and understanding. Observing these practices connects participants with the country, and provides a welcoming atmosphere and spiritual presence to the place where people are meeting. It also reinforces the place of Indigenous perspectives within Queensland Government policies and procedures.

1. Welcome to Country

Welcome to Country gives custodians the opportunity to formally welcome people to their land from other parts of the country and other countries. This is carried out as a ceremony or an oral welcome from a custodial representative. A Welcome to Country changes depending on the type of function, the location, the agreements made and the protocols of those involved.

Welcome to Country is recommended for large public events, e.g. statewide events and conferences. It may involve ceremonies of dance, smoke and/or song to bless the event and welcome participants. A larger Welcome to Country ceremony is negotiated with local Indigenous groups as part of the event. Occasionally, communities may also wish to ceremonially close the event to thank the participants and protect the land for future meetings.

Local communities may prefer an oral Welcome to Country performed by a traditional custodian. At the beginning of an event, the custodial representative gives a formal Welcome to Country. Again, the local custodial group may request a closing speech.

Events where a Welcome to Country is particularly appropriate include:

- statewide conferences
- conferences or large professional development events involving a wide cross-section of participants
- highly publicised events
- significant policy, report or project launches
- professional development and whole-of-Government/organisation functions.

2. Acknowledgment of Country

Acknowledgment of Country usually occurs when traditional custodians are not available to provide an official Welcome to Country, or the scale of the function does not warrant a traditional welcome.

Senior personnel may also give an Acknowledgment of Country following Welcome to Country. An Acknowledgment of Country shows respect by acknowledging that the event is taking place on traditional custodial land, thanks the custodians for allowing the event to take place, and sets a conciliatory tone for the event.

Acknowledgment of Country is a way that the wider community can show respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander protocol, and acknowledge the ongoing relationships between the traditional custodians and the spiritual and cultural practices of the local area. It is a significant and symbolic reconciliation gesture.

Most city and shire councils, government departments and many other organisations are adopting the practice of acknowledging the local Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander traditional custodians at meetings, official events and ceremonies. Acknowledgment of Country is a matter of protocol at events involving external personnel, and sector or community representatives.

The Queensland Government encourages managers, education officers, executives, committee chairs, community leaders and individuals to include relevant acknowledgments in speeches they make at public meetings and forums. See: www.reconciliation.qld.gov.au/message.html

Developing an Acknowledgment of Country

An Acknowledgment of Country is both a personal and professional protocol. Developing an Acknowledgment of Country may take time. It should reflect a personal approach and not be seen as an organisational directive. The Dare to Lead coalition can provide further guidance on this through their website: www.daretolead.edu.au.

The following statement is used by Brian Giles-Browne in his work in New South Wales:

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land and pay our respects to the Elders both past, present and future for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of Aboriginal Australia. We must always remember that under the concrete and asphalt this land is, was and always will be traditional Aboriginal land.

The following statement was used at the Dare to Lead national, state and territory launches. It is available for public use and can be adapted if required, e.g. by using the name of the people instead of the generic “first people”, or by changing the last line so it refers to a particular project or agreement:

Paying respect to the first peoples on whose land we are,
Acknowledging the loss of lands, cultures and treasures,
Knowing the consequences for people, communities and nations,

Believing we can walk together to a better future,
We meet today.

Other alternatives for use or adaptation are:

I would like to acknowledge the [language name/s if known] traditional custodians of the land upon which we meet and the important role that these custodians play in maintaining gathering places such as these for our collective use.

I would like to acknowledge the Indigenous peoples of Queensland [or other location, e.g. Townsville, Roma, Brisbane] and particularly honour and thank the traditional custodians of the [language name/s if known] land upon which we meet. Thank you for providing access to this part of your country.

Our organisation affirms that Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the Indigenous peoples of Australia. Before we proceed with today's meeting, I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land upon which we meet and welcome you to this area.

With time, individuals will develop their own preferred style and approach to Acknowledgment of Country, and this will change depending on the context and place of the event or meeting.

It is appropriate to give an Acknowledgment of Country at the start of a meeting or daily proceedings. Individuals involved in speaking throughout a day or within meetings may sometimes provide a personal Acknowledgment of Country, and this is entirely appropriate.

Community engagement in observing protocols

Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples from the wider community can provide advice on when to use Welcome to Country ceremonies, Acknowledgment of Country and other Indigenous protocols during events or functions.

It is important to note that the meaning of ceremonies and practices differs from place to place. Therefore, it is important to work together to decide on when and where ceremonies and acknowledgments should take place, the format of the ceremony, who could and should be involved, and an appropriate level of remuneration.

The process will not always be easy.

Observing Aboriginal protocols and Torres Strait Islander protocols includes allowing time for traditional decision making and discussion. Welcome to Country must be given by an appropriate person or delegated representative from the traditional Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander custodian's group.

As an effect of dispossession, in some parts of Queensland there are disputes about custodial ownership. People who have been dislocated from their land and have returned to an area may no longer be accepted as traditional custodians. These issues are the concern of the Indigenous communities involved. In such a case, speakers, Indigenous community representatives or Elders at an event might acknowledge the traditional owners of the land without naming those people by not disclosing their language or family name. Acknowledging country in this way will not cause offence where there is some potential for dispute, or actual dispute, around traditional owners.

2.2 Countering racism in schools

Racism is an ideology that gives expression to myths about other racial and ethnic groups that devalues and renders inferior those groups, that reflects and is perpetuated by deeply rooted historical, social, cultural and power inequalities in society.

Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (1998)

All members of the school community — staff, students and parents — have the right to a safe and productive teaching, learning and working environment that is free from racism. A range of materials has been developed to support school communities in providing an inclusive working and learning environment.

Schools are encouraged to develop whole-of-school community programs that meet the needs of students, staff and community from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to educate for a socially just and harmonious Australia.

One initiative is the “Racism. No way!” project developed by the Conference of Education Systems Chief Executive Officers (CESCEO) through its subgroup on racism in schools. Their resource, *Racism. No way! A Guide for Australian Schools*, was distributed to all Australian schools in 2000 to help overcome contemporary challenges related to racism. It documents the various ways that school communities within Australia have dealt with racism. A website, <www.racismnoway.com.au>, continues to provide resources and enables school communities across Australia to exchange ideas easily.

Knowledge of the history of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia and the impacts of racism is essential for understanding and promoting positive change. Education is a key to that process.

Since racism thrives on ignorance, the most effective way to counter it is through education. Teachers can be at the vanguard of countering racism. Because of wider community pressures on students, the positive results of education may take considerable time — possibly generations — to show substantial effects, but sometimes there are small short-term “miracles” that reward the effort.

No matter what school or community you are in, it is likely that there will be some form of racism. This might include the slander of a person or persons with apparent membership of a group that is stereotyped based on physical, cultural, social, sexual, religious or behavioural characteristics.

Small, isolated, long-established “European” communities can exhibit confrontational racism that challenges any effort made by teachers to overcome this problem. However, urban communities with concentrations of long-term socioeconomic problems can also focus the brutal side of racism. After centuries of oppression, stereotypical and racist attitudes are likely to be equally strong in the oppressed and oppressor groups. These focuses of racism are just as common in Australia as in other post-colonial societies of the “new” world.

It is important to encourage collegial support and group strategies in an attempt to prevent isolated efforts to counter racism from becoming energy draining and demoralising.

	Broad suggestions	Turning the suggestions into strategies
1	Make racism a school issue.	Talk in your staffroom, at staff meetings, to the principal and deputies; take it to the P&C, school council — find out where they stand. Promote anti-racism projects and curriculum initiatives in your school.
2	Seek out allies in the wider community.	Discuss the issues with colleagues inside and outside school and with other community members. Meet with your Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness (ASSPA) committee.
3	Collaborate with school personnel to develop whole-of-school strategies.	Find others in the school who share your views and support you, e.g. teachers and teacher-aides; senior students; guidance officers, a chaplain; a Department of Education and Training representative; a Department of Communities representative; or your local district office or education diocese.
4	Collaborate with colleagues to develop classroom activities.	Study racism with your class. Work with teachers in your own school to develop suitable activities. Network with teachers in other schools. Publicise what you are doing in department/systemic newspapers and industrial organisations' magazines.
5	Increase your own knowledge, and counter racist arguments.	Read widely, including for example the works of historians and writers such as Henry Reynolds, Jackie Huggins, Marcia Langton and Martin Nakata. QSA provides readings and resources that may be a useful starting point. Visit the QSA website < www.qsa.qld.edu.au > and select P–12 approach > Indigenous perspectives > Support materials.
6	Avoid using racist language and concepts.	Note when you might have racist thoughts or when you might find that racism may make a social situation more comfortable, e.g. by sharing racist jokes. Awareness of your own behaviour will help you to change it. When in situations where racist jokes and statements occur, voice your feelings and discuss why this behaviour is unacceptable.
7	Never publicly berate a young person who uses racist language.	Aim to encourage different values. Avoid publicly denouncing students and their role models (e.g. parents, siblings, media-generated “heroes”). However, where possible, question and challenge views based on stereotypes, a lack of understanding and prejudices. Promote active debate.
8	Take breaks from issues of intensity.	If you start to feel depressed about your efforts, do something to “recharge your batteries”, such as going to the cinema, going away for the weekend, writing to or visiting an empathic friend, meditating or exercising. Also, regularly include activities that counter racism and generate positive feelings, such as organising a barbecue for your local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community or hiring videos (such as those suggested in the section “Detailed strategies for developing classroom activities” below).
9	Seek help from “experts”.	All educational system providers within Queensland have Indigenous support staff and experts in the area of Indigenous education to assist you.
10	Create a racism-free school environment.	Make your school a product of inclusivity methodologies. Create public artworks, murals and sculptures to promote inclusivity in the school and community. Develop reconciliation gardens and meeting places in the school. Construct memorials for events such as Sorry Day and world events that commemorate the sufferings caused by racism (e.g. the Holocaust or local Indigenous massacres) or the triumphs of humanitarianism over racism (e.g. the ending of apartheid in South Africa).

Detailed suggestions for developing whole-of-school strategies

- Make an Acknowledgment of Country a normal part of the school parade proceedings. For special events provide a Welcome to Country. QSA provides some guidance for this. See Welcome to Country and Acknowledgment of Country (Protocol P001) on the QSA website <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select P–12 approach > Indigenous perspectives > Support materials.
- Consult with groups such as your school’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education committee or IESIP (Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Program) committee to develop annual plans for hosting events within the school; for example, Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC (National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee) Week, Sorry Day, Harmony Day and World Indigenous Day. If you do not have a school committee that considers Indigenous education, you should establish one. Celebrations can involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members and personalities from the local area. Order and distribute relevant badges before and during the events and encourage staff and students to wear them. Invite Elders and traditional custodians to open the celebrations.
- Form or join a local reconciliation committee. This might be a locally-based school student committee or a whole-school community committee. Distribute reconciliation materials generated in the previous 10 years and use these to promote reconciliation in your school. Encourage your school to subscribe to *The Koori Mail*, Australia’s national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander newspaper, and make this valuable resource available through the school library.
- Invite an Indigenous representative (e.g. an Indigenous education worker) to conduct a cross-cultural workshop for the staff instead of a staff meeting.
- Include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education issues and community awareness within new staff member orientation.
- Create a whole-school approach to embedding Indigenous perspectives across the curriculum. This involves the organisational environment, curriculum and pedagogy, community engagement and participation, and personal and professional accountability. See the approach that Department of Education, Training and the Arts takes as a model of best practice: <<http://education.qld.gov.au/schools/indigenous/educators/eatsips-overview.html>>.
- Host a Torres Strait-style *Kup Muri* or an Aboriginal feast at school functions other than Indigenous functions (e.g. celebrations of the school year).

Detailed strategies for developing classroom activities

- Consider Indigenous perspectives in *all* units you are delivering. Some questions that you might like to consider include:
 1. How can I involve Indigenous people?
 2. How is the content area relevant to Indigenous cultural and social practices and contexts? How can I show this relationship?
 3. Have I checked that my unit materials are not biased towards one particular way of viewing an issue or event?
 4. Have I included Indigenous resources in the unit?
 5. Have I created opportunities and choices in the assessment tasks for checking students’ understanding of Indigenous perspectives within the unit?
- Display the Australian Declaration Towards Reconciliation and other reconciliation resources prominently in the classroom (see <www.reconciliation.org.au>).

- Keep up to date with news items on Indigenous issues. SBS and ABC offer a comprehensive view of Indigenous issues, while ABC radio, AAA (98.9FM) and other local Indigenous radio stations provide Indigenous perspectives throughout their programming. For example, on Thursday 24 May 2007 at 8:21pm on ABC, Lowitja O'Donohue denounced the recommendations of the *Bringing Them Home report*, stating that there has been a failure of moral authority and ethical leadership in Australia. Current perspectives of Indigenous Australians provide a useful resource for classroom debate and discussion.
- View anti-racism films and videos. Preview videos to assess their appropriateness and decide what follow-up may be necessary. Suggested titles include:
 - films and television programs set in Australia: *Women of the Sun* (1981), which presents four stories in separate episodes; *Fringe Dwellers* (1986)
 - films set in South Africa: *Cry Freedom* (1987)
 - films set in America: *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1962), *Mississippi Burning* (1988), *Dances with Wolves* (1990), *The Hurricane* (1999)
 - films set in Europe: *Kinder der Landstrasse (Children of the open road)*, which presents striking parallels between the stolen generations and Swiss Government policies towards the Rom (gypsies) in the first half of the 20th century
 - Kanyirninpa Jukurrpa, the Martu History and Archive project, which is a collaboration between The National Film and Sound Archive (NFSA) and the Martu peoples of the Australian Western Desert: <www.abc.net.au/canberra/stories/s1871756.htm>
 - *From Wave Hill to Wik and Beyond 2002* — ABC: <www.abc.net.au/darwin/stories/s655768.htm>.
- Read related articles by historians and writers such as Henry Reynolds, Jackie Huggins, Martin Nakata, John Pilger, Marcia Langton; books such as *My Place* by Sally Morgan (2000), *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* by Dee Brown (1970 — set in America), *Maybe Tomorrow* by Boori Pryor (1998), *Inside Black Australia* edited by Kevin Gilbert (1989 — poetry anthology), *Don't Take Your Love to Town* by Ruby Langford (1989). See also the QSA website <www.qsa.qld.edu.au> select P-12 approach > Indigenous perspectives > Support materials.
- Listen to songs by artists such as Archie Roach, Goanna, Yothu Yindi, Paul Kelly, Tiddas, Christine Anu, and *Gurindji Blues* by Ted Egan.
- Display relevant statistics — birth/death and infant mortality rates. Take care not to reinforce negative stereotypes with data — for example, percentage of Aboriginal people in prison populations. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has a direct theme page to assist with locating Indigenous statistics. See: <www.abs.gov.au> select Topics @ a Glance > People > Indigenous.
- Develop specific units and assessment items that consider Indigenous issues. For example, consider a SOSE unit on why “immigrants” came to Australia in the last 200 years, where they came from and how they arrived here, and relate this to refugees, persecution, racism and “misfits”.
- Visit an Indigenous cultural centre, for example Tjapukai (Cairns), Ngutana Lui (Inala) or local significant sites. Record these visits and publish relevant information in newsletters and on your school's website.
- Promote the concepts and stories of Indigenous role models, intersperse with positive non-Indigenous role models. Access local role models and past students (e.g. invite them to speak at, or request they attend, an informal social event such as a lunch or afternoon tea with your students) to discuss their approaches to countering racism.

- Familiarise yourself with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social justice issues. The Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's website <www.humanrights.gov.au> is a useful resource.
- Invite guest speakers and cultural teachers from the local community to participate in the planning, delivery and/or evaluation of your unit, and then to view the outcomes of the unit.
- Display relevant posters and images of Indigenous Australians in the classroom. For example, display a map of Australia showing the diversity of Indigenous language groups across Australia.

3. Local area studies

This section of the handbook provides advice on studying the local area, which is an integral component of the senior syllabus in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.

3.1 Suggested strategies for studying the local area

Teachers will have developed their own teaching strategies to suit their personal interaction styles. However, in many respects, teachers will be co-learners and facilitators for this subject. *Consultation is essential when developing materials for local area studies.*

The classroom strategies suggested are included to support teachers and all students, and particularly Aboriginal students and Torres Strait Islander students who have elected to study the subject. Students are empowered when the school community develops and implements strategies that reflect equitable, socially just practices, which result in the delivery of a quality education.

Teachers are reminded of the diversity of the learning styles of Aboriginal students and Torres Strait Islander students, who come with a wide range of cultural/life experiences and knowledge.

Building on the knowledge and experiences of students is a valuable strategy. Exchanging information about components of Aboriginal histories, languages and cultures and Torres Strait Islander histories, languages and cultures is acceptable (e.g. invasion/intrusion, massacres, government policies and Acts). Co-delivering this information with Aboriginal people and/or Torres Strait Islander people is preferred.

However, to single out any one student as the “expert” on a particular issue is inappropriate. It is important to recognise the displacement and loss of “knowledge” for some people, and not to assume all Indigenous students have a depth and breadth of knowledge.

Inferring or placing an exotic emphasis on Aboriginal peoples’ practices, beliefs and ideals and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ practices, beliefs and ideals could trivialise the dignity of those experiences.

Teachers can offer all students, particularly Aboriginal students and Torres Strait Islander students, a supportive school environment by reflecting culturally inclusive practices in their teaching. Professionalism can be demonstrated by:

- being prepared, responsible and organised (allowing time for establishing pre-contact, building relationships, and sharing understanding with interviewees and the Indigenous community)
- teaching in context
- being sensitive to and genuinely interested in students’ language, cultural backgrounds and their families
- reflecting on the interrelatedness of a particular area when engaging in a local area study by responding to the whole complexity of factors such as the people, the place, the land ownership and responsibilities (who it belongs to and the relationships of the people with the land), the histories, the time
- emphasising activity-based learning styles and skills that are worthwhile and relevant such as listening, observing, actively participating, cooperating, interacting, sharing, creating, exploring, forming and transforming

- indicating that learning is a sharing experience involving teachers, students and the community by developing ways of involving families and Aboriginal community members and Torres Strait Islander community members in school activities
- working towards effective and open communication
- working towards a positive student–teacher relationship
- enhancing students’ personal and academic self-esteem by having confidence in them and high expectations of their work
- establishing a relationship based on mutual respect, care and support through understanding and encouragement
- acknowledging differences in students’ values and experiences
- building upon the independent orientation characteristics of students, by creating learning structures that allow students the freedom to follow their own ways of learning
- being alert, informed, flexible, tolerant, observant and open-minded to the cultural differences of students
- implementing relevant student activities that are linked with and reflect an understanding and supportive teacher attitude towards a student’s personal, social and cultural background (e.g. understanding what is happening in the community, where a student’s interests lie, the expectations of parents and students)
- creating a flexible classroom environment (e.g. circle, paired or block seating, a variety of activities operating simultaneously)
- accessing the outdoor environment and community venues (where appropriate) as learning and teaching resources
- offering a variety and diversity of stimulating experiences to maximise interest and attention, for example audiovisual approaches (television, films, DVDs, radio, CD-ROMs and music), problem solving, workshops, lectures/discussions, demonstrations, cooperative learning techniques and group projects, peer-tutoring, student-centred learning, student-negotiated learning, games, field trips, print media and computer instruction, while recognising multiple intelligences and preferred learning styles
- developing study guides, task sheets, progress report sheets and evaluation sheets that support students by minimising anxieties and maximising students’ learning. These documents should clearly define the tasks, content (research and study areas), responding mediums (presentation techniques), assessment criteria, student–teacher evaluation (i.e. what happened, what worked, what needed to be changed).

3.2 Teaching culture

Teaching aspects of culture is the responsibility of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people only.

Invite local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people to your class for:

- presentations or hands on activities such as music, dance, drama, arts, craft, family history, and other appropriate cultural information
- assisting with individual and group work
- formal and informal interactions including lectures, open discussions and forums, workshops and seminars
- storytelling/story sharing.

4. Managing and processing information

This section of the handbook provides advice on suitable pedagogical strategies for working with Indigenous students.

4.1 Approaches

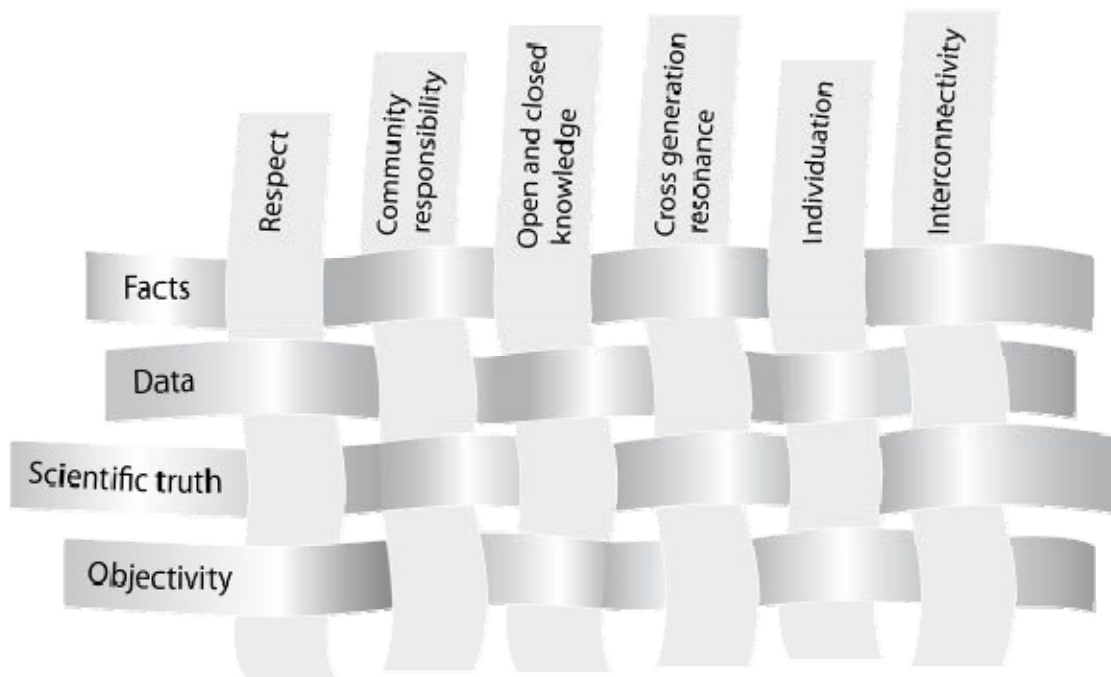
There are many approaches that a course in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies may incorporate that enable a deeper understanding and connectedness to the subtleties and complexities of the distinct Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and identities. Community engagement is the key to success in each of these approaches.

The approaches outlined below illustrate how knowledge and knowing is integrated and holistic. They are not an exhaustive set of strategies, but rather tools to gain further insight into how the worldviews of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples need to be and can be incorporated into the planning, design and delivery of teaching and learning.

Conceptual approach

Figure 1: Concepts that shape the acquisition of Indigenous knowledge

Concepts that shape the acquisition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies learning or knowledge



These concepts acknowledge courses based on the work of Dr Norm Sheehan, Wiradjiri man; teacher Will Davis, Cobble Cobble man; and the communities in which Indigenous knowledge processes were instigated and occurred.

One approach to guiding a student's acquisition of knowledge is by engaging the aspects of an issue through the above concepts. The diagrammatic mat illustrates how patterns of relating bind and shape knowledge through respect, reciprocity in community responsibility, cross-generational resonance, an understanding of open and closed knowledge, individuation and interconnectivity. These concepts are central to the acquisition of Indigenous knowledge. The outcome is an integrated mat of knowing that emerges as students manage, process and reflect on Indigenous knowledge in their assessment tasks.

How does the mat work?

The threads of any inquiry require the learner and the teacher to conceptualise knowledge as part of a richer and broader community of culture and identity. In order for learners to gain a substantive picture of a topic, the following concepts tie these threads together.

Respect is esteem for, or a sense of the worth or excellence of, a person, a personal quality, ability or knowledge.

In certain ways, respect manifests itself as a kind of *ethic* or *principle*, such as in the commonly taught concept of “[having] respect for others” or the *ethic of reciprocity*. It is about treating the acquisition of knowledge ethically or having respect for not only the cultural context in which the knowledge is generated or instigated, but an ethical treatment of different perspectives and positions.

Respect is recognition of the non-hierarchical interaction and relational aspects of sources of information. It is a collective negotiation of how relationships invest meaning in information.

Community responsibility builds on the principle of having respect for differentiated sources and positions held. A negotiated acquisition and management of knowledge means that all interested and interconnected groups have a responsibility for the development of how the inquiry is understood by individual learners. Learners are also responsible as part of the community.

Open and closed knowledge focuses on the terms of the negotiation in finding a pathway to understanding. It is about recognising “the what, the how and the why” in terms of the nature of closed knowledge and the nature of open knowledge.

Open knowledge is a commonality with which all the community is engaged, while closed knowledge is accessed and interacted by specified groups and individuals within the community according to cultural protocols. It is the context of the dialogue about open and closed knowledge that enables learners to deepen their understanding of Australian Indigenous experience.

Occasionally, what appears to be open knowledge for all learners can uncover the source of trauma for Indigenous learners and therefore it is critical that the conceptualisation of open and closed knowledge needs to be sensitively engaged with by the community of learners. Knowledge may be appropriately shared in some contexts; however, it may be inappropriate to share it beyond the terms of the negotiation. It is important that this is not seen as an obstacle but rather as a powerful tool in authentically unpacking the living continuous nature of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

Cross-generation resonance refers to meaning that is embedded within inquiries or topics that comes not only from the present generation, but from a shared understanding or movement of knowledge from one generation to another. Each generation adds a dimension to the understanding of a topic.

It can be regarded as cultural memory, but also moves beyond to the personal and community experience of a topic. It can be about investigating different sources across different timelines about a topic that may bring a deeper understanding or recognition of how meanings can change or why they stay the same.

Individuation refers to the degree and the processes by which the individual learner may engage with the topic. It describes the movement towards a mature understanding of the topic. The tracing and tracking of the learning journey is a key element in the flow. Individuation is a natural moment of reflecting on perspective and processes.

Interconnectivity is perceiving the temporal, relational and place patterns that exist in a topic. A crucial component is that sources of knowledge about a topic are communal and connected.

Many perspectives or contexts are responsible for the generation or instigation of information. This concept can be summarised as follows: a system is difficult or sometimes impossible to analyse through its individual parts when each part is considered alone. This is because all parts of a system create that system and each part interacts with and relies on other parts of that system. It is often linked to the concept of *interconnectedness*, which is used to refer to the spiritual, and *interdependence*, which refers to the moral, rather than the physical or scientific. <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interconnectivity>>

Interconnectivity is about finding knowledge that is the fabric of the community and finding safe things that students can use in their learning.

Examples illustrating Indigenous knowledge and worldviews include:

- Indigenous explanations of events and circumstances from a spiritual perspective
- Indigenous issues of kinship
- the Indigenous notion of moieties
- Indigenous environmental and ecological attitudes.

The interconnectedness of the various aspects is often not recognised.

Holistic approach

A course in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies should be approached in a holistic manner because the worldview of Indigenous Australians is not fragmented; each aspect of culture, history and society is connected with all other aspects. The content of each of the themes, *Culture and identity*; *Place and space*; *Time, continuity and change*; and *Political and economic systems*, is strongly dependent on the other themes.

Such an approach involves the following concepts:

- the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. That is, each aspect of a culture cannot be understood except in its relationship to the entire system
- ultimately, knowledge cannot be broken down into discrete parts, subjects, disciplines, experiences — all aspects of knowledge are indivisible (see General objectives, *Knowing and understanding*).

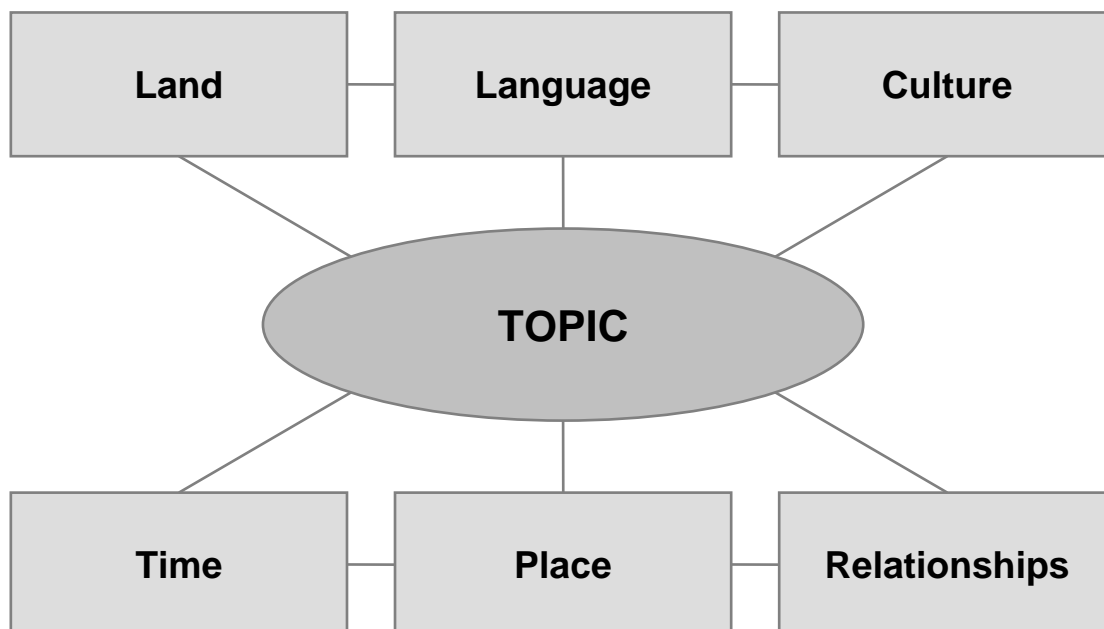
The challenge for teachers is to ensure that, at the completion of the course, students are able to understand and explain the interconnectedness of Indigenous histories, societies and cultures and relate these to contemporary life for Indigenous Australians.

The following overarching organisational framework in Figure 2 exemplifies a holistic model that incorporates the elements of *land*, *language* and *culture* in the context of particular *times*, *places* and *relationships*, e.g. *times* could relate to *pre-contact*, *contact*, *post-contact* and *contemporary* aspects. This approach is equally applicable to unit, topic or lesson planning. It is an authentic Indigenous approach developed by an Aboriginal Elder and cultural research officer.*

* These holistic frameworks are taken from *My Land My Tracks* by Dijirabal/Djirrabal Elder and statewide cultural Research Officer Ernie Grant.

The framework demonstrates how the course, unit or topic may be organised to incorporate a holistic Indigenous perspective as well as comprehensive coverage of the objectives.

Figure 2: Holistic organisational model



Spiralling approach

To reflect the holistic nature of Indigenous learning, the syllabus advocates a spiralling approach. This approach allows the following themes to be developed in an integrated way: *Cultures and identities*; *Time, continuity and change*; *Places and spaces*; and *Political and economic systems*. For example, while the focus of a unit may be on the theme, *Cultures and identities*, it will be necessary to refer to elements of *Time, continuity and change*; *Place and space*; and *Political and economic systems* as these cannot be separated from concepts relating to the theme *Cultures and identities*.

An additional benefit of a spiralling approach is that it accommodates the wide range of teaching and learning situations in operation throughout Queensland schools. For example, the approach is designed to cater for both composite and discrete Year 11 and 12 classes. A spiralling approach allows teachers to focus on a particular theme, e.g. *Cultures and Identities* with Year 11 students, while continuing to integrate it with other inquiry topics.

A spiralling approach allows for the themes and inquiry topics to be revisited and extended over the two-year course of study. Such an approach would also be conducive to teaching composite classes.

Figure 3 illustrates the spiralling approach, in which themes (*Cultures and identities*; *Places and spaces*; *Time, continuity and change*; and *Political and economic systems*) are present in each topic, but with a different emphasis.

Figure 3: The spiralling approach



There are many approaches that a course in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies may incorporate to enable a deeper understanding and connectedness to the subtleties and complexities of the distinct cultures and identities. Each of the approaches outlined below functions as an illustration of how knowledge and knowing is integrated and holistic. The strategies are not exhaustive, but rather they are a set of tools to gain further insight into how the worldviews of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples need to be and can be incorporated into the planning, design and delivery of teaching and learning.

4.2 Selecting and evaluating resources

An overview — with a new Introduction and minor adaptations — of *A Resource Guide for Aboriginal Studies and Torres Strait Islander Studies*, published by Curriculum Corporation, Melbourne, in 1995.

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Introduction

When developing school-based resources or selecting texts or materials, teachers should carefully evaluate their educational value for embedding Indigenous perspectives. In particular, it is essential that the materials selected are sensitive and adequate in their treatment of Aboriginal aspects and Torres Strait Islander aspects of the subject matter.

In general, sound evaluation techniques recognise:

- the cultural diversity of Aboriginal communities and Torres Strait Islander communities across Australia
- that some materials are site-specific and may not be suitable for use in other states
- that Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples should be consulted about the appropriateness of including culturally sensitive issues or potentially distressing content in curriculum materials
- that Aboriginal viewpoints and Torres Strait Islander viewpoints should be reflected.

A number of guidelines are available to help teachers to evaluate resources. Two that are of particular value are:

- *Guidelines for Ethical Research in Indigenous Studies*, developed and published by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) in Canberra in May 2000

- *A Resource Guide for Aboriginal Studies and Torres Strait Islander Studies*, published by Curriculum Corporation, Melbourne, in 1995.

A Resource Guide for Aboriginal Studies and Torres Strait Islander Studies (outline)

The resource guide provides an excellent checklist for teachers. Despite its earlier publication date, it applies the broad framework of the AIATSIS guidelines specifically to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander contexts. The evaluation criteria suggest questions to ask, things to look for and action to take when evaluating resources.

Five key evaluation criteria are recommended:

1. authenticity
2. balanced nature of the presentation
3. Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander participation
4. accuracy and support
5. exclusion of content of a secret or sacred nature.

1. Authenticity

Before the 1980s, much material contained stereotyped and generalised information. Today, there are many resources that have been written by, or in consultation with, Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people. These resources often contain information about particular Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups, thus illustrating the diversity and complexity of both cultures.

Questions to ask	What to look for	Action to take
Is the material up to date?	Date of publication.	Generally, do not use material published before 1980. Check if the publication is a reprint of an earlier edition.
Is the material accurate?	Many books indicate that Aboriginal peoples from some areas no longer exist, e.g. "Truganini was the last Tasmanian Aborigine"; "the Jugara people died out"; "The Kalkadoons were killed in battle". One book cites Yagan, a noted Western Australian man, as being from Victoria. Such statements are not only inaccurate, but offensive.	Consult with Aboriginal Studies consultants, and/or local communities.
Does the material perpetuate the concept of <i>terra nullius</i> ?	Statements such as "a vast and empty land" and "explorers discovering vast tracts of unused land" ignore prior occupancy.	Do not use.
Does the material ignore or misrepresent Aboriginal resistance to European occupation of the land?	Aboriginal peoples are seldom portrayed as defenders of the land to which they belong, but rather as treacherous, murderous etc.	It is best not to use this kind of material with students; use material that presents a balanced view.

Questions to ask	What to look for	Action to take
Does the material over-generalise?	<p>Statements such the following do not apply to all groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The men played didgeridoos” • “Aboriginal people hunted kangaroos with spears” • “Torres Strait Islanders cultivated certain vegetables” • “Aborigines were nomadic”. 	<p>Avoid using resources that contain sweeping generalisations and that ignore the diversity of Aboriginal cultures and Torres Strait Islander cultures.</p>
Is the number and diversity of both Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal languages and cultures ignored?	<p>Passages that refer to “the Aboriginal language” are misleading. References should refer to particular languages, e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Kamilaroi language • the Western Arrente language • the Kurna language. 	<p>Explain to students that such descriptions do not apply to all groups.</p> <p>Locate and use recent publications that clearly distinguish between groups.</p> <p>Apply caution when using resources that do not specify groups (see above).</p> <p>If unsure of information, consult with experts or local community.</p>
Are illustrations and photographs positive and accurate portrayals of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and relevant to the text?	<p>Some illustrations depict Aboriginal people as caricatures, or Europeanised with dark skins, such as the sketches of French naturalist Peron.</p> <p>Some photographs and illustrations are intrusive, demeaning and show negative stereotypes.</p> <p>In some instances, illustrations do not relate directly to the text.</p>	<p>Use resources that portray Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples positively, unless such portrayals are to be used as examples of racist and stereotyped reports.</p> <p>Ensure that illustrations and photographs relate to the text.</p>
Are photographs accompanied by captions that name the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person*, or group, and indicate where they come from?	<p>Many photographs do not dignify the person or group with a name and location.</p>	<p>Make students aware of the courtesy of identifying people and groups portrayed. If photographs are of local people or groups, local community members may be able to assist with identification.</p>

* Be aware that in some areas it is not appropriate to use the name or photograph of a deceased person. Consult with the local community.

2. *Balanced nature of the presentation*

Resources in Aboriginal Studies and Torres Strait Islander Studies must value the diversity and complexity of both cultures.

Questions to ask	What to look for	Action to take
Is there an over-representation of men in the material?	Some books over-emphasise the importance of men's roles, particularly in ceremonies and food gathering.	Do not use. Find other resources that present a more balanced view of women and men.
Does the material trivialise women's roles in Aboriginal societies?	Statements and photographs that imply that the male tasks are more onerous, and trivialise the importance of women's roles, e.g. reference to food suppliers.	Do not use. Select materials that present both men's and women's roles.
Are stereotyping and racist connotations present?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text and graphics that indicate Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples are far more "backward" than another race of people. Text that clearly demonstrates the bias of the author, e.g. "treacherous blacks" and "brave settlers". References to intellectual and physical capabilities of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, e.g. "uneducable blacks" or "all blacks are good at sports and running". The use of derogatory terms to describe Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Phrases that trivialise Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander technology, e.g. "simple" weapons. Negative connotations when referring to education, lifestyles, technology, transmission of information, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "The Aborigines had no tradition of reading and writing" "The Aborigines did not grow crops or keep animals" "Life was a constant search for food". 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not use the resource with students unless material presenting a more accurate view is also presented or is available for follow-up research by students. Do not use unless materials countering these views are also presented. Do not use unless materials countering these views are also presented. Do not use the resource with students. If unsure, check with Aboriginal Studies consultants, reference groups or local community. Locate resources that acknowledge the complexity and uniqueness of technology in Aboriginal societies and Torres Strait Islander societies. Use resources that have positive content describing the often complex nature of aspects of Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal lifestyles, education practices, and transmissions of information.

Questions to ask	What to look for	Action to take
Does the resource exclude some readers by assuming a European background?	A text that suggests all students' ancestors came from colder climates and that, unlike "us", Aboriginal people ate most things raw, assumes there are no Aboriginal students or Torres Strait Islander students in the class.	Use with caution.
Does the resource exclude Torres Strait Islander peoples?	Some materials do not mention Torres Strait Islander peoples at all, and some use an asterisk (*) and footnote to indicate that where the term "Aboriginal(s)" is used alone, it refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	Use "Indigenous" as an inclusive term, or use "Torres Strait Islander" alternately with "Aboriginal" when discussing both groups of people, communities, students, societies, cultures, etc. Never use "ATSI", as Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples find this offensive. Provide students with a resource list specifically about Torres Strait Islanders, which will be used in conjunction with resources about Aboriginal peoples.
Does the resource emphasise the "exotic" to the exclusion of other cultural aspects?	Over-emphasis on mortuary and initiation rites, ceremonies, body ornamentation, etc.	Do not use as general resources. Seek a balanced presentation of cultural aspects.
Does the resource assume that all Torres Strait Islander peoples and Aboriginal peoples live in the past?	Phrases such as "Aboriginal artists used natural pigments" ignore contemporary artists. Many history texts have one page or chapter on Aboriginal peoples (sometimes ignoring Torres Strait Islander peoples altogether) pre-1788 with no further reference.	Locate recent publications that have a contemporary focus.

3. Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander participation

It is important that the resource recognises contemporary Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander input as an indication of the diversity of communities within both cultures and presents these as living, dynamic and changing.

Questions to ask	What to look for	Action to take
Does the resource acknowledge Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander participation in the research, writing and presentation processes?	Names of Torres Strait Islander and/or Aboriginal peoples who helped in creating the resource. Specific references to Aboriginal groups and Torres Strait Islander groups that contributed to the material's development, e.g. Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups, Aboriginal Medical Service.	Check acknowledgments.
Is the author Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?	Resources that clearly advise the reader of the author's identity and area of origin.	Read the jacket cover. The background information on it or within the book itself should indicate origins. This is one indicator of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander materials, but does not necessarily mean that the content is accurate. Books written by non-Indigenous authors may be used if other criteria are met. If unsure, do some research.

4. Accuracy and support

Often, Aboriginal studies and Torres Strait Islander studies materials used in schools, as well as for general use, are inaccurate. More accurate and well-informed material is now being produced, in which Aboriginal groups and Torres Strait Islander groups are involved in endorsing manuscripts before publication. However, support for materials may vary from community to community and state to state.

Questions to ask	What to look for	Action to take
Is the material about your local area or state?	Supporting statements or endorsements by local, regional or state Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups.	Check recommended resource lists compiled by State and Territory Aboriginal Education Units.
	Look for resources published by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Units.	Obtain a resource list from your resource centre or education unit.
Has the material been endorsed by local, regional, state or territory Aboriginal education consultative groups?	Acknowledgments to show that the book has been endorsed by the relevant Aboriginal education consultative group.	
Has the material been endorsed by other Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander groups?	A foreword, or other statement written by an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person or group.	
Is the material acceptable to the local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community?	Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community endorsement or involvement in development or production — indicated on jacket cover or within the publication.	Check with local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community.

5. Exclusion of content of a secret or sacred nature

It can be quite distressing for some Aboriginal students and Torres Strait Islander students to be exposed to material that contains photographs and texts that are not appropriate for them to view. Some anthropologists and others have also published photographs of events that belong to the participants only.

Questions to ask	What to look for	Action to take
Does the material present information about secret and/or sacred items, practices, sites, representations?	<p>Material presenting particular ceremonies and rites being performed, e.g. women's or men's initiation rites.</p> <p>Materials presenting specific sites, e.g. Dreaming sites of particular groups.</p> <p>Text detailing processes involved in Torres Strait Islander or Aboriginal ceremonies and practices.</p> <p>Inclusion of photographs and the names of deceased Torres Strait Islander and/or Aboriginal peoples.</p> <p>Photographs and textual detail or representations that are significant to specific Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander groups, e.g. in some areas it is not appropriate to view concentric circles.</p>	<p>Do not use without first discussing with local community.</p> <p>Consult with local Aboriginal peoples and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples for examples that are appropriate for indiscriminate viewing.</p>

4.3 Ethical research in Indigenous studies

The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies has prepared a paper *Guidelines for Ethical Research in Indigenous Studies* (May 2000) that provides a guiding framework for teachers and students, especially in relation to local area studies, and consultation with local Indigenous communities. In summary, these guidelines are:

A. Consultation, negotiation and mutual understanding

1. Consultation, negotiation, and free and informed consent provide the foundation for research with or about Indigenous peoples.
2. The responsibility for consultation and negotiation is ongoing.
3. Consultation and negotiation should achieve a mutual understanding about the proposed research.

B. Respect, recognition and involvement

4. Indigenous knowledge systems and processes must be respected.
5. There must be recognition of the diversity and uniqueness of individuals and peoples.
6. The intellectual and cultural property rights of Indigenous peoples must be respected and preserved.
7. Indigenous researchers, individuals and communities should be involved in research as collaborators.

C. Benefits, outcomes and agreement

8. The use of, and access to, research results should be negotiated.
9. A researched community should benefit from, and not be disadvantaged by, the research project.
10. The negotiation of outcomes should include results specific to the needs of the researched community.
11. Negotiation should result in a formal agreement for the conduct of a research project, based on good faith and free and informed consent.

The complete guidelines are available on the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) website. Go to <www.aiatsis.gov.au> select Publications > Research > *Guidelines for Ethical Research in Indigenous Studies* (pdf).

4.4 Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander guest speakers

Endorsed by the Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives in Schools (EATSIPS) reference group, Education Queensland.

Reproduced with permission of Education Queensland, 2007.

Source: Adapted from Draft P–12 Guidelines and Framework, the *Teaching of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies in Queensland Schools*, Queensland Department of Education, 1995, pp. 7 & 8.

Teachers embedding Aboriginal perspectives and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in their curriculum will, at times, need to engage Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples have the cultural knowledge and the skills to impart specific knowledge in the classroom.

Indigenous education workers in schools, districts and dioceses within Queensland can help you connect with appropriate people within your local Indigenous community. Indigenous education workers will assist you to follow the right protocols and practices for inviting cultural teachers into your classroom. These experienced workers have many roles across Queensland, including community education counsellors, teacher aides, support staff, partnerships officers, liaison officers and many others. These Indigenous education workers will provide you with a wealth of experience valuable for understanding the local community and recognising appropriate cultural and community teachers.

The following information is a guide for teachers in identifying their own school and curriculum needs for employing a cultural teacher or community speaker within the class.

The initial approach

Arrangements should be made well in advance to allow your guest speaker to consider your proposal. It is important that the proposal is negotiated with the cultural or community teacher and not imposed on them. Appropriate engagement of Indigenous community members within schools as guest speakers and cultural teachers can be beneficial. It is preferable to involve the guest speaker before, during and after the unit of work or course of study. Knowledge gained from contact with the Indigenous community in discussing concepts can often influence the decisions made when planning the unit.

If the cultural teacher or community speaker has worked with you previously, a relationship will exist and negotiations can proceed quickly. However, when making contact with an unknown cultural teacher or community speaker, it is culturally appropriate and courteous to make an initial face-to-face visit. This can be arranged through your Indigenous education worker contact (school/regional/district/diocese). A phone call or email may assist in setting this up.

On the next visit, outline the intended unit plan and community involvement clearly and succinctly. Ask for suggestions that will improve it. Be sure to address matters such as transport, meals, payment for materials provided and remuneration. Cultural teachers and community speakers who are parents or grandparents of children in the school may request remuneration, even though there is a close family/friend connection. Some may have a set rate of pay and others may need help deciding on a rate of pay. Seek advice from your local Indigenous education worker in the first instance. Be flexible and try to accommodate personal commitments where practical.

In the school or other setting

Before the cultural teacher's or community speaker's presentation, you should start by giving an Acknowledgment of Country and follow with an agreed introduction to the community visitor.

The cultural teacher or community speaker commands the same respect and courtesy as any other teacher. Ensure that the teaching or demonstrating environment is comfortable and appropriate to the content being taught. In preparing students for the visit, appropriate questions should be planned and shared with the cultural teacher/s. Many Aboriginal cultural teachers and Torres Strait Islander cultural teachers prefer to work with small groups; however, the group size should be the decision of the guest speaker. Teachers are reminded to remain within a comfortable distance from the activities to ensure support is acknowledged and that the interactions are positive.

The cultural teacher or community speaker may bring a friend or relative for company or assistance. This should be encouraged as it helps the person to relax during the visit, particularly if this is their first visit to the school. Many cultural teachers and community teachers have a preference for working outside of the school. There may be additional benefits to learning within the community, but there will be extra logistical aspects. Some Elders who invariably have much accumulated wisdom and life experience prefer to remain in their home or community settings. They can often explain connections to "Country" and the environment by showing specific sites and sharing stories of the land, making the shared understanding between the Elder, students and you a relaxed but effective learning experience.

Great benefit is gained from providing students with the opportunity to learn from the experiences of visiting Elders and significant people in the context of their community and local area. Where possible, you should involve an Indigenous education worker to accompany the class on such excursions. Education workers can provide advice on preferred behaviour and protocols for the visit, and following this advice will increase the likelihood of a welcomed visit next time.

After the teaching session

To demonstrate an appreciation of the knowledge that was shared, students should be invited to thank the cultural teacher or community speaker. A "thankyou" card and/or a gift may be presented at the end of the session.

Do not allow students to leave quickly after a session, leaving the cultural teacher or community speaker alone. It is polite to help gather up materials and equipment and see the visitor off the school grounds. If a follow-up session is required, make arrangements immediately, and make contact to confirm the guest speaker's commitment a few days before the next visit.

If the cultural teacher was involved with an assessment item, it is often important for this person to be invited back to the school for the public sharing of the assessment. The community speaker or cultural teacher may enjoy visiting an exhibition, public expo or drama performance that showcases learning and knowledge gained through the shared experiences of building the unit of study.

Ethics and protocol

The following should be considered when establishing and maintaining relationships with Aboriginal communities and Torres Strait Islander communities:

- Aboriginal social and cultural conventions are different from Torres Strait Islander social and cultural conventions and the differences should be respected and observed.

Discuss with your regional Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander education worker contacts for appropriate protocol and guidelines for working with different communities.

- It is important to remember that the information you gather from Aboriginal peoples and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples is information regarding their stories and lives. This information must be treated with respect and is not open to generalised interpretation.
- Always ensure that the person/s with whom you speak understand how materials will be shared and used. Intellectual property rights and transfer of this knowledge should be respected in educational settings. Ensure that the guest is aware of your intentions, and has given permission for any recordings or use of materials.
- Be aware that asking sensitive questions can invoke painful memories. Try to gauge reactions and to assess body language. Remember that events from the past may be history for you, but can remain living memories for others.
- Although it is always preferable to personally negotiate an oral teaching commitment, many cultural teachers will appreciate a written summary of the main questions and issues, dates and time in writing. This aids communication and helps to eliminate misunderstandings.

Involving and engaging Indigenous people within the classroom context has benefits for both local Aboriginal communities and Torres Strait Islander communities and the school. Students' learning experiences are enhanced by an understanding of Indigenous knowledges and, over time, positive relationships between the community and the school will be enhanced. Such shared activities and experiences can change negative perceptions of schools as institutions.

4.5 Oral histories

The guidelines for conducting an oral history project should be fully explained to students before their meetings with potential interviewees. Once students demonstrate their understanding of these issues, it becomes their responsibility to discuss with the interviewee the scope of the interview and procedures.

It is also important to be sensitive to other commitments of potential interviewees, who often have a number of personal commitments.

It is imperative that students realise that the interviewee should have control over what ultimately happens to the information and how the information will be used. Specific permission from the interviewee is needed for however the interviewer wants to use the information.

Students need to cover the following areas:

- why the oral history is being conducted (e.g. for a local area studies program)
- who it is for (e.g. the family, the Aboriginal community, the Torres Strait Islander community, the school, the general public)
- how the oral history will be used (e.g. essay, research project, visual and/or verbal presentation, computer presentation)
- what form the approval will take (e.g. verbal or written agreement, legal release forms)
- where the interview will be conducted (e.g. at the interviewee's home, an outside or community venue, school, classroom)
- hospitality issues (e.g. correct titles and other protocols, dietary requirements, welcome and farewell)

- what the preferred recording instrument is for the interview (e.g. tape recorder, written notes, video recording)
- how the interviewee wants the final transcript to read (e.g. in the original language as shared, or translated)
- when the information will be used (e.g. this year, for a number of years)
- whether the interviewee will be given access to a copy of the final study.

Stages of oral history

1. Inspiration and motivation

2. Preparation

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| • ethics | • selecting interviewees |
| • ownership of information | • preliminary meetings |
| • topic | • equipment |
| • nature of memory | • supervision |
| • questionnaires | • duty of care |
| • interview skills | • school policies |

3. Interviews

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| • location | • processing interview data |
| • other sources | • transcripts |
| • ongoing contact | • correct acknowledgments |
| • evaluation | |

4. Final product

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Useful publications

Barwick, D, Mace, M, & Stannage, R (eds) 1979, *Handbook for Aboriginal & Islander History*, Australian National University Press, Canberra.

Carmody, K 1988, "Aboriginal oral history: Some problems in methodology", in N Loos, and H McDonald (eds), *Black Voices*, vol. 3, no. 1, James Cook University, Townsville (pp. 1–22). This publication documents in detail the technical skills and legal responsibilities required when conducting an oral history.

Course #1: *Oral History: Interview and Writing Techniques* 1986, Course notes prepared by Janis Wilton, lecturer, Armidale College of Advanced Education.

This publication explains the do's and don'ts of conducting an oral history. It outlines technical skills, interview skills and ethical responsibilities.

Sample consent form for interview

The following interview consent form may be changed as necessary. It is important for all students and classes to develop a process that is suitable for their project and the community with which they are working.

Interview and copyright consent form

I agree to the use of material and information that I provide, as outlined in this consent form.

1. I have been provided with information about the nature and purpose of the research/interview project.
 2. I understand that this consent form applies for the duration of the research and that I have the right to withdraw at any time during the course of study.
 3. I realise that the content of what I say during interviews, and other information I provide, is not intended to be confidential.
- I want my anonymity to be maintained.

OR

- I do not want my anonymity to be maintained.
4. I agree to clearly indicate to the researcher any matters about which I wish confidentiality to be respected and to be treated as “off the record”.
 5. I am aware that I may ask to examine the interview notes and transcripts, if made, to ensure they are an accurate reflection of my statements.
 6. I understand that I can obtain a copy of the research task if I wish to.
 7. I am aware that I may request feedback on the research task.

Name of respondent

Signature of respondent

Date

Queensland Studies Authority

154 Melbourne Street South Brisbane

PO Box 307 Spring Hill

QLD 4004 Australia

T +61 7 3864 0299

F +61 7 3221 2553

www.qsa.qld.edu.au
