

Nomenclature Principles pertaining to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples



Aim

To provide guidance to Eastern Victoria GP Training (EV) staff and associates in selecting language that is culturally appropriate and inclusive specifically in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Preamble

EV agrees that use of appropriate language in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures conveys respect and acknowledges the social, linguistic and cultural diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. EV believes that when we work in a culturally appropriate manner we contribute to improving health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

EV is committed to:

- establishing and maintaining an organisational culture built upon respect, developing relationships with and opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their communities and diverse cultures (AIATSIS, 2009);
- developing a deeper understanding of both historical and contemporary issues that impact on the lives of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (GPET, 2010); and
- acknowledging that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have the right to own and control their “indigenous cultural and intellectual property”. thus protecting their indigenous heritage. EV agrees that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be recognised as the primary guardians and interpreters of their cultures. (Oxfam, 2015).

Principles

1. The naming of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples will reflect the preference of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community leaders and/or peak organisations.
2. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people may also wish to be described by including the:
 - a. language group name e.g. Gunai-Kurnai, Bunurong, and/or
 - b. geographical area that a person comes from e.g.: Koorie, Murri, however it is not appropriate for non-Aboriginal people to use this terminology unless invited to do so.
3. EV will keep up to date with trends and protocols in relation to appropriate naming and language. “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are complex, dynamic and evolving; therefore, protocols may change according to the particular group or community in question. With this in mind, consultation needs to take place on a case-by-case and ongoing basis” (Oxfam, 2015). Such changes will be reflected in staff/Board induction and the *IM-Org-7.5 Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country* procedure.
4. EVs approved terminology has been developed based on research and conventions and approved by EVs Cultural Advisors.
5. Preferences of each local area, community group etc., will be established and adhered to.

Approved terminology

1. The most precise, inclusive and acceptable collective reference is **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander** people (Australian Government, 2002) and is to be used as the prime reference in official documents and in verbal communications at EV.

Other acceptable group terms include:

Aboriginal peoples

Australian Aboriginals

Torres Strait Islanders

First Australians

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Individuals should be described as an:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person

- When referring to Australian Aboriginal people the word Aboriginal is always capitalised. Capital letters are also used when referring to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and Elders, Traditional Owners, Traditional Custodians etc.,

Non-approved terminology

- The following terms **should not to be used** in EV documentation, conversations or marketing materials (including electronic media) because these may cause offence to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, community leaders and/or peak organisations:
 - The term **Indigenous** is not accepted by many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
 - The acronym **ATSI** to refer to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities or services.
 - The term **Aborigine** to describe an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person or community.
 - The term **Native** to describe an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person; and
 - Regional and linguistic names, e.g. **“Koori” [NSW]** as a synonym for Aboriginal – although some Aboriginal people may use a regional and/or language name, e.g. Koorie [Victoria] or similar themselves as described in the Preamble above.

Definitions

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander: A person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent, who identifies as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by the community in which he [or she] lives (Parliament of Australia)

Nomenclature: The body or system of names used in a particular specialist field (Oxford Dictionary, on-line).

Additional information

EV Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country Procedure

EV Aboriginal Health: Definitions and common terminology

References

Australian Government. 2002. *Style Manual for Authors, Editors and Printers*. 6th ed. AGPS, Canberra: 57.

Australian Government. *Defining Aboriginality in Australia*.

https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/Publications_Archive/CIB/cib0203/03Cib10 [accessed 19.07.2018].

Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS), 2009. *The Little Red Yellow Black Book*, 2nd ed. Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra: 6-7.

Oxfam Australia, 2015. *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Protocols*. Oxfam, Australia.

Oxford Dictionaries. <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/nomenclature> [accessed 19 July 2018].

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