

Nomenclature Principles pertaining to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples



Aim

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

Preamble

EV agrees that use of respectful and inclusive language and terminology is an essential component of reconciliation. Language is active and can impact attitudes, understandings and relationships. (Reconciliation Australia, 2019).

EV believes that when we work in a culturally appropriate manner we can contribute to improving health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Principles

EV will:

- 1 seek advice from our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders regarding preferences and protocols around terminology.
- 2 ensure our approved terminology is based on research and best practice and approved by our Cultural Advisors/Educators.
- 3 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 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 and this supporting document.

Approved terminology

1. The most precise, inclusive and acceptable collective reference is **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander** peoples and is to be used as the prime terminology in official documents and in verbal communications at EV.

Other acceptable group terms include:

Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples

Australian Aboriginals

First Australians

First Nations Peoples

Individuals should be described as an:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person, or

Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person

2. 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, Aunt, Auntie, Uncle etc.,
- 3 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people may also wish to be described by including the:
 - a. language group name e.g. Gunai-Kurnai, Wurundjeri, and/or,
 - b. geographical area that a person comes from e.g.: Koorie (Vic), Murri (Qld)however, it is not appropriate for Non-Aboriginal people to use this terminology unless invited to do so.

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Non-approved terminology

The following terms **should not to be used** in EV documentation, conversations or marketing materials (including electronic media) - they are considered to be offensive.

- 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.
- Terms **Aboriginal** or **Aborigine** to describe an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person or community.
- Terms such as **native, full blood or half caste** to describe an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person;
- Regional and linguistic names, e.g. **Koori [NSW]** or **Koorie** (Vic) as a synonym for Aboriginal people – refer to 3. 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, 2008).

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
- Nomenclature Principles pertaining to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples – Quick Guide
- EV Aboriginal Health Definitions and common terminology, March 2017

References

Australian Government. *Defining Aboriginality in Australia*.

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

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<https://www.reconciliation.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/language-guide-1.pdf> [accessed: 21 August 2019].

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