Establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research Agreement

Charles Darwin University is committed to ensuring research undertaken with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities is safe, respectful, responsible, high quality and of benefit to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities.

In keeping with the guidance from the NHMRC on research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities (2018), it is important for researchers to have a negotiated agreement with all relevant Peoples, organisations and communities so that each party fully understands what is expected from them and each other.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities have the right to seek advice and ask for help to negotiate agreements. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities also have the right to expect negotiation of a new agreement if anything substantial changes in the project.

Research agreements are important because they provide protection for organisations and communities involved in the research and for researchers and research institutions. Agreements should be a collaborative process with all parties working together in the development of the agreement.

Agreements should include how researchers, organisations and communities will work together respectfully, define roles and responsibilities throughout the research process, identify conflict resolution and complaint processes, outline communication and dissemination strategies and outline the protection of any intellectual property.

Such agreements will vary in format, formality and complexity, depending on the characteristics of each research project. However, the agreement should be comprehensive and cover all aspects of the research, incorporating ethical standards appropriate when working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. In some cases (such as research resulting in commercial products) further legal documents will likely be required.

A research agreement might include (but is not limited to):

* aim of the research
* names of researchers and research institution/s
* funding details
* benefit to the participants and broader Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander population
* commitment of the researchers and the participating organisations and communities
* copyright and intellectual property management
* clarification of roles and responsibilities of researchers and participating organisations and communities
* informed consent process
* data collection, ownership, analysis and storage
* strengthening capacity strategy
* communication and media strategy
* dissemination process, including to communities and key stakeholders

For further information on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research agreements, please refer to the NHMRC publication [Keeping research on track II](https://nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/keeping-research-track-ii).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research Agreement Guidance Template

**Research Agreement Title:**

**Project Title:**

**Proposed start date:**

**Estimated end date:**

**Parties to this agreement: [Please specify name and role/position]**

* **CDU Faculty: Principle Investigator [name and details]; co-investigators**
* **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander/Australian Indigenous Leaders; community representatives;**
* **Other partners (if relevant) e.g. community-based organisations, researchers from other universities**

**Purpose:**

This negotiated agreement supports ethical conduct of research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities. The research agreement certifies that each party fully understands what is expected from them and each other. Research agreements are important because they provide protection for organisations and communities involved in the research and for researchers and research institutions.

The agreement should represent a collaborative process, involving all parties working together to produce a fair plan for the conduct and reporting of research that has merit and integrity and is beneficial, respectful and sensitive to the culture, values and beliefs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities.

**The Research Study/Project:**

The following details pertaining to the research study/project have been discussed and agreed between all parties:

1. **The background justification and purpose of this research project**
2. **The benefit to the participants and broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations**
3. **The commitment of the researchers and the participating organisations and communities (e.g. planning, training, capacity building, services, acknowledgement, authorship)**
4. **Research methods used to conduct the research [recruitment of participants, informed consent process, protection of participant identity and confidentiality, data collection methods, involvement and role of co-researchers, plan of analysis**
5. **Ownership (copyright and intellectual property management); distribution and storage of all data collected**
6. **Methods and timescale for communication of project progress and outcomes to participants, the community, scientific/academic communities…**
7. **Media strategy (if applicable)**
8. **Conflict resolution and complaint processes**
9. **Funding details**

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**Signatories to the agreement:**

**1)**

**Name Signature Date**

**Position**

**2)**

**Name Signature Date**

**Position**

**3)**

**Name Signature Date**

**Position**

**4)**

**Name Signature Date**

**Position**

**Statement of Commitment by the research team to the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_community:**

**Signed:**