Biotext

First Nations – traditional knowledge and referencing

Citations and research involving First Nations people must recognise and respect their rights, culture and knowledge systems. Researchers should discuss with First Nations people how they would like to be recognised and cited in any content or publication.

This guide has been developed for the Australian context, with help from:

- Dr Terri Janke – an Indigenous Australian lawyer of Wuthathi/Meriam heritage; Solicitor Director of Terri Janke and Company and a leading international authority on Indigenous cultural and intellectual property (ICIP)
- Dr Mark Lock – an Australian academic of Ngiyampaa heritage, specialising in cultural safety in research, writing and editing
- Professor Gawaian Bodkin-Andrews – a D'harawal man raised on Bidigal and Nattaimattagal Country; Director of Indigenous Research at Western Sydney University
- Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS)
- Universities Australia Deputy Vice Chancellor / Pro Vice Chancellor Indigenous Committee.

This guide contains names of First Nations peoples.

In this guide, the term *traditional knowledge* refers to the knowledge of First Nations people that has been handed down across generations, or that is kept by a knowledge holder or Elder of a language nation.

'Traditional knowledge is knowledge, know-how, skills and practices that are developed, sustained and passed on from generation to generation within a community, often forming part of its cultural or spiritual identity.'

– World Intellectual Property Organization

Why traditional knowledge citations should be used

Citation of sources is a critical element of an academic tradition in which knowledge is built on what has gone before. Citations recognise and show the work and discoveries of previous researchers.

Traditional knowledge is similarly built up over time and through the experiences of many people. Traditional knowledge is usually not written down or published, but should be treated with the same level of respect as academic publications.

Citing traditional knowledge recognises that it represents a tested and respected body of knowledge with an oral, rather than written, tradition. In Australia, traditional knowledge reflects at least 65,000 years of continuous culture and history of the many nations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Formally citing traditional knowledge in the recommended format provides an important way for this knowledge to be recognised and included.

When to use traditional knowledge citations

The traditional knowledge citation should be used whenever traditional knowledge is quoted or summarised in content.

Other citation styles may be used for general information gained through communication with a First Nations person. Researchers should discuss with the knowledge holders how they would like to be recognised and cited in any publication (see Research involving First Nations people).

Before you include traditional knowledge in your content

Make sure the traditional knowledge included in the content has been collected ethically. This means:

- research with or about First Nations people or topics is conducted ethically
- Indigenous cultural and intellectual property (ICIP) rights are considered and respected in any research involving First Nations people or subjects
- free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) is obtained from the First Nations people involved before any traditional knowledge is published.

Research involving First Nations people

Research involving First Nations people or subjects has specific ethical requirements. These always apply when working with First Nations people, and can also apply when conducting desktop or other research involving First Nations sources or topics. Follow the procedures required for your institution or publication.

In Australia, researchers conducting research on First Nations topics should follow:

- Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) *Code of ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research* (PDF 1.3 MB), which outlines 4 principles that underpin ethical Australian First Nations research
- AIATSIS *Guidelines for the ethical publishing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authors and research from those communities* (PDF 1.3 MB).

Other guidance on conducting First Nations research is available, including from:

- research funding organisations, such as
  - Australian Research Council codes and guidelines
  - National Health and Medical Research Council *Ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities: guidelines for researchers and stakeholders* (PDF 713 KB)

- research institutions, such as
  - Indigenous Archives Collective *Indigenous referencing guidance for Indigenous knowledges* (PDF 9.2 MB) (which has guidance about assessing and using sources relating to First Nations)
  - Indigenous Knowledge Institute Charter for research with Indigenous knowledge holders
  - CSIRO Our knowledge, our way guidelines
- universities, such as
  - Australian National University Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research
  - University of Melbourne Indigenous knowledges research guide
  - University of Tasmania Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research ethics.

Indigenous cultural and intellectual property

First Nations people have rights associated with their traditional knowledge, including intellectual property (IP) rights. Traditional knowledge IP is known as Indigenous cultural and intellectual property (ICIP). ICIP should be considered and respected in any research involving First Nations people or topics.

Various guidance resources about ICIP are available, including:

- IP Australia – First Nations IP hub and a discussion paper on issues for protection and management of Indigenous knowledge
- NSW Government Aboriginal cultural and intellectual property protocol
- *True tracks* by Dr Terri Janke, which provides guidelines for respectful engagement with Indigenous IP, knowledge and culture
- Creative Australia – Protocols for using First Nations cultural and intellectual property in the arts
- World Intellectual Property Organization – *WIPO treaty on intellectual property, genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge* (PDF 272 KB), which addresses the connection between IP, traditional knowledge and genetic resources.

Free, prior and informed consent

Before any traditional knowledge is published, free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) must be obtained from the First Nations people involved.

The principle of FPIC is recognised under the *United Nations declaration on the rights of Indigenous peoples* (PDF 150 KB) and implemented under various national and international laws and practices. FPIC allows First Nations people to provide, withhold or withdraw consent to the use of their ICIP at any time.

New uses of ICIP require new consent. Protocols for using First Nations cultural and intellectual property in the arts states that: 'FPIC is dynamic and ongoing. As projects develop … there may be new aspects of ICIP use that require the further permission of the source communities. Make sure that the relevant Indigenous people and/or communities are consulted adequately on these additional uses. This, too, should be documented and agreed to in writing.'

A guide to FPIC is available from the United Nations: *Free, prior and informed consent manual* (PDF 900 KB).

How to cite traditional knowledge

The recommended format for Australian traditional knowledge citations is:

> Last name, title (if appropriate) and first name; position (if appropriate; for example, Knowledge Holder, Elder), language nation. *Topic of communication*, date of communication (day month year). Other details as appropriate.

Example

Poole, Aunty Dawn; Knowledge Holder and Elder, Wiradjuri. *Belonging to the river*, 2 May 2020. Conversation with James Hayes.

Cumpston, Zena; Barkandji. *Indigenous plant use*, 1 September 2021. Notes provided to the national State of the Environment project.

Always ask the person how they would like to be referred to in the citation.

This citation approach was informed by the approach developed by Lorisia MacLeod for citing North American Indigenous knowledge:

> Last name, first name. Nation/Community. Treaty territory if applicable. City/Community they live in if applicable. Topic/subject of communication if applicable. Date of communication (day month year).

Other approaches to citing traditional knowledge may be used, depending on the requirements of the publication and the preferences of the knowledge holder. The main alternative method is to cite oral information as a 'personal communication'.

Further advice on citing traditional knowledge is available from:

- Indigenous Archives Collective – *Indigenous referencing guidance for Indigenous knowledges* (PDF 9.2 MB)
- Bond University guidance on Indigenous authors
- University of Melbourne – Indigenous knowledge research: advice on citation
- James Cook University APA 7th referencing guide.

How to reference First Nations publications and works

Citations of works, such as artworks, by First Nations people should include details of their language nation and place. Detailed guidance has been developed by Danièle Hromek (Budawang/Yuin) and Sophie Herbert in the University of Technology Sydney Library guide to referencing Indigenous material, on page 122 of the *UTS Library APA 7th referencing guide* (PDF 2 MB).

First Nations researchers can include their cultural identity as part of their authorship credentials in publications, depending on the options available for the publication. Some academic journals follow the Indigenous cultural identity of research authors standard.