

7 July 2017

National Health and Medical Research Council
GPO Box 1421
Canberra ACT 2601

Dear NHMRC Colleagues

REVIEW OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER RESEARCH ETHICS GUIDELINES

On behalf of Charles Sturt University I wish to thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this important and timely review. We have provided below our responses to the specific consultation questions. I trust our responses will help contribute to development of revised guidelines for broad dissemination and support of diverse research questions. We commend the Indigenous Research Ethics Guidelines Review Working Committee on the production of the consultation documents which are extremely high quality and provide a range of the step by step guidelines for researchers engaged in Indigenous research. As a result our comments are minimal.

- 1. The previous guidelines focused on health research only and the scope of the revised guidelines has been broadened to cover research across all disciplines. Is this broader scope adequately reflected in both guidelines?***

A clear statement on what is meant by 'research' should be included in the introduction to both documents. The introduction to the Guideline goes a little way toward this, but does not cover, for example, environmental related research (historical and contemporary) on Country with Indigenous people, or Government Agency evaluations (for example Local Land Services evaluating their relationship with community groups, some of them Indigenous). Some different modes of research could also be mentioned (for example researcher (Indigenous or otherwise) led, community led, co-inquiry) to indicate that all of these are research. There is an overarching theme of research on, rather than research with, in the Guidelines, which we do not believe is intended, but which could be softened by an introductory paragraph on research.

- 2. Information about intellectual property has been included in both of the revised drafts. Are the amount and strength of intellectual property information provided in each draft adequate?***

The section in the Guidelines on intellectual property rights needs more information. In particular, if research data are co-created through focus groups, or yarning, or systemic inquiry, can the intellectual property rights be shared with the non-Indigenous co-researchers? What are the implications for publishing in academic journals? The Guidelines are brief, and refer the researcher to the Keeping on Track document, but it would be useful to have a balance of information in both documents. We would also support the proposal to include case examples for intellectual property to provide clearer and more relatable guidance.

- 3. Consideration is being given to including case studies as supplementary material for one or both of the revised drafts: should a case study about intellectual property be included? If a case study about intellectual property was included, what are some good examples of case studies in this***

area? What other topics would case studies be useful for? What are some good examples of other case studies?

As noted above we are supportive of intellectual property case examples, perhaps in particular where Honours and or Higher Degree by Research Students are involved as well as where established research teams are involved.

An example of a process of working with an Indigenous community on the development and design of a research project where the process created a deeper research engagement and design would also add richness to the guideline addendum.

Comments on any aspect of Ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities: Guidelines for researchers and stakeholders (Please list your comments under the relevant section heading as set out in the guideline)

Section: RESEARCH AGREEMENTS

With regard to the statement (quoted below) in both documents, it is not clear if the agreement should be negotiated with a potential participant directly or with an 'elder'. Greater guidance or options would be useful in this regard, given that draft agreements are often prepared at a distance from the engaged research team within the university structure.

"It is important for the researcher to have a negotiated formal agreement with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities so that each party fully understands what is expected from them for the research project".

Comments on any aspect of Keeping research on track II (Please list your comments under the relevant section heading as set out in the guideline)

No further comments.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or we can provide further support. Thank you once again for this valuable opportunity.

Yours sincerely



Professor Mary T Kelly
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research, Development & Industry)