



Position Statement: Research Involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities

The Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) should actively promote and build on the weight of evidence identified in previous research. PHAA acknowledges:

- The importance of Aboriginal community control, connection with land and cultural determinants such as maintenance of language.
- That all research including publication of results undertaken about, with, through, or in anyway affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, peoples or individuals must meet the conditions for ethical research. These include the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) guidelines and clear acknowledgement in research papers of the community/ies or individuals involved.
- That all research including publication of results involves the full participation and acknowledgment of Aboriginal people.

This position statement should be read in conjunction with the PHAA's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health policies.

The PHAA notes:

1. The Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples¹ (Article 19) "Indigenous people have the right to participate fully, if they choose, at all levels of decision-making in matters which may affect their rights, lives and destinies through representation chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures ..." (Article 20) "Indigenous people have the right to participate fully, if they so choose, through procedures determined by them, in devising legislative or administrative measures that may affect them." (Article 23) "Indigenous people have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for exercising their right to development. In particular, Indigenous people have the right to determine and develop all health, housing and other economic and social programmes affecting them and, as far as possible, to administer such programmes through their own institutions." (Article 29) "Indigenous peoples are entitled to the recognition of the full ownership, control and protection of their cultural and intellectual property rights."
2. **The PHAA believes:** that these rights are self-evident and extend to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, peoples and individuals rights to determine the extent of their involvement in research affecting them in any way.

3. In recognition of the ethical issues involved in research about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and peoples the NHMRC has issued “Values and Ethics: Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Researchⁱⁱ.” These guidelines must be read and implemented in conjunction with the “National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans.ⁱⁱⁱ”
4. Academic and research institutions and individual researchers are held accountable for the ethical conduct of their research via their institutional and funding bodies ethics committees.
5. Most academic and research institutions have guidelines for authorship based on the contribution of members of the research team to the research project.
6. It is not the role or function of the PHAA to undertake ethical reviews of research nor to set overarching requirements on the authorship of research articles or reports.
7. Contributors to the Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health are advised that the Journal is committed to reflecting inclusive language in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with preferred terms being Indigenous Australians or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples generally, or Indigenous nation names, where appropriate. Contributors are encouraged to describe engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, families and or communities other than as subjects or participants.

ADOPTED 2007, REVIEWED & RE-ENDORSED 2010

First adopted at the 2007 Annual General Meeting of the PHAA. Reviewed and re-endorsed as part of the 2010 policy revision process.

References:

ⁱ Commission of Human Rights, Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2005
www.usask.ca/nativelaw/ddir.html

ⁱⁱ National Health and Medical Research Council, Values and Ethics: Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research, 2003

ⁱⁱⁱ National Health and Medical Research Council, National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans, 1999