

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Peoples Recruited into Research

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This document is relevant to all WH sites, including Bacchus Marsh, Melton and Caroline Springs

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1. Overview

This procedure describes the support and consideration that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples require when they are either the target population in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research or they are incidentally recruited or their data incidentally collected in/for a research project conducted at Western Health. It also recognises the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to be engaged in research that appears and is of particular significance to them.

2. Applicability

This procedure is relevant to all staff involved in the conduct of research at Western Health.

Staff not engaged in the conduct of research or recruitment of participants into research.

3. Responsibility

The Research Program Director has the responsibility for implementing this procedure into operational practice and to ensure that all relevant staff are aware of their obligations in relation to this procedure.

The Research Program Director will seek guidance from the Manager of Aboriginal Health, Planning and Policy and/or Research Fellow in Aboriginal in relation to all aspects of this procedure.

All staff involved in the conduct of research at Western Health must ensure this procedure is followed where their research activity directly targets or may incidentally recruit or collect data on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

4. Authority

Exceptions to the practices described in this procedure can be authorised by the Research Program Director post consultation with the Manager- Aboriginal Health, Planning and Policy.

5. Associated Documentation

In support of this procedure, the following Manuals, Policies, Instructions and/or Guidelines apply:

Name

- *AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research: [Code of Ethics | AIATSIS](#)*
- *Ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities: Guidelines for researcher and stakeholders. [Indigenous-ethical-guidelines.pdf](#)*

[National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research \(2023\) | NHMRC](#)

6. Definitions and Abbreviations

6.1 Definitions

For purposes of this procedure, unless otherwise stated, the following definitions shall apply:

Research	Research is to also encompass clinical trials or clinical intervention research whereby participants are recruited into a research project
Clinical Trial	Research involving human volunteers dedicated to generating new high-quality evidence around a particular intervention
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research	As stated in the Code of Ethics AIATSIS this should be understood as research that concerns or impacts Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in any of the following ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The research is about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, societies, culture and/or knowledge. • Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander policies or experience. • The target population is Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals, groups, communities or societies. • The target population is not explicitly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals or communities but the research population includes a significant number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

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- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people incidentally recruited and researchers wish to do separate analysis of Indigenous-specific data.
- There are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals or communities contributing to the research.
- There is new or pre-existing data related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples being used in the research.
- The research concerns Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' lands or waters.

6.2 Abbreviations

For purposes of this procedure, unless otherwise stated, the following abbreviations shall apply:

NMHCRC	<i>National Health and Medical Research Council</i>
AIATSIS	Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies

7. Procedure Detail

All research involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait People must abide by the six core principles that underpin the *Ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities: Guidelines for researcher and stakeholders*. [Indigenous-ethical-guidelines.pdf](#)

All research staff should familiarise themselves with the research protocol and identify if there will be deliberate or potentially incidental recruitment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples research into the study.

Action 1: Intentional Recruitment of First Nations People into Research

- If the Protocol necessitates deliberate recruitment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples into the study, then prior to any ethics submission, the delegated research team member (Research coordinator or Principal Investigator) must discuss the research protocol with the Manager of Aboriginal Health, Planning and Policy and/or Research Fellow in Aboriginal Health to identify any areas that may need further consideration
- The delegated research team member and the Manager of Aboriginal Health, Planning and Policy must incorporate any suggested changes to the protocol and associated documents (Invitation letter/email, trial adverts, PICF etc) to meet the requirements of the [indigenous-ethical guidelines](#) and the [AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research](#)
- The research team will conduct the trial in accordance with the specifics provided by the Manager for Aboriginal Health, Planning and Policy which has been ethically approved in accordance with the AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research: [Code of Ethics | AIATSIS](#)
- For externally sponsored research that already has the ethics approvals in accordance with the AIATSIS Code of Ethics requirements, the research team will need to notify the Manager of Aboriginal Health, Planning and Policy that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples will be recruited into a research project. The research team should notify the Manager of Aboriginal Health, Planning and Policy when recruitment commences.

Action 2: Incidental Recruitment of First Nations People into Research

- For potentially incidental recruitment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, the study team should assess the likelihood of this occurring prefaced around the prevalence of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Peoples representation in the disease population targeted.
- Where incidental recruitment is identified and the prevalence of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Peoples is likely due to the disease being targeted researchers must determine whether or not they will do a separate analysis of Indigenous specific data which is made in accordance with the AIATSIS Code of Ethics requirements.
- If an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person is incidentally recruited into the study, as soon as the research team becomes aware will inform the Manager for Aboriginal Health, Planning and Policy. The research team will ensure that the requirements of the [indigenous-ethical guidelines](#) and the AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research are considered.
- The participant can elect to continue to remain enrolled in the study and receive support from the Western Health Aboriginal Health team as required.

8. Document History

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9. References

- [National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research \(2023\)](#)
- *AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research: [Code of Ethics | AIATSIS](#)*
- *Ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities: Guidelines for researcher and stakeholders. [Indigenous-ethical-guidelines.pdf](#)*

10. Sponsor

Office for Research - Research Program Director

11. Authorisation Authority

Chief Medical Officer

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