

CBF Indigenous Engagement Protocol

The Community Broadcasting Foundation regularly receives funding applications for broadcast projects that include Indigenous people and cultural material. This guide helps stations engage Indigenous people in a meaningful and respectful manner by identifying the respective protocol.

The CBF Indigenous Engagement Protocol has been developed to offer advice and recommendations for engaging Indigenous Australians in community media projects in a respectful and appropriate manner at each stage of production and broadcasting. It is designed to be an initial point of reference in planning programming that includes Indigenous presenters, contributors and advisors or uses Indigenous cultural material. It does not give specific advice on the cultural issues of a particular group, which may vary from region to region. A link to contacts and references to access relevant people and information in different areas is included on pages 4-5.

This guide concentrates on moral and ethical issues relating to the use of Indigenous cultural material, recognising Indigenous Australians as custodians of culture. It is designed for day-to-day use by program makers planning a CBF Grant Application. It should be read in conjunction with relevant copyright laws and should not be viewed as legal advice.

The CBF Indigenous Engagement Protocol is relevant to anyone working in or with the community broadcasting sector who is applying for a CBF grant, including;

- Indigenous and non-Indigenous presenters, producers and program contributors
- Station Management and relevant station personnel
- Program guests

Presenters, production crew, producers, voiceover artists, script-writers, program contributors and station personnel are broadly referred to in this document as 'program makers'.

We hope program makers working with Indigenous people will use this guide as a framework for developing appropriate processes for their specific projects, language groups, regions and communities prior to submitting their Grant Application.

Engaging

Media is an important means of expressing Indigenous heritage – past, present and future. Community broadcasters can adopt a best practice approach by encouraging respect for the cultures of Indigenous Australians, by acknowledging their innate value and difference from other cultures and by respecting ownership and control of Indigenous heritage.

Indigenous cultural and intellectual property rights include the right to*:

- Own and control Indigenous cultural and intellectual property
- Ensure that any means of protecting Indigenous cultural and intellectual property is based on the principle of self-determination
- Be recognised as the primary guardians and interpreters of their cultures
- Authorise or refuse to authorise the commercial use of Indigenous cultural and intellectual property, according to Indigenous customary law
- Maintain the secrecy of Indigenous knowledge and other cultural practices
- Full and proper attribution
- Control the recording of cultural customs and expressions, the particular language which may be intrinsic to cultural identity, knowledge, skills and teaching of culture.

It is important to recognise the diversity and complexity of the many different Indigenous cultures in Australia. Methods of dealing with issues and cultural material may differ from community to community and across urban, rural and remote lands. While it is not possible to prescribe universal rules for engaging with any group of people, there are some fundamental principles within which to conduct respectful work.

**Our Culture: Our Future – report on Australian Indigenous cultural and intellectual property rights.*

Protocols

The CBF supports the Community Radio Broadcasting Codes of Practice (2008) which acknowledges the unique status of Indigenous peoples as the First Australians and to offer a way to demonstrate respect for their cultures and customs. In the code 'Indigenous Australians' refers to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Australia.

With this Code of Practice in mind, we expect CBF grant-seekers to:

- Be respectful of cultural differences, aware of potential prejudices/stereotypes and avoid perpetuating negative perceptions.
- Program makers should endeavour at all times to present a balanced view of issues. An Aboriginal view of indigenous issues may differ from a non-Aboriginal one. Indigenous Australians are a complex and diverse multicultural people and this diversity should be recognised as an integral part of Indigenous society and represented as such.
- Seek advice from relevant community leaders, council Elders and/or community service organisations regarding the specific nature of your project to ensure your broadcast intentions for spoken word, music recordings and live content are geographically and culturally appropriate. Where non-Indigenous people produce programs about indigenous people, they should do so in consultation with the Indigenous people particularly with those who are the subject(s) of the program content. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander protocols may prevent the use of some images and archival recordings.
- If a radio or television script depicts an Indigenous character, situation or issue, the script should be authenticated to ensure that the Aboriginal parts are appropriate in terms of language and behaviour. Writers should encourage Indigenous collaboration in the script-writing process.
- It may be necessary for program makers to acknowledge that Indigenous Australians do have control over their information, images and raw audio recordings and negotiate to share in the use of that information and the commodities it can bring. Provide a clear outline of any financial and contractual arrangements that may be involved in the project, especially regarding how and when people will be paid, and obtain agreements in principle.
- If a project requires travel into Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander country or entering communities, it is essential that program makers contact the local Aboriginal Community Council, Land Council or Aboriginal service organisation as a courtesy to the community, to inform the community of their intention in the area, to seek permission to travel on Aboriginal land (including obtaining a visitor's permit if necessary), to help determine the most appropriate person or persons to be interviewed and to confirm any script consultancy that may be required regarding that community.
- If your Grant Application requests presenter, producer or contributor wages, we would expect to see a distribution of funds for contributor fees for Indigenous project participants.

- Refrain from incorporating content elements derived from Indigenous heritage in their works without the informed consent of the Indigenous owners. Programs should include appropriate accreditation if Indigenous works are included in the project. You should also consider whether a particular song is appropriate for your project when adding music to your project. For traditional songs, it is a good idea to consult with the performer and relevant language group and get permission to use the songs in an appropriate context.
- Every effort should be made to ensure that the planning and execution of any research or interviews undertaken for your project are done so with the full involvement of, and under direction of, the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people involved. Seek nomination and confirm the use of Indigenous consultants by the appropriate community leaders or organisations. Wherever possible, Indigenous people should be involved in project decision making and encouraged to engage broadly in day-to-day volunteering at your organisation.
- Consider possible long-term outcomes from your project toward [Closing the Gap](#) targets and the potential impact of your project within your local area. Build partnerships with individuals and community organisations that can extend beyond the life of the project and the funding period. Provide feedback to project participants to nurture a positive and ongoing relationship.
- Ensure that any negotiations with Indigenous people are honest and clearly detailed about the intended broadcast outcomes of the project.
- Program makers should do everything within their power to protect the physical, psychological and social wellbeing of the Indigenous people and everyone they are working with, and to honour their dignity and privacy.

The CBF assessor assignment protocol ensures that Indigenous projects for or by Indigenous stations/groups will be assessed by a minimum of 50% of assessors identifying as Indigenous as well as assessors who have completed or have been deemed exempt from cultural competency training. Such assessors are equipped to determine your organisation's adherence to these protocols.

Broadcasting and re-broadcasting

As primary guardians and interpreters of their cultures, Indigenous people have well-established protocols for interacting with their cultural material. New situations, such as new media platforms, also require cultural protocols and permission should be sought for the re-broadcasting of material online and/or via additional media platforms.

Cultural material should always be used in an appropriate context. Permission to re-broadcast or simulcast material beyond your station footprint should be sought as some content and stories may not be suitable for wide dissemination. It is the responsibility of program makers to discuss any restrictions on use with the relevant Indigenous groups.

In many Indigenous communities, the reproduction of names, audio recordings and photographs of deceased people are restricted for public viewing for a period of mourning. The person's family or community should be consulted so that the appropriate protocols are observed for using sound recordings, films and images of Indigenous people who have passed away.



Checklist

Have you:

- Identified any Indigenous cultural property you plan to use
- Sought permissions to broadcast cultural material and Intellectual Property
- Consulted with relevant Indigenous custodians and groups
- Checked if there are any locally relevant protocols that may impact your project
- Provided opportunity for Indigenous people to contribute to the project
- Discussed any requirement for contributor fees
- Provided opportunity to review broadcast material and edits before the project is broadcast
- Confirmed appropriate broadcast and re-broadcast regions

The CBF supports the Australian Declaration Towards Reconciliation and the National Strategies to Advance Reconciliation as proposed by the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation and Reconciliation Australia.

Helpful references

The following resources from [Media Diversity Australia](#) can be read in conjunction with this Protocol:
[Quick Guide: Reporting on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and Issues](#) (for media professionals)
[Handbook: Reporting on Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Peoples and Issues, An Introductory Resource for the Media](#) (for news reporting)

Sector Representative Organisations

[First Nations Media Australia](#)

[Community Broadcasting Association of Australia \(CBAA\)](#)

Land Councils

[Australian Government](#)

[Creative Spirits](#)

[Office for the Coordinator General for Remote Indigenous Services](#)

[National Congress of Australia's First Peoples](#)

Local Council Indigenous Engagement Officers.

Useful background reading

[Community Radio Broadcasting Codes of Practice](#) (CBAA)

[Australian Declaration Towards Reconciliation](#)

[Reconciliations Australia](#)

[United Nations' Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#)

[ABC Indigenous language map](#)

Educational opportunities

The [Centre for Cultural Competence Australia](#) offers online cultural training and development courses.