



### Wardliparingga Aboriginal Health Equity

South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute (SAHMRI)  
Adelaide, South Australia

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Cultural Safety in Aged Care Funded by the Australian Government through the Dementia and Aged Care Services Fund

## Cultural protocols– Acknowledgement of Country

It is important that appropriate protocols are adhered to. Therefore, recognising local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their connection to Country is extremely important. When meetings or important events are held, acknowledgement of the traditional custodians of the place is a very significant and important part of formal recognition of Aboriginal people. An Acknowledgement of Country is an opportunity for staff to show respect for the traditional custodians and continuing connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to Country (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Protocols Document SAHMRI, 2017).

Appropriate and respectful acknowledgment of Country, Elders past, present and future as well as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people presenting and attending the presentation(s) must be undertaken prior to starting.

**Note:** When presenting this content, we encourage the presenter to acknowledge the local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people of the geographical area. The following example can be used and/or adapted to suit the local area and acknowledgement of relevant traditional custodians.

“We acknowledge and respect the traditional custodians whose ancestral lands we are meeting upon here today, the \_\_\_\_\_ people. We acknowledge the deep feelings of attachment and relationship of the \_\_\_\_\_ to their Country. We also pay respects to the cultural authority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people visiting/attending from other areas of \_\_\_\_\_ present here”

The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies have developed an online interactive tool which can assist with the identification of different language groups across Australia. It is available at:

<https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/articles/aiatsis-map-indigenous-australia>

### 1. Making use of the Presenter Guide

The presenter guide is intended to assist you with presenting the information provided in the accompanying powerpoint slides. You can use the notes included in this guide to:

1. Outline the main information provided in the accompanying powerpoint slides.
2. Provide examples of suggested strategies described in the slides.
3. Assist with generating discussion with participants – see included questions throughout the guide.

**Note:** Please remind participants to use the accompanying workbook to note any thoughts and questions relating to content. The questions in the presentation slides are included in the workbook to record participants’ notes and responses.

### 2. Presenter Introduction

1. Presenter introduce yourself
2. Invitation to participants to introduce
  - themselves, their work roles etc
  - their organisation affiliations (where appropriate)
  - their reason for attending the Cultural Safety in Aged Care Training and
  - what they want to get out of the course, i.e. what would they like to learn about cultural safety in aged care?

**Cultural Safety in Aged Care**

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**Principle 3. Provide buildings that meet Aboriginal Elders' and their communities' needs**

### Presenter Notes Title Slide

In this presentation, we will describe key concepts relating to Principle 3. “Provide buildings that meet Elders and their communities’ needs” and consider:

1. What did we learn from Aboriginal Elders about their cultural safety needs in aged care?
2. What are the benefits to aged care organisations?
3. What are the opportunities for aged care organisations?
4. What can an aged care organisation do?

**Note:** Remind participants that they can use the accompanying workbook to note any thoughts or questions relating to this principle. The questions in the presentation slides are also included in the workbook to record participants’ response.



## Acknowledgement of Country

We would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet and pay our particular respects to the Elders past and present, as well as acknowledging the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the room.

### Presenter Notes Acknowledgement of Country

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### Designing Aged Care Facilities

- Engage and partnering with communities to co-design culturally responsive buildings, spaces and facilities
- Create environments which promote independence and wellbeing
- An environment which allows for 'Ageing in Place'
- Environments that are welcoming

### Presenter Notes Designing Aged Care Facilities

#### Presenter points to follow:

When designing new buildings and facilities or modifying and upgrading existing facilities for older Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people it is critical to consider key objectives of the design that involve the following aspects.

**1. Engage and partner with communities to co-design culturally responsive buildings, spaces and facilities**  
Design buildings and facilities to allow Elders to remain connected to their community and culture.

**2. Create environments which promote independence and wellbeing**

This means that building and facility design needs to accommodate older peoples' physical needs, for example, mobility, disability, dementia, and other health needs together with promoting wellbeing. This can occur through the creation and use of space which will assist in meeting the social, emotional and spiritual needs. Note: For older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, wellbeing encompasses both individual wellbeing and community wellbeing (Taylor et al. 2012).

Consider how the design and use will support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to pass on knowledge, tradition, ceremony and culture from one generation to the next through language, performance, protection of significant sites, storytelling and the teachings of Elders.

**3. An environment which allows for 'Ageing in Place'**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have a strong preference to receive care in their community and to stay close to their Country, where they have a cultural and family connection (see Principle 1, Respecting Aboriginal Life, Traditions and Living Culture)

This is important to understand, especially for people who cannot be cared for in their home community. This implies a need to design buildings and facilities that provide welcoming spaces.

**4. Environments that are welcoming**

This relates to closely to Principle 2. Creating Aboriginal friendly spaces. The design of aged care facilities requires consideration of how the use of internal and external spaces can enable connection to culture. Engaging with local communities can assist with identifying ideas about how this could be achieved.

#### Reference

Taylor J, Edwards J, Champion S, Cheers S, Chong A, Cummins R et al. 2012. Towards a conceptual understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and community functioning. Community Development Journal 47:94 –110.

## Principle 3. Provide buildings that meet Aboriginal Elders' and their communities' needs



Source: Booroongen Djugun Aged Care Facility, New South Wales

Slide 5

### Presenter Notes

#### Presenter points to follow:

The photos in this slide are an example of an aged care residential facility that was designed from the views and opinions held by Elders at Greenhill, via Kempsey, on the Mid North Coast of New South Wales, Australia.

For the Elders, the totems of fire, water, earth, and sun were identified as having strong ties to traditional life. To meet their needs, extensive consultation occurred at a grass roots level. This allowed for the facility's development to reflect the spiritual feelings connected with the traditions and customs of Aboriginal people.

#### Reference

<http://booroongendjugun.com.au/aged-care-facility/>

**Principle 3. Provide buildings that meet Aboriginal Elders' and their communities' needs**



**What can aged care organisations do ?**

- Create synergy between the outside environment and the design of the building
- Design the facility with internal and external spaces that link to community needs
- Incorporate traditional and/or important country or landscape features in the orientation of and movement within the facility

Source: Indigenous Aged Care Design (2017)

**Presenter Notes** What did we learn from Aboriginal Elders about their cultural safety needs in aged care?

**Presenter points to follow:**

1. Older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people commonly express a preference to be cared for on Country. As they hold central roles in the cultural and spiritual life of the community and are the keepers of culture.
2. An enforced move away from community to access aged care is an enormous loss and sadness to the whole community, not just the individual or their family.

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What are the benefits for aged care organisations?

- Culturally safe environment
- Improved access and acceptability of services
- Creates a sense of belonging and well-being

**Presenter Notes** What are the opportunities for aged care organisations?

**Presenter points to follow:**

1. Providing a culturally safe environment that promotes physical, social and emotional wellbeing and a sense of belonging for clients will be of clear benefit to aged care organisations.
2. Clients will feel comfortable in accessing the service, families will feel welcome and satisfied that their Elders needs are being met.

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### What are the opportunities for aged care organisations?

- Design new facilities from the views and opinions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- Consider the multi-generational use of a facility
- Provide ample space for community members to visit and share stories and knowledge.

### Presenter Notes What are the opportunities for aged care organisations?

#### Presenter points to follow:

1. Effective and meaningful consultation with the local community is imperative to achieving appropriate design. The community will have deep understandings of the cultural and spiritual significance of the location on which facilities are located.
2. When designing new facilities its location will be fundamental to creating a sense of belonging and links to community.

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Source: Indigenous Aged Care Design (2017)

### Presenter Notes What can an aged care organisation do?

#### Presenter points to follow:

1. Many residents will have strong association with their traditional land or Country. This may be the most important planning criterion for the facility as a whole and for the design of both inside and outside places.

In rural and remote areas, ensure traditional and or important country or landscape features are considered in the orientation of, and movement within the facility. For example, utilise views of outside, significant trees as landscape features

2. Consider planning with surrounding country to locate dancing, sorry business and places for art and craft
3. Determine the arrangement of men, women and various kinship structures\* within the facility to allow for adherence to cultural protocols and to practice ceremonies.

**Note:** Kinship is an integral part of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and may impact on the way services are utilised. In Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander societies the family structures, obligations and expectations underlying them are extended to the whole society. The concept of family for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples contrasts with many Western cultures. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are collective in nature. It often includes a much wider extended family, where there are mutual obligations and sharing within the extended family (kinship system). It is important to understand the concept of kinship and offer a service that addresses the family obligations that many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples experience.

## Discussion Points



- Describe the features of your facility that you believe help to keep Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people connected to their culture.
- How do you ensure that the use of internal and external spaces meet the needs of people in your care?

*Suggested readings and helpful resources*

Indigenous Aged Care Design. 2017. Dementia Training Australia

[https://www.dta.com.au/wpcontent/uploads/2017/02/Indigenous\\_Aged\\_Care\\_Design\\_Guide.pdf](https://www.dta.com.au/wpcontent/uploads/2017/02/Indigenous_Aged_Care_Design_Guide.pdf)

Booroongendjugun Aged Care, 2019 <http://booroongendjugun.com.au/aged-care-facility/>

Taylor J, Edwards J, Champion S, Cheers S, Chong A, Cummins R et al. 2012. Towards a conceptual understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and community functioning. Community Development Journal 47:94 –110.

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