



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Terminology Guide

This guide has been developed by the Moondani Toombadool Centre.

The purpose of this document is to ensure that terminology used within the University recognises and respects the diverse cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and eliminates the use of inappropriate or offensive terms.

Acceptable Terminology

The preferred term to use when referring to Australia's collective Indigenous peoples is: *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples*. This should always be capitalised and written in full. It is also acceptable to refer to each separately in the correct context:

- Aboriginal Australians
- Torres Strait Islander Peoples

The term Indigenous can be suitable in some contexts and if used, should always be capitalised and contextualised: *Indigenous Australians*

First Nations is a global term. Although the term was not historically used in Australia, *First Nations* is increasingly used to describe Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander societies. It is more appropriate to use:

- *The first Australians*; or
- *The first peoples of Australia*

The use of the word *Aboriginal* as a stand-alone descriptive noun should be avoided, but it is acceptable to use as an adjective, such as the *Aboriginal Education Unit*.

If discussing a specific Nation, it is appropriate to refer to that Nation by name. For example, the *Wurundjeri People* are the Traditional Owners of the land on which Swinburne's Australian campuses are located in Melbourne's east and outer-east. Some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples also use broad terms to refer to large geographical regions, such as Koorie/Koori in Victoria. Seek confirmation with that Nation to ensure they are comfortable with the broader term.

Quick Guide - Acceptable Terminology

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Torres Strait Islander people(s)
- Aboriginal people(s)
- Indigenous Australians
- Aboriginal Nation(s)
- Torres Strait Islander Nation(s)
- Indigenous Nation(s)
- Elder(s)
- Aboriginal Australian(s)
- First Australian(s)
- First peoples of Australia
- The Dreaming/Dreaming stories/Spirituality/Spiritual beliefs
- Language/Cultural group
- Invasion/Colonisation/Occupation/Pre-invasion and Post-invasion history

Unacceptable Terminology

- ATSI
- The Aborigine(s)/The Aborigines
- The Torres Strait Islanders
- Islanders
- Natives
- Nomads
- Primitive
- Modern
- Hunter-gatherers
- Part Aborigine
- Full/Half/Quarter-caste
- Black, Blackfella, Coloured
- Tribe
- The Dreamtime
- Dreamtime stories/Legends/Myths
- Pre-history
- Settlement
- Australia was discovered

This guide has been developed in partnership with the Moondani Toombadool Centre.

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