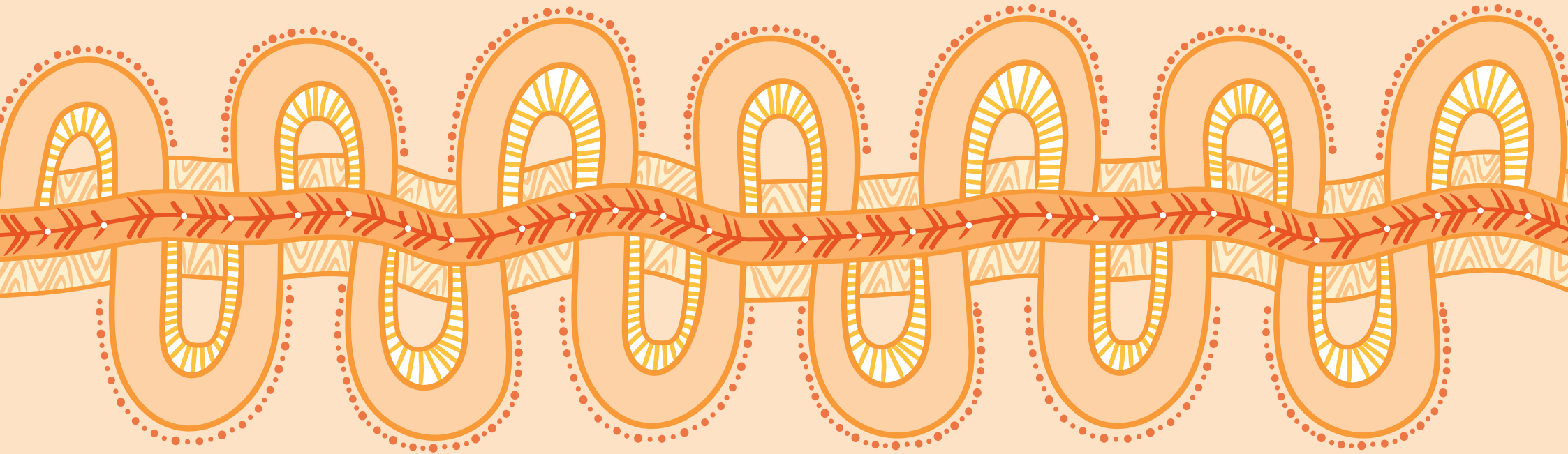


Good Yarn Guidelines

Media guidelines on the reporting of First Nations issues in Australia



About the Good Yarn Guidelines

What are these Guidelines?

These Guidelines provide a set of best practice on how to report on First Nations issues, peoples and communities, in a way that is culturally sensitive, psychologically safe, historically accurate and supports social and emotional wellbeing.

It aims to avoid harms that can be caused by the media through reporting that, deliberately or unintentionally, causes offence, distress or prejudice.

Why do we need them?

Media organisations have a responsibility to report on First Nations issues in a way that is correct, fair, balanced and does not cause harm.

In accordance with Principle 7 of the Australian Press Council's Statement of General Principles, "media organisations should take reasonable steps to avoid causing or contributing materially to substantial offence, distress or prejudice, or a substantial risk to health or safety, unless doing so is sufficiently in the public interest."

These Guidelines were developed by Australia's leading experts in First Nations social and emotional wellbeing, and represent reasonable steps media organisations can take to avoid harms when reporting on First Nations issues.

How to use them

We encourage media organisations to incorporate these Guidelines into their internal Code of Conduct and Style Guides. We are also working with the relevant industry bodies to ensure adoption into their standards and codes, including the Australian Press Council's Standard and Advisory Guidelines, and the Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance (MEAA) Journalist Code of Ethics and Guidelines.

These Guidelines should be distributed to members of the media who report on issues relating to First Nations peoples, and incorporated into training for new staff members.

Principle	Avoid	Try
<p>Culturally responsive language and practice</p> <p>Consider the use of language and terminology when referring to First Nations peoples. Journalists should respect cultural protocols of the Indigenous community they are reporting on.</p>	<p>Using outdated or inappropriate language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aborigine • Half-caste • Of mixed descent • Abbreviations (eg, ATSI) <p>Cultural taboos</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using the name and image of a deceased person without appropriate warnings • Reporting on 'sacred and secret' cultural practices or persisting with questioning once informed something is sacred or secret • Filming an Indigenous community or cultural site without permission from the local Land Council and consent from relevant community members such as Elders 	<p>Using preferred language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Nations peoples • Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders • Indigenous communities <p>If you are unsure about appropriate terminology or cultural protocol, ask!</p> <p>The best way to know the expected protocols in a community is to ask respected members of that community.</p> <p>Ask, "Is there anything I need to know about engaging with people in your community?"</p>
<p>Inclusion of First Nations voices</p> <p>Include First Nations voices in stories pertaining to First Nations issues. First Nations people should also be considered for non-First Nations stories.</p>	<p>Using non-First Nations "experts" to comment on First Nations issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having a panel of non-Indigenous people to discuss what's best for First Nations people • Having one First Nations person on a panel with many non-Indigenous people 	<p>Including a variety of First Nations voices wherever possible.</p> <p>Allow First Nations peoples to have a say on regular Australian stories or issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Shanelle, a Bundjalung women, feels that rent prices in Byron Bay have become unaffordable for many people from the region"
<p>Diversity of perspectives</p> <p>First Nations peoples have diverse perspectives and experiences. No one First Nations person can speak on behalf of all First Nations peoples.</p>	<p>Relying on one Indigenous perspective to represent a diversity of views and experiences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The Indigenous community believe..." • "First Nations people support..." 	<p>Canvassing a range of views, use statistics or specifying the commentator's specific background:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "80% of surveyed Indigenous people say..." • "Dr Schultz, Gomerioi man, says..."
<p>Safety of First Nations sources</p> <p>Acknowledging the risk of harm for some First Nations people to speak publicly to media, journalists should ensure sources are protected and provided with the option for anonymity.</p>	<p>Pressuring First Nations peoples to give comment on issues they do not feel comfortable commenting on.</p>	<p>Offering options to decline participation or remain anonymous.</p> <p>Take a trauma-informed approach to interviewing, particularly around people's experiences with racism, violence or deaths.</p>

Principle	Avoid	Try
<p>Relevance when mentioning First Nations identity In accordance with the Australian Press Council's Guideline: Reporting of 'race', journalists should not place gratuitous emphasis on race, unless race, physical appearance or ethnic background is directly relevant to the story and in the public interest.</p> <p>Note: First Nations identity should not be used to describe physical appearance, as First Nations identity does not have one appearance, in skin colour, hair or facial features.</p>	<p>Gratuitous emphasis on race, when race is not relevant to the story</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Indigenous athlete wins big" • "Indigenous people riot in Alice Springs" • "Aboriginal man arrested for assault" <p>Use of First Nations identity to describe physical appearance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The missing girl is Aboriginal in appearance" 	<p>Mentioning race, only when it is relevant and in the public interest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Nova Peris was the first Indigenous Australian person to become an Olympic gold medallist." • "Indigenous Elders in Alice Springs speak to their community's discontent" <p>Where possible, ask if the person would like their First Nations identity to be shared as part of the reporting.</p>
<p>Strength-based approaches Journalists should focus on capabilities, talents, competencies, hope, resources, optimism and autonomy when reporting challenges faced by First Nations peoples or communities.</p> <p>Strengths-based approaches may provide alternatives to the deficit narrative without denying that First Nations people face difficult challenges.</p>	<p>Using language that, when presented alone, perpetuates deficit discourse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Indigenous Australians are twice as likely to die from heart disease" 	<p>Presenting challenges in the context of structural issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Structural inequality continues to be noticeable, despite decades of effort, in significantly high statistics reported in heart disease rates among First Nations peoples"
<p>Historical and cultural accuracy Acknowledge the long history and culture of First Nations people, and the equal validity of their ways of being and knowing.</p>	<p>Using statements or quotes that discount First Nation history and culture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Australia is 200 years old" • "Europeans gave Indigenous people the gift of modern medicine" • "Colonisation has been good for Aboriginal people" 	<p>Using statements or quotes that acknowledge First Nation history and culture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Australia has a long history, dating back thousands of years prior to European colonisation" • "Traditional medicine practices when used in conjunction with modern medicine have been proven to assist with social and emotional wellbeing" • "Colonisation has, and continues to, have a negative impact on the social and emotional wellbeing of First Nations peoples."
<p>Alignment with Human Rights Media reporting on First Nations issues should adhere to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, endorsed by the Australian Government in 2009. This includes acknowledging First Nations peoples' rights to self-determination, equality and connection to Country, community and culture.</p>	<p>Claims that suggest First Nations peoples do not have the right to self-determination, equality and connection to Country, community and culture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Indigenous people should assimilate into Australian society" • "Native Title is a land grab by Aboriginal people" • "Indigenous people should learn English before they learn their native languages" 	<p>Reinforce the rights of First Nations peoples to self-determination, equality and connection to Country, community and culture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "First Nations peoples in Australia have a right to negotiate treaties, as First Nations peoples have done in New Zealand, Canada and the United States of America"

Principle	Avoid	Try
<p>Appropriate image and video use</p> <p>The images used can have a positive or negative impact on audiences. Images and videos can also enhance, detract from, or change the meaning of other content.</p>	<p>Avoid images or videos that reinforce negative stereotypes.</p> <p>Avoid staging images or scenes.</p> <p>Care needs to be taken with publishing or sharing traumatic images or videos. Scenes of racist behaviour or violence, for example, can be re-traumatising for the people involved and the broader communities.</p>	<p>Use images or videos that are strengths-based where possible (e.g. model hope, show social connection, etc).</p> <p>Use a diverse range of images (if choosing from stock photos or image libraries).</p>
<p>Minimising the impact of hate speech</p> <p>Media companies should not directly re-publish any comments or materials that contain hate speech against First Nations peoples. If a media organisation chooses to report on comments or materials that contain hate speech, they should do so by referring to the comments or material without directly quoting or republishing materials.</p>	<p>Directly quoting or re-publishing hate speech materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadcasting a video of a death threat against a First Nations person • Publishing a quote that includes a racial slur or comment that incite violence or exacerbates prejudice 	<p>Not amplifying comments or materials that contain hate speech.</p> <p>If a media organisation chooses to report on comments or materials that contain hate speech, because it is deemed in the public interest, refer to them without using direct quotes or republishing materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The video — which we have chosen to not publish — was widely condemned as “cowardly”, “disgusting”, and “menacing”, and is now being investigated by the Australian Federal Police (AFP).”

For more information, contact: policy@blackdog.org.au

