

It is important to remember that **ONLY** Aboriginal people can determine who is Aboriginal and who is not.

The definition and identification of Aboriginality is sometimes a paradox to the uninitiated and even sometimes for Aboriginal people. That is, in most cases the confirmation of Aboriginality is a very easy and simple process. However, some attempts at confirmation of Aboriginality are difficult, complex and may lead to very heated debates, because, as in mainstream society, Aboriginal people at times, may agree to disagree about who is an Aboriginal person.

The official formal criteria used by the Australian Government and most State Governments developed in consultation with Aboriginal peoples are set out in the following formula:

An Aboriginal person must meet the following three criteria:

1. Must be of Aboriginal Descent
2. Must identify as an Aboriginal
3. Must be accepted as an Aboriginal by the community in which they live.

The following old fashioned, outdated terms should never be used as they are extremely offensive. They are:

“half caste” “quarter caste” “full blood” “he doesn’t look like a real Aboriginal” and so on. Also do not use

acronyms to refer to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people e.g. “ATSI’s”; “TIs” or “Abs” etc. These terms must be written in full and not abbreviated as it shows respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Also ensure that the word Aboriginal is always capitalised.

Aboriginal people both individually and collectively as a community, define themselves by their culture not the colour of their skin. For your information and cultural awareness rather than use, Aboriginal people have, nationally, terms of reference by which they broadly identify themselves, such as:

Area	Name
Queensland	Murries/Murri’s
South Australia	Nunga’s
New South Wales	Koories/Koori’s
Western Australia	Nyoongah’s
Victoria	Koories/Koori’s
Northern Territory	Yolngu (top end) Anangu (central)
Tasmania	Koories/Koori’s

Please do not refer to Aboriginal people by these names unless your credibility has been well established. Permission and/or acceptance for use of the names by non-Aboriginal people must be sought first from the relevant person, group or community.

However, Aboriginal people specifically relate to each other by tribal groupings and/or family names or groupings e.g. “I’m a Batjala” or “My mother was a Ross and she’s Darambal from Kepple Island” and so on.

The following section of this booklet highlights aspects of a range of protocols regarding consultation and negotiation with Aboriginal people. However, it needs to be emphasised that every negotiation and consultation is unique. You will find you may need to use a different strategy for each process.

- There is no blanket recipe, as Aboriginal society is too diverse. There are remote communities such as Doomadgee or Mornington Island, rural communities such as Innisfail or Boulia, provincial towns or cities such as Townsville or Rockhampton and major cities such as Brisbane, Sydney and so on.

- You may deal with one community in a certain style and another community 100 kms away you may deal with in a totally different way. Accordingly, this protocol document is intended purely as an aid and guide in whatever process you use.

- It is highly recommended that agencies incorporate this document into their existing cultural awareness training modules.

