

What is meant by cultural competency and cultural standpoint?

In addition to the requirements specified in the Terms and Conditions of Use, all Authorised Users of the LSIC dataset should be guided by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC): Values and Ethics: Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research. A summary of these values appear in the table below.

Spirit and Integrity	That the research is approached with respect for the richness and integrity of cultural inheritance and that research exhibits credibility in intent and process.
Reciprocity	That the research is inclusive, demonstrates an equitable and respectful engagement with peoples, values and cultures and advances the interests of Australian Indigenous people in ways that are valued.
Respect	That the research acknowledges individual and collective contributions, interests and aspirations and acknowledges the right to have different values, norms and aspirations at all stages, including the consequences of research.
Equality	That the research recognizes the equality and value of Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander knowledge and wisdom; that all partners are equal and there is an equal distribution of benefit.
Responsibility	That the research does no harm to Indigenous individuals/communities or things they value and is accountable to individuals, families and communities especially in relation to cultural and social dimensions.
Survival	That the research recognises and values Indigenous people; the importance of the personal and collective bond, and cultural distinctiveness and does not diminish the right to assert or enjoy that distinctiveness.

Three key principles of working with the LSIC data are discussed below. These principles have been developed in consultation with a subcommittee of Aboriginal members from the LSIC Steering Committee.

Prospective applicants and Authorised Users are encouraged to contact the DSS LSIC team for advice about any aspect of these protocols or for support or ideas about enhancing their cultural competency in interpreting and reporting the data. LSIC staff can be contacted at NCLD@dss.gov.au

DSS, in partnership with the LSIC Steering Committee, may review LSIC data outputs (post-publication) for adherence to culturally sensitive practices in the analysis, interpretation and reporting of data.

Principle 1 – Acknowledge ‘Standpoint’ when applying for and reporting LSIC data

Applicants and Authorised Users must openly acknowledge their Standpoint in the application and in the reporting of data outputs in reports or publications. This is a declaration of the context in which the data analysis is being generated, including institutional context and personal context.

Professor Maggie Walter¹ writes about Standpoint in social science research as follows:

“How we see the world is not a neutral, objective understanding, but is inevitably influenced by the filters and frames of our life experiences and circumstances and our social, cultural, economic, and personal identity location... Our Standpoint—who we are socially, economically, culturally, even politically—underpins the questions we see, the answers we seek, the way we go about seeking those answers, and the interpretation we make, the theoretical paradigms that make sense to us” (p.11)

Declaring openly one’s Standpoint requires a researcher to become conscious of who they are and their embedded ways of making sense of the world around them. By acknowledging their standpoint, the researcher also allows others to understand the way the researcher has approached, analysed and interpreted the LSIC data. Indigenous Authorised Users may have a different worldview on many topics from their non-Indigenous colleagues; people in different academic disciplines are likely to view the dataset from different perspectives, as might government researchers compared to community-based ones.

In summary, this principle states that the LSIC Authorised User needs to acknowledge their institutional context (such as university, government department, community organisation or cross-sector partnership), as well as the personal context, such as cultural background, work background, depth of experience liaising with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and prior research/publications in the area.

Principle 2 – Cultural competency

In addition to having social research method competency and self-reflective capacity, LSIC Authorised Users should strive to be culturally competent. Cultural competency refers to the need to respect, understand and acknowledge the benefits, values and realities of Indigenous people and communities. This includes being mindful of Indigenous people’s right to have different values, norms and aspirations to non-Indigenous people. Analysts should recognise that Indigenous communities are diverse, with different languages, cultures, histories and perspectives, and acknowledge the diversity of individuals within these communities. This diversity should be understood and appreciated in the analysis, interpretation and reporting of the data.

The findings derived from the LSIC data should not be extrapolated to all Indigenous people. Whilst the LSIC sample is reflective of a diverse range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within the research sites, and covers remote, regional and urban areas, the study was not designed to be nationally representative of all Indigenous people in Australia. Rather, the study was intended to provide an in-depth understanding of the holistic nature of Indigenous children’s pathways in growing up. Other data sources, such as the ABS National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS) 2008, can be used to provide a nationally representative snapshot of Indigenous children’s social circumstances.

¹ Walter, M. (ed.) (2009). *Social Research Methods: An Australian perspective*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne.

Associate Professor Karen Martin² (2008, p.133) offers some key parameters the researchers can use to self-regulate their behaviour and enhance their cultural accountability. Martin suggests that all researchers must show respect for land, laws, elders, culture, community, families and support Indigenous people's visions for their futures. Cultural respect is the important element emphasised by Martin and one that LSIC Authorised Users should demonstrate.

The researchers need to demonstrate responsible and accountable behaviour in the way they manage their research projects which respects the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families who have openly shared personal information that has allowed the building of the dataset. This can be a process of self-regulation where one actively takes the time to 'come alongside' (a phrase suggested by Martin) the issue being researched. This means implicating oneself in understanding more deeply the Indigenous perspective on the topic at hand rather than treating the data purely as an external object of science that can be expertly known at a distance.

Principle 3 – Contributing knowledge to build better outcomes

Sharing findings from the LSIC data is an essential component of being accountable to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities who have given their time in the hope that LSIC would build better outcomes for their children and families. Greater accessibility of the final research material generated from the LSIC data (in association with the researcher's Standpoint) will improve the quality of the analysis and interpretation of the data. LSIC Authorised Users should work to meet the Research Materials requirements so that the Department can honour its commitment to give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's communities (particularly those involved in the study) feedback on how the data are being used and a summary of research findings.

² Martin, K. (2008). Please knock before you enter: Aboriginal regulation of outsiders and the implications for researchers, Post Pressed, Teneriffe, Queensland