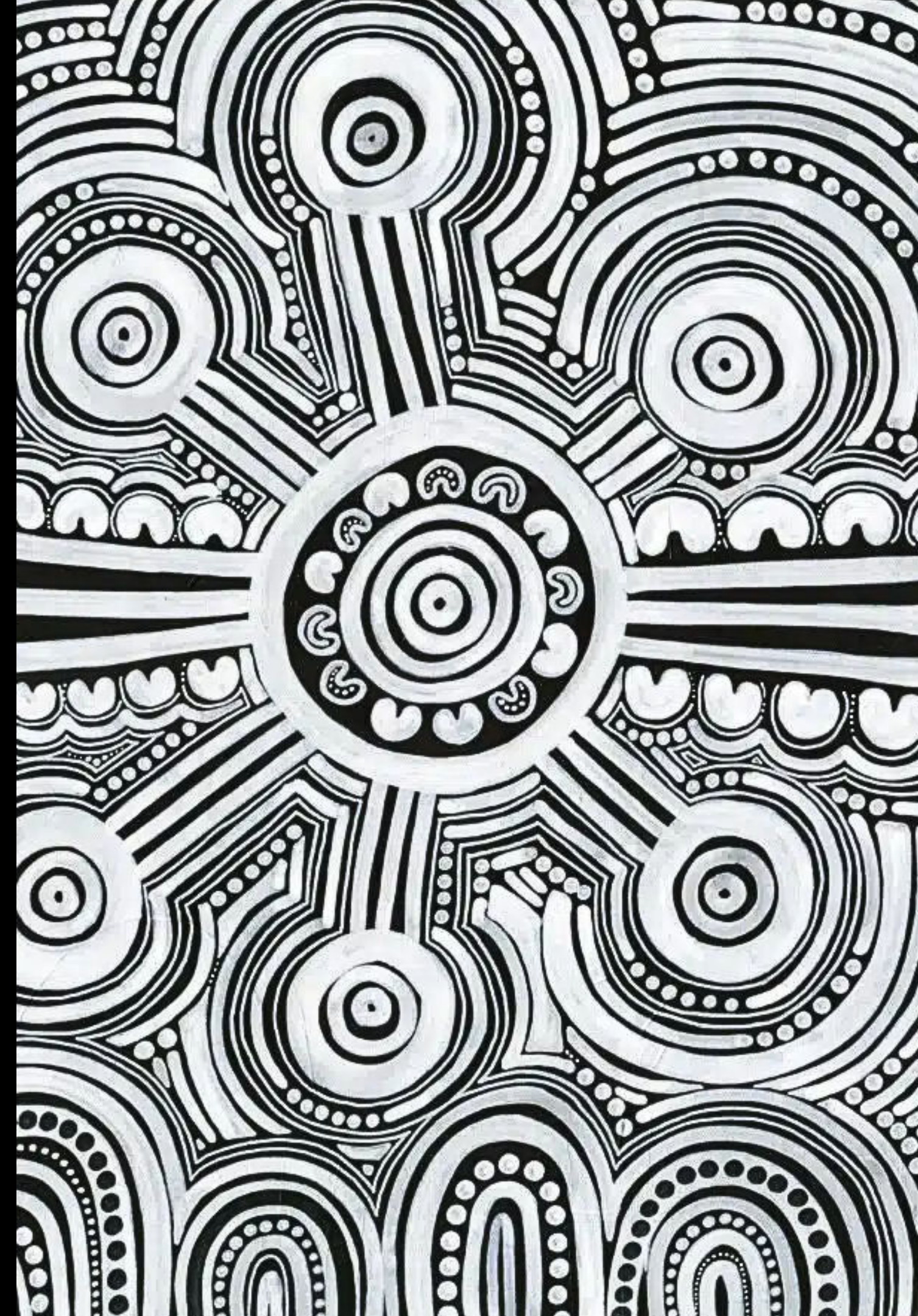




First Nations Language and Style Guide

October 2023

Meerta 'Stand up' by Merindah-Gunya



Introduction

Australian Retailers Association

The purpose of this document is to provide Australian Retailers Association (ARA) staff, its members and other representatives with a style guide that promotes reconciliation and protects against stereotypical representations of First Nations cultures.

For further information, please contact policy@retail.org.au.



A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

As the largest private sector employer in Australia, the retail sector has an important role to play in promoting reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Reconciliation is about acknowledging the centuries of systemic racism, oppression and disposition of Australia's First Nations peoples, which has resulted in intergenerational inequity and inequality that continues to have profound impacts today. It is also about strengthening the relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous peoples, to assist in closing the gap.

As part of this, the ARA has developed this First Nations Language and Style Guide, to provide your teams with the language and tools to inform respectful discussions, and to protect against stereotypical representations of First Nations Australians. We have developed this document with input of First Nations stakeholders, and we hope it will support your businesses in your journey to reconciliation.



Paul Zahra
Chief Executive Officer



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1. Language

First Nations Australians are often called Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples however, there is significant diversity within these two groups.

‘Aboriginal’ is a broad term that groups nations and custodians of mainland Australia and most of the islands, including Tasmania, Fraser Island, Palm Island, Mornington Island, Groote Eylandt, Bathurst and Melville Islands.

‘Torres Strait Islander’ is a broad term grouping the peoples of at least 274 small islands between the northern tip of Cape York in Queensland and the south-west coast of Papua New Guinea. Many Torres Strait Islander peoples live on the Australian mainland.

a) Referring to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Individuals: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Nations: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

Note: 'Indigenous' and 'Aboriginal' are broad terms imposed on First Australians without consultation. These are not words they chose for themselves.

While the term 'Indigenous Australians' is in common use, many First Australians may not be comfortable with it.

If you must use it, remember to only do so when writing generally about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The term should always appear as 'Indigenous Australians' in the first instance, always with a capital 'I'. Afterward you can use 'Indigenous', capitalised, so long as the context is correct and clear. Using 'Indigenous' alone is inaccurate.

"Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander" is the preferred term when referring to the original inhabitants of all the lands now known as Australia.

All words **must** start with a capital letter, it is not appropriate to abbreviate the term.



Aboriginal and
Torres Strait
Islander people/s



Indigenous



Aboriginal

b) Other terms

First Nations:

Refers to the collective of individual Nations in Australia. This is to be used when referring to all or some of the Indigenous Nations in Australia. All words **must** start with a capital letter and is always a plural.



First Nations

First Peoples:

Refers to the collective of individual Nations in Australia and acknowledges those who may not know which nation they are from. This can be used when referring to all or some of the Indigenous Nations in Australia. This term can be used instead of Indigenous. All words **must** start with a capital letter and is always plural.



First Peoples

Indigenous:

This term can be seen as problematic or homogenising label for such diverse identities, only use if approved by a person/organisation. It should be used only when in the name of a title or a direct quote, or when referring to First Peoples in an international context. **Must** start with a capital “I”.



Indigenous

c) Terms to avoid



Aborigines



Native/native Australians



Disadvantaged



Lost (eg: lost language)

d) Other notes on capitalisation

Capitalisation is used to demonstrate respect. Capitalisation conventions extend to terms such as:

- Elders
- Traditional Owners/Custodians
- Country (and corresponding terms such as 'Land; when it is used in place of 'Country'.
- Acknowledgement of Country, Welcome to Country and the names of other cultural practices.

NB: It is not necessary to capitalise the term 'reconciliation' unless making reference to the name of Reconciliation Australia, or the name of a formal program or document such as a Reconciliation Action Plan



Elders



Traditional Owners/Custodians



Country (and corresponding terms such as 'Land; when it is used in place of 'Country'



Acknowledgement of Country, Welcome to Country

A close-up photograph of two handprints pressed into fine, reddish-brown sand. The handprints are light-colored, contrasting with the darker sand. They are positioned one above the other, with the top handprint being more complete and the bottom one partially obscured by the sand's texture.

2. Respecting Country

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians are still connected to the Country of their ancestors and most consider themselves the custodians or caretakers of their land. It is imperative that we show respect to this land, and involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians in this process.

*“Country’...we mean something beyond the dictionary definition of the word. ...we might mean homeland, or tribal or clan area and we might mean more than just a place on the map. For us, Country is a word for all the values, places, resources, stories and cultural obligations associated with that area and its features. It describes the entirety of our ancestral domains.”
(Professor Mick Dodson)*

This respect to Country should be acknowledged in meetings, gatherings, and events through a Welcome to Country or an Acknowledgement of Country. This reminds us that every day we live, work, and dream on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land.

a) Welcome to Country

History:

Protocols for welcoming visitors to Country have always been a part of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. When permission was granted the hosting group would welcome the visitors, offering them safe passage and protection of their spiritual being during the journey. Today, while these protocols have been adapted to contemporary circumstances, the essential elements remain: welcoming visitors and respect for Country.

Delivery:

Welcome to Country is delivered by Traditional Owners, or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who have been given permission from Traditional Owners, to welcome visitors to their Country.

Your local Aboriginal Land Council or Native Title representative body can advise on organising a Welcome to Country by a Traditional Owner in your area.

Welcome to Country occurs at the beginning of a formal event and can take many forms including singing, dancing, smoking ceremonies, and/or a speech.





b) Acknowledgement of Country

An Acknowledgement of Country is an opportunity for anyone to show respect for Traditional Owners and the continuing connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to Country.

Delivery: An Acknowledgement of Country can be offered by any person and like a Welcome to Country, is given at the beginning of a meeting, speech or event.

There is no specific wording for an Acknowledgement of Country, just be sincere and, if possible, do some research on the Country you are acknowledging.

Example:

“I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land we meet on today, the (Insert People and Lands) and would like to pay my respect to Elders past and present.”

If you are unsure what country you are on, please use this resource developed by The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies to identify the traditional owners: <https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/map-indigenous-australia>.



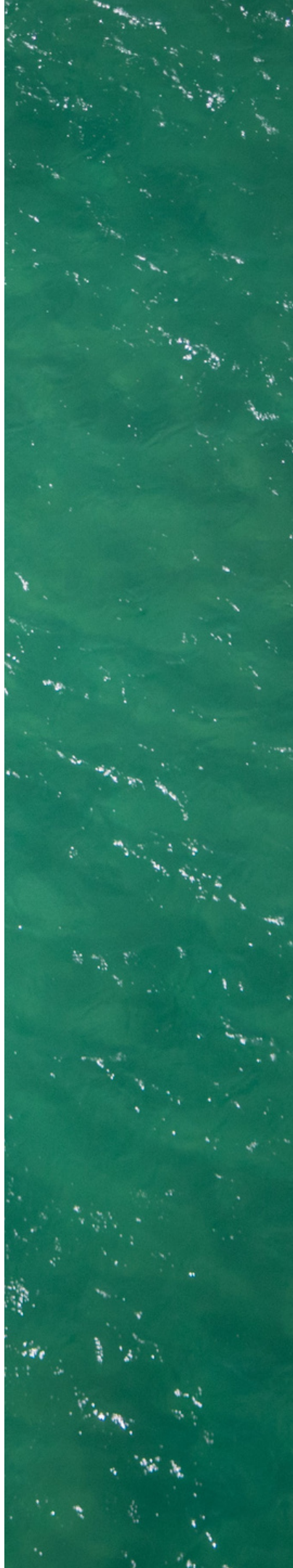
3. Imagery

a) Photographs

Some Indigenous artists apply cultural sensitivity by seeking consent from family members to use photographs of family, or by only using Indigenous language group material from their own regions.

Other artists feel that unless they can ascertain the origins of archival photographs and gain permission then it may be unwise to reproduce or use such images – particularly where there is little or no information about the individual or community depicted in the photograph.

Some Indigenous artists have developed cultural sensitivity practices such as:

- Not using old photographs of deceased people in their work;
 - Clearly discussing proposed future uses of photographs and getting written release forms when taking photographs of people;
 - Working in close collaboration with an Indigenous community, giving them joint control of the project; and
 - Using photographs only of their own family members and/or language groups.
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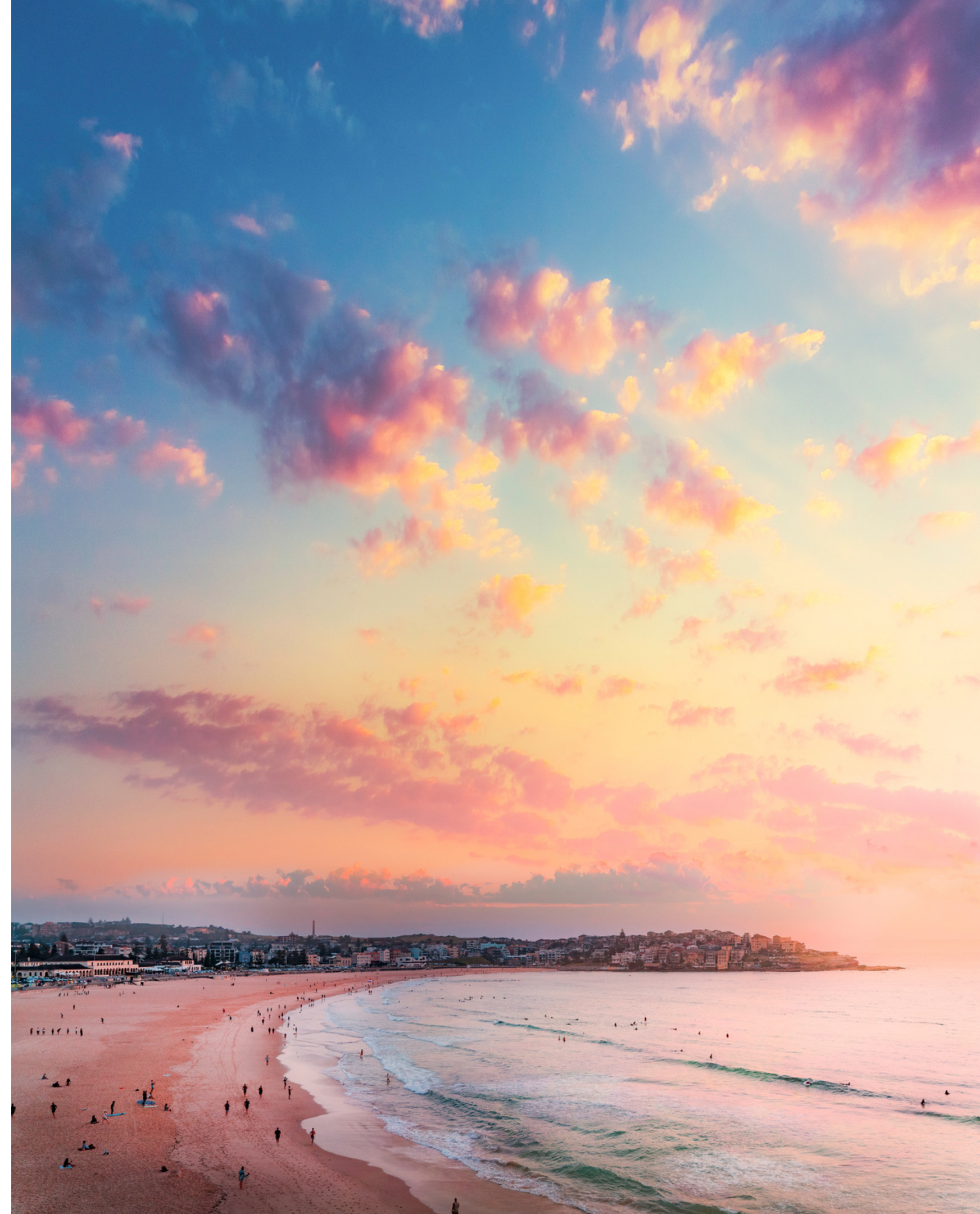
b) Indigenous imagery

As with any photograph, permission is required from the photographer to reproduce works protected by copyright. Copyright generally protects photographs created by living artists or by an artist who passed away less than 70 years ago.

In circumstances where a photograph is being altered or adapted, special consent must be sought in writing. However, certain cultural imagery is not suitable for adaption or alteration and is considered culturally inappropriate— such as any artwork that embodies a creation story.

Although some very old artworks may no longer be in copyright, it is still good practice to consult with Indigenous people for the use of these works. Although such works might be able to be sourced and copied from the internet or accessed from cultural institutions, permission for context and use is culturally appropriate. Attribution is also important.

Consent may be required where communally owned knowledge is used — it is therefore important to develop strong consultative ties with the owners of material to keep them informed of how you intend to use it. Owners should be informed of any intended use by third parties to who you might license the rights.



4. Representations of deceased people

In many Indigenous communities, the reproduction of names and images of deceased people is not permitted.

Where a deceased Indigenous person is the subject of an arts project, the person's family or community should be consulted and their wishes observed. This should be considered when using sound recordings, films, images or other portrays of those that have passed.

Cultural protocols may include not allowing artworks of a recently deceased artist for a certain time after their death. It may also be offensive to name or show photos of deceased persons in books or written materials.



5. Sources

- Reconciliation Australia, *Acknowledgement and Welcome to Country*: <https://www.reconciliation.org.au/reconciliation/acknowledgement-of-country-and-welcome-to-country/>
- Reconciliation Australia, *Demonstrating inclusive and respectful language*: <https://www.reconciliation.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/inclusive-and-respectful-language.pdf>
- Monash University, *Inclusive Language*: <https://www.monash.edu/about/editorialstyle/writing/inclusive-language>
- Public Health Association Australia, *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Guide to Terminology*: <https://www.phaa.net.au/documents/item/2292>
- Australian Government Style Manual, *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples*: <https://www.stylemanual.gov.au/accessible-and-inclusive-content/inclusive-language/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-peoples#:~:text='Indigenous'%20and%20'Aboriginal',not%20be%20comfortable%20with%20it.>
- Australian Government, *Protocols for using First Nations Cultural and Intellectual Property in the Arts*, Pages 45, 53: <https://apo.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/2020-09/apo-nid308574.pdf>
- Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies: <https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/map-indigenous-australia>



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