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Relationship building in CARE

Monday 13 October 2025 18:00 (1h 30m)

The presentation will discuss the importance of relationship building between the university researchers and local Aboriginal community organisations as part of a national research project. The project from the University of Melbourne is led by Distinguished Prof Marica Langton included the current presenters who are members of the research team.

The research project was codesigned by university researchers and three community controlled organisations of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service Brisbane, Southeast Queensland, Binarri Binyja Yarrawoo (BBY) East Kimberley, Western Australia and Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara NPY Women's Council Alice Springs, NT.

Of the four priority reforms for action from the National Agreement on Closing the Gap 2020 (National Agreement) this research project was developed in relation to priority 4. The sharing data and information with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have more power to determine their own development. The project codesign involved preliminary meetings between the researchers and members of each community controlled organisation to put community agreements in place. These preliminary meetings are where much of the relationship building is located to establish the ongoing relationships throughout the project. Relationship is more important than the task. The protocol of providing information about yourself and your cultural location so people can connect and establish a relationship with you culturally, socially and politically. This was for non-Indigenous people as well so that they could connect with the Indigenous individual, family and community too (Corporal 2017).

The community priorities of Indigenous data governance and data ecosystems as well as technical infrastructure and Indigenous data capacity building were the main aims of the interview questions that were agreed on

The process of building relationships with each of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisations was an important part of the process to have a connection with the local community organisations, families and individuals. Building relationships takes time and one of the most appropriate ways of building relationships is through listening to stories. Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, especially Elders, tell the stories or yarning and if you listen closely, you will hear what they want to tell you (Corporal 2017) p:221

This project has the potential to produce outcomes from a grassroots focus on Indigenous data stewardship and data governance, with potential results that can be upscaled across community-controlled organisations nationally.

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