

## **ADVISORY NOTE**

# **THE PORTRAYAL OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES**

This Advisory Note is intended to help and encourage reporters and program producers to produce programs which treat the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as an integral and important part of contemporary Australia, and which respect the dignity, traditions, diversity and contemporary achievements of these peoples. It also suggests ways to avoid encouraging or endorsing prejudice, stereotyping or unwarranted generalisation. As such, it will also be of assistance to programmers, program promotion producers and program classifiers. This note should be read with the separate Advisory Note on the Portrayal of Cultural Diversity.

1. In reporting or portraying events or situations concerning Indigenous peoples, you should be conscious of your own preconceptions, avoid stereotyping, and be aware of the cultural norms and experiences of Indigenous peoples.
2. Balanced portrayal is particularly important when the reports or programs deal with negative aspects of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' lives. Descriptions of problems should, where possible, be balanced by details of efforts being made by the people themselves to resolve them, and should provide an opportunity for the person or group concerned to comment on the issue.
3. To avoid misrepresenting Indigenous peoples' circumstances and traditions, reporters should, wherever practicable, consult local Indigenous groups when preparing news and current affairs. Program makers should encourage Indigenous peoples' involvement in all relevant stages of production of programs relating to them.
4. You should respect local social protocols and codes of behaviour, and obtain any necessary permission before entering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
5. You should be careful not to use language which Indigenous peoples find offensive or discriminatory. This includes terms such as 'Full-blood', 'Half-caste', 'Part-Aboriginal', 'Walkabout' and the use of 'Aboriginal' except as an adjective (i.e. avoid reference to 'an Aboriginal').
6. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander paintings and symbols should not be used in programs without seeking appropriate advice or permission.
7. Indigenous religious and cultural beliefs should be respected, particularly the widespread prohibition on displaying images of the deceased or naming them during periods of mourning. When the mourning period cannot readily be ascertained, the use of images of recently deceased Aboriginal persons should be preceded by an appropriate oral warning.
8. In scripting and casting drama and selecting on-air talent, management and producers should be concerned to reflect the place of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in contemporary Australia.