



## Participant Information Sheet

### Researchers

Prof Naomi Priest

Centre for Social Policy Research | Australian National University

Dr Olivia Evans (Gomeroi)

Research School of Psychology | Australian National University

### Project Title

‘We know what’s going on’ – Racism towards Aboriginal peoples in the SA Education system

### Outline of the project

**Description and Methodology:** This research, organised by Reconciliation South Australia (SA) and guided by an Aboriginal governance group, aims to understand the experiences of Aboriginal educators with racism and anti-racism in South Australian schools. Through individual interviews and group discussions, the study will gather insights from current and former Aboriginal educators to highlight their perspectives and inform future actions to address racism in education. Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander current and former educators will be eligible, though we use Aboriginal throughout to reflect the language of Reconciliation SA and to reflect the South Australian population where fewer than 1000 people identify as Torres Strait Islander (with approximately 43 500 people identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander at the last Census).

Addressing racism towards Aboriginal peoples is a priority for Reconciliation SA. A State free of racism where relationships between all Australians are respectful of cultures, rights and experiences is one of five identified dimensions of reconciliation identified by Reconciliation SA. Reconciliation SA conducts anti-racism training in schools, workplaces and sports settings and has developed an anti-racism toolkit for educators and school staff.

While reconciliation is not the primary focus of this research, truth-telling is a crucial element in the broader reconciliation process. This study aims to document and understand Indigenous educators’ experiences of racism in the South Australian education system, bringing to light structural inequities that shape their professional and personal lives. Recognising and addressing these experiences is a necessary step toward reconciliation, as it fosters awareness, accountability, and systemic change.

**Participants:** Participants include current or former Aboriginal education staff who have worked in government, Catholic, or independent schools or early learning centres in SA. This includes both teaching and non-teaching staff. We aim to conduct about 10-15 interviews and 3-5 focus groups, and the exact number will depend on when we reach enough information to understand the patterns. We also have an option to respond to interview questions online via a free-text response form if you do not wish to be part of an interview or focus group but would still like to participate.

**Use of data and Feedback:** The information participants share will help us better understand racism in education and suggest ways to improve anti-racism strategies. The results will be used to create reports, presentations, and articles for journals. Once the research is finished, participants will receive a summary of the results, showing how their input helped the study. The summary will be in an easy-to-understand format, and participants can review it before it is shared with others.

**Project Funding:** The research is supported by Reconciliation SA.

**Indigenous Data Sovereignty:** The research team respect and uphold Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Indigenous Data Governance in this project. Attached is a summary document describing how this project meets principles outlined in the Maïam nayri Wingara Indigenous Data Sovereignty [Communique 2018](#).

## Participant Involvement

**Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal:** Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You do not have to take part if you do not want to, and you can choose to stop at any time without giving a reason. If you decide to withdraw, you can let us know, and we will make sure that any data you have provided is not included in the study. You can also choose to not answer any questions you are not comfortable answering. Your decision to withdraw or skip questions will not affect you in any way.

**What does participation involve:** If you agree to participate in this research, we will ask you to take part in an individual interview, a group discussion or provide written free-text responses online. We will explore your experiences as an Aboriginal educator in the SA education system. Interviews and focus groups will be audio recorded so we can accurately capture what you say. Afterward, we will transcribe the recording into text for analysis. Before we finish analysing the data, if you have participated in an individual interview we will send you a copy of the transcript so you can review it and suggest any changes if needed. We will also send you a transcript of your online responses if you participate this way. Your recordings will be stored safely on a password protected device, and only the research team will have access to them during the project. The information you share may include sensitive topics, such as your experiences with racism, so please feel free to only answer questions you are comfortable with. Your contribution is important, and we want to make sure you feel comfortable and informed throughout the process.

**Location and duration:** The research will happen either online or in person at an appropriate location of your choosing (e.g., at the Reconciliation SA offices, a private community space). Each interview or group discussion will last about 45 minutes and will be audio recorded to ensure the accuracy of the information collected. You can choose to be interviewed by an Aboriginal or a non-Aboriginal researcher, to chat to us first before you decide if you go ahead, and you can also bring a support person with you. The online response form will take between 15-30 minutes and can be done at any time you wish using a web-enabled device.

**Remuneration:** As a thank-you for your participation, you will receive a \$30 Coles or Myer gift voucher.

**Risks:** There are some risks involved in this research. Talking about your experiences with racism may cause discomfort or emotional distress, and in some cases, it could bring up difficult memories. There is also a small risk that someone else might identify you based on what you share, despite our efforts

to keep your identity private. If you feel uncomfortable at any time, you can stop the interview or group discussion and skip any questions you do not want to answer. To support you, we can provide contact details for culturally appropriate counselling services like 13 YARN or Wellmob, or for Lifeline, where you can speak to someone if you need help. We will also provide information about how to make a complaint about racism to the Equal Opportunity Commission SA, the Australian Human Rights Commission or directly to the SA Department for Education.

**Benefits:** It is unlikely that you will personally benefit from participating in this research, but your involvement will help improve understanding of racism in the education system and support the development of better anti-racism strategies. Findings from this study will be used to inform policies and practices that aim to create safer and more inclusive environments for Aboriginal educators and students. Your experiences and insights will help bring attention to important issues and contribute to positive changes in education, benefiting the broader Aboriginal community and society as a whole.

**Exclusion criteria:** You will not be included in the study if you are under 18 years old, as this research is focused on the experiences of adult Aboriginal educators. Additionally, if you do not identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, or if you do not have experience working in the SA education system (early childhood, primary or secondary schools across government, independent or catholic schools), you will not be eligible to participate. If you do not provide consent to be recorded, you will also be excluded from the study.

### Confidentiality:

- **Who will have access:** Only the authorised research team will have access to the material you provide. No one outside the research team will have access to information that can identify you.
- **Data:** Your data will be stored securely on password-protected computers and in a secure online folder managed by the Australian National University, accessible only by the research team. To protect your confidentiality, your name and any identifying details will be removed from the data, and if you choose you will be given a pseudonym (a fake name) in all reports and publications. A separate document linking your real name to your pseudonym will be kept securely during the analysis phase and deleted once the analysis is complete.
- **Attribution:** The information you share will be attributed using a pseudonym (a fake name) if you choose in all reports, presentations, and publications. If you do not choose using a pseudonym (a fake name), your real name or any details that could identify you will not be used unless you request this specifically.

**Confidential or Anonymous:** We will not tell anyone who you are or that you told us what you did unless you say it is okay for us to. If you tell us certain things – e.g., that someone might be hurt – we might need to report this, so try not to tell us things like that. Confidentiality will be protected as far as the law allows.

**Focus Groups** If you choose to participate in a focus group, please be aware that other group members will hear your contributions and may know who you are. We ask everyone to respect the confidentiality of the group by not sharing what is discussed outside of the session. To help protect your privacy, please avoid sharing sensitive or highly personal information or making statements that could be considered defamatory about any person. We will not be able to remove comments from

group discussion transcripts as we can for interviews as it can be hard to identify who has said which comments and to remove specific comments that may be the centre or linked to a larger discussion.

## Privacy Notice

In collecting your personal information within this research, the ANU must comply with the Privacy Act 1988. The ANU Privacy Policy is available at <https://policies.anu.edu.au/ppl/document/ANUP010007>. It contains information about how a person can:

- Access or seek correction to their personal information;
- Complain about a breach of an Australian Privacy Principle by ANU, and how ANU will handle the complaint

## Data Storage

**Where:** The information you share will be stored securely on password-protected computers and in a secure online folder managed by the Australian National University (ANU). Any physical records will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in the Principal Investigator's office (Prof Naomi Priest). During the research, we will take all necessary steps to protect your personal information, including using encryption and restricted access.

**How long:** The information you provide will be stored securely for a minimum period of five years from the date of any publications arising from this research. This is in line with ethical guidelines.

**Handling of data following the required storage period:** We will not use the primary data and information collected for future research. Rather the report findings from this study will be made public, so they can contribute to ongoing work on racism and anti-racism. After the storage period, the data will be permanently deleted from all ANU devices by the Principal Investigator (Prof Naomi Priest) to ensure your privacy. If you consent, project data will be archived at the Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) at the conclusion of the project. At AIATSIS these materials can be preserved and made available in the future. When donating materials to AIATSIS you can place conditions on who can access them, although it is advisable to consider if this is absolutely necessary now and in the future. You will be given a further opportunity to declare any restrictions on access to the information you provide before it is donated to AIATSIS. If you do not wish for your data to be archived at AIATSIS, please participate via interview or online survey, as we will not be able to remove individual information from focus group recordings.

## Queries and Concerns

**Contact details for more information:** If you have any questions or need more information about this study, please contact the Prof Naomi Priest [naomi.priest@anu.edu.au](mailto:naomi.priest@anu.edu.au). Or Dr Olivia Evans (Gomerai) [olivia.evans@anu.edu.au](mailto:olivia.evans@anu.edu.au) We are happy to assist with any queries you may have.

**Contact details if in distress:** If you find any part of this study distressing or would like someone to talk to, support is available. You can contact 13 YARN or Lifeline on 13 11 14 for 24/7 confidential crisis support (see more details in the attached Distress Protocol).

## Ethics Committee Clearance

The ethical aspects of this research have been approved by the ANU Human Research Ethics Committee (Protocol H/2024/1233).

If you have any concerns or complaints about how this research has been conducted, please contact:

Ethics Manager  
The ANU Human Research Ethics Committee  
The Australian National University  
Telephone: +61 2 6125 3427  
Email: [Human.Ethics.Officer@anu.edu.au](mailto:Human.Ethics.Officer@anu.edu.au)