

**GUNDITJ MIRRORING**

Traditional Owners  
Aboriginal Corporation  
RNTBC

# GUNDITJ MIRRORING TRADITIONAL OWNER ABORIGINAL CORPORATION RESEARCH PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES:

*CREATING PARTNERSHIPS FOR RESEARCH WITH GUNDITJMARA  
AND/OR ON GUNDITJMARA COUNTRY*

The Gunditj Miring Traditional Owner Aboriginal Corporation (**GMTOAC**) Research Guidelines (**the Guidelines**) are designed to inform prospective researchers who wish to undertake research projects on Gunditjmara Country or with Gunditjmara.

These Guidelines will assist researchers to engage with the Gunditjmara and Gunditjmara Country in an ethical and culturally responsive manner.

Any potential research can only be approved if it will enrich, protect and promote Gunditjmara well-being (cultural, social, economic, political, physical and/or spiritual).

These Guidelines were endorsed by the GMTOAC Chief Executive Officer on 23 November 2022.

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#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation (**GMTOAC**) would like to acknowledge all Gunditjmara and GMTOAC staff who contributed to the development of these Research Guidelines and Principles (**the Guidelines**).

Also, we would like to thank the Ngarrindjeri Regional Authority which shared with us the *Guidelines for Researching on Ngarrindjeri Ruwe/Ruwar (Lands, Waters, People and All Living Things)*. The Ngarrindjeri Guidelines were important in informing the content and the principles of these Guidelines.

GMTOAC has been working on Gunditjmara nation building with the Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research at the University of Technology Sydney, specifically Alison Vivian, the Native Nations Institute at the University of Arizona, the Ngarrindjeri Regional Authority, and individuals and groups from the Wiradjuri Nation funded by two Australian Research Council grants (DP1092654 and LP140100376). These Guidelines have been developed with assistance from that Indigenous Nation Building collaboration.

To discuss these Guidelines or the project approval process, please contact the GMTOAC Senior Policy and Research Officer at [research@gunditjmirring.com](mailto:research@gunditjmirring.com) or (03) 5527 1427.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

AIATSIS	Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
Cth	Commonwealth
DELWP	Department Environment Land Water and Planning
GMTOAC	Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owner Aboriginal Corporation
NHMRC	National Health and Medical Research Council
The Guidelines	Research Principles and Guidelines
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
Vic	Victoria

## 1. GUNDITJMARA VALUES

### ***"Ngatanwarr wartee pa kakay teen Gunditjmara mirring"***

Welcome brothers and sisters to Gunditjmara Country.

A message from Gunditjmara Elders:

*For Gunditjmara, 'Country' includes all living things - none better than the other but equal in its importance in forming this diverse natural landscape that is Gunditjmara Country.*

*Country means people, plants and animals alike. It embraces the seasons, stories and spirits of the creation. This flowing, connected cultural landscape possesses its own sacred places, languages, ceremonies, totems, art, clan groupings and law.*

*Our spirit is in this Country, from Koonang Mirring (Sea Country) up through Bocara Woorowarook Mirring (Glenelg River Forest Country) where Boandik Country north west of Bocara (Glenelg River) embraces Woorowarook Mirring (Forest country) and across the wetlands to Budj Bim (Mt Eccles) and Tungatt Mirring (Stone Country).*

*Our Country is a place of belonging and pride that comes with this belonging. We are proud to share many aspects of our land, art and culture with visitors/guests. It is a part of us and who we are, and we ask that you care for it when you visit. It is our responsibility to look after Country, our children will continue to look after Country, because that's the way it is and will be. (GMTOAC, DELWP, Parks Victoria, Budj Bim Council, 2015, p. 23).*

These Guidelines align with Gunditjmara cultural values of Country as expressed through cultural traditions, oral testimony, research, Gunditjmara-led studies and plans, and the Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation (GMTOAC) (2022) *Cultural Values of Gunditjmara Woorowarook* cultural values outline. These cultural values are attached to the landscape as a whole and to its individual components such as plant and animal species used by Gunditjmara. Gunditjmara traditional knowledge is maintained by millennia of oral transmission and continuity of Gunditjmara cultural traditions evidenced by exceptionally well preserved archaeological, environmental, and historical records.

These Guidelines should be read in conjunction with [The Burra Charter: The Australian ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance](#) (ICOMOS, 2013) and [Ask First: A guide to respecting Indigenous heritage places and values](#) (Australian Heritage Commission, 2002).

## 2. GUNDITJMARA COMMITMENT TO RESEARCH

We, the Gunditjmarra, have always maintained our cultural identity and asserted our rights and responsibility for Gunditjmarra Country. This stance is recorded in our oral traditions as well as in ethnographic and research references and government legislation and reports.

As a relatively small Traditional Owner community our work over the past decade in being awarded World Heritage status by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (**UNESCO**) for the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape and recognition by federal, state, and local governments, is unprecedented. Just as importantly, recognition by the broader community in the southwest of Victoria is positive and growing.

Our community has achieved a level of stability and capacity that has guided us towards achieving many goals. These include settling our lengthy native title claim, operating our ongoing obligations of cultural heritage management, the restoration of our wetlands and our lake, Tae Rak (Lake Condah), and the consolidation of our sustainable tourism vision. These achievements will ensure Gunditjmarra's future of always being on Country and continuing our connection to Gunditjmarra Country.

We recognise the importance of partnerships. The Gunditjmarra are a community that is supportive of research that assists us to achieve community aspirations. We have a strong history of commissioning research and engaging in research collaborations, including several key long-term partnerships with industry bodies, First Nations organisations, national and international universities. These collaborations have been an integral part of our success in areas such as native title, cultural heritage, and ecological and resource management.

There is still much work to be done to rectify the effects of dispossession, disadvantage, and poverty on our individual and collective prosperity, wealth, and well-being. The Gunditjmarra have achieved status as recognised Traditional Owners with rights and obligations in caring for Country. We have reached a level of capacity in conducting our own business. The ideals of achieving compensation, reparation, parity, and broader land justice are still held by the Gunditjmarra. This requires the construction of a formidable, broad-based, self-determined, and self-realised platform of Indigenous governance.

We support research, projects, programs, and activities that are conducted in partnership and that assist us to meet our cultural obligations in caring for Country as well as facilitating our prosperity and truly independent participation in the Australian economy. We support projects that assist the Gunditjmarra to achieve our aspirations.

### 3. BACKGROUND ABOUT GUNDITJMARA AND GUNDITJMARA COUNTRY

All researchers who wish to conduct research with Gunditjmara or on Gunditjmara Country should visit the [GMTOAC website](#) and should first at a minimum read:

- Commonwealth of Australia (2017), [Budj Bim Cultural Landscape: World Heritage Nomination](#).
- The Gunditjmara People with Gib Wettenhall (2010), [The People of Budj Bim. Engineers of aquaculture, builders of stone house settlements and warriors defending Country](#).
- Jessica K Weir (2009), [The Gunditjmara Land Justice Story](#).

#### **Gunditjmara Country**

Gunditjmara Country reflects the interconnectivity of place, people, plants, and animals. Country for the Gunditjmara is the relationship between those elements; the ties that direct how we care for and fulfil our obligations to Country. It embraces the seasons, stories and spirits of the Creation. This flowing, connected cultural landscape possesses sacred places, proud languages, vibrant ceremonies, strong totems, ancient art, unique clan groupings, and law and lore. Gunditjmara spirit is in this Country, from Tungatt (the stones), entwined in Woorrowarook (forests), along Bocara (Glenelg River) to the roaring Nyamat (sea) (GMTOAC, DELWP, Parks Victoria, Budj Bim Council, 2015, pp. 1, 7).

How Gunditjmara connect to Country is governed by where we live in the distinct regions of our Country: Bocara Woorrowarook Mirring – River Forest Country; Tungatt Mirring – Stone Country; Woorrowarook Mirring – Forest Country; and Koonang Mirring – Sea Country, and by our six seasons (Big Dry, Early Wet, Big Wet, Flowering Time, Fattening Up and Drying Out Time) (GMTOAC, DELWP, Parks Victoria, Budj Bim Council, 2015, pp. 7-11).

Gunditjmara Country is in what is now known as southwestern Victoria, bounded on three sides by the Glenelg, Wannon, and Hopkins (Mustons creek) rivers and by the coast on the fourth. Gunditjmara Country is dramatic: fertile and rich volcanic plains, rugged coastline, limestone caves, forests and rivers, underground aquifers, and geothermal energy provided the abundance that supported Gunditjmara for millennia (Weir, 2009, p. 8). Volcanic activity, eruptions, earthquakes, and tsunamis are part of our oral history that tells of an ancestral creation being who revealed himself in the centre of this landscape. His forehead is the volcano Budj Bim (high head) (formerly Mt Eccles) and his teeth, *tungatt*, are the scoria cones; ‘the stones’. Budj Bim was the source of the extensive lava flow that changed the environment entirely.

For at least 6,600 years (McNiven, et al., 2015), Gunditjmara engineers have used stone from the Tyrendarra lava flow to create a sophisticated aquaculture network. Insulated from all but the very worst drought, our Gunditjmara ancestors always had food security that provided the basis for permanent settlements (Gunditjmara people with Gib Wettenhall, 2010, pp. 18-23; Weir, 2009, p. 8; Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, 2010). Gunditjmara lived in circular stone houses in villages that formed part of the same cultural complex as the aquaculture system (Gunditjmara people with Gib Wettenhall, 2010, pp. 18-23).

The first site of invasion in what is now known as Victoria was in Gunditjmara Country where whalers and sealers annually visited Portland Bay, probably as early as 1810 (Kellaway & Rhodes, 2002, p. 21). The fertility of the volcanic soils and fresh water ecologies led to the intensification of European ‘settlement’ from the 1830s and the establishment of the town of Portland in 1834 (Weir, 2009, pp. 9-

10). The Gunditjmara resisted this European incursion for the 20 years of the Eumerella Wars, earning us the title 'The Fighting Gunditjmara' (Weir, 2009, p. 9).

In 1861, the Victorian colonial government created a system of Aboriginal reserves and established the Framlingham Aboriginal Reserve on 3,500 acres on the eastern boundary of Gunditjmara Country (Koorie Heritage Trust, 2010). In 1869 an Anglican mission was established on a 2,043 acre reserve at Tae Rak (Lake Condah), close to kooyang traps and within sight of Budj Bim (Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, 2010). Despite the closure of the Lake Condah mission in 1919, the school and church remained in operation and the remaining Gunditjmara maintained a strong community. In 1951 the Victorian government revoked the Lake Condah Reserve's status as protected land and transferred title to the Soldiers Settlement Commission (Weir, 2009, p. 10). The revocation became a source of intense bitterness for the Gunditjmara, because of the unilateral land transfer and because Gunditjmara servicemen had their applications for their own traditional lands rejected by the Commission (Weir, 2009, pp. 10-11). Gunditjmara continued to set fish traps at the lake and the creek, attend church, and arrange social gatherings at the mission site until St Mary's Church was demolished in 1957 by government authorities.

In 1970, in response to calls for Aboriginal land rights across Australia, the Victorian Government introduced the *Aboriginal Lands Act* (1970). The Gunditjmara made several attempts to have parts of Gunditjmara Country returned to community control but all were unsuccessful until the acquisition of the Lake Condah mission site and cemetery in the early 1980s through the 1981 *Onus v Alcoa of Australia* (147 CLR 27) judgment in the High Court (Weir, 2009, p. 14). The Gunditjmara continued in their efforts to reclaim Country and in 1998 the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission purchased the Tyrendarra property and vested the land with the Winda Mara Aboriginal Corporation. GMTOAC manages nine other properties along the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape. Overall, the combined area owned by GMTOAC is approximately 2,830 hectares.

Further action to secure control of Gunditjmara Country resulted in a non-exclusive native title determination for the Gunditjmara made by consent on 30 March 2007 (Part A) and on 27 July 2011 (Part B). Since that time, the Gunditjmara have gone from strength to strength, culminating on 6 July 2019 in our successful bid to have the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

## 4. GUNDITJ MIRRORING TRADITIONAL OWNERS ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

The GMTOAC was established in 2006 by Gunditjmarra Traditional Owners in the far southwest of Victoria. On behalf of, and as directed by Gunditjmarra Traditional Owners and native title holders, the GMTOAC manages the interests and obligations of the Gunditjmarra in relation to native title, cultural heritage, our land holdings, developments and aspirations.

GMTOAC is scheduled as a Prescribed Body Corporate under the *Native Title Act (1993)* (Cth) following the successful finalisation of the Gunditjmarra native title claim in March 2007. GMTOAC is also scheduled as a Registered Aboriginal Party pursuant to the *Aboriginal Heritage Act (2006)* (Vic).

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### 4.1 THE OBJECTIVES OF GMTOAC

The core objectives of the Corporation are:

- I. To relieve poverty, sickness, suffering, distress, misfortune, destitution, and helplessness amongst the Gunditjmarra, recognising that such poverty, sickness, suffering, distress, misfortune, destitution, and helplessness result from Gunditjmarra people having been progressively dispossessed of their lands and/or waters, without compensation, because of which they have become socially and economically disempowered.
- II. To ensure that the responsibilities and duties that arise under Gunditjmarra lore and law, custom, and beliefs are carried out in relation to:
  - a. The protection of, and caring for, Country.
  - b. The protection and continuation of Gunditjmarra lore (law) and custom.
- III. To promote, protect and manage Aboriginal Cultural Heritage.

In addition, the corporation performs several administrative functions pursuant to various legislative and policy objectives.

## 5. GUNDITJMARA PRINCIPLES GUIDING RESEARCH

### 5.1 INDIGENOUS RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

GMTOAC encourages researchers to adopt Indigenous research methodologies to guide the development of research proposals or any other project to be undertaken in collaboration with the Gunditjmara.

The research methodologies applied should, at a minimum, involve:

- Ensuring free and prior consent of Gunditjmara participants
- Joint research design by academics and Gunditjmara
- Research that supports Gunditjmara self-determination
- Ethical research consistent to Gunditjmara
- Position Gunditjmara as the authorisers of research
- Incorporate Gunditjmara knowledges in theorising and research design
- Acknowledge Gunditjmara as the owners of these knowledges, and
- Strive for ongoing collaboration and mutual benefit.

### 5.2 KEY GUNDITJMARA REQUIREMENTS OF RESEARCHERS

A key requirement of any research or other project involving Gunditjmara or Gunditjmara Country is:

- Gunditjmara engagement in all aspects of the research from planning and implementation to analysis and reporting
- The objective of increased Gunditjmara capacity as an outcome, and
- Compliance with the appropriate Gunditjmara cultural protocols and cultural, intellectual, and property rights.

Approval and endorsement from the GMTOAC will be given to researchers who are committed to acting in full and equal partnership with the Gunditjmara.

We expect that researchers who are proposing projects will comply with these Guidelines, the [AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research](#) (AIATSIS, 2020) and the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) (United Nations General Assembly, 2007).

The Guidelines provide further guidance on the application of those standards in Gunditjmara People and Country research. The Guidelines should be read in conjunction with the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#) (NHMRC, 2018 (2007)) and the [National Statement of Ethical Conduct in Human Research](#) (National Health and Medical Research Council, 2007) and the Burra Charter Practice Notes, especially [Understanding and Assessing Cultural Significance](#), [Intangible Cultural Heritage and Place](#) and [The Burra Charter and Indigenous Cultural Heritage Management](#).

GMTOAC requires that researchers will:

- Review all GMTOAC strategic documents, policies and masterplans that are current at the time of application and ensure the proposed project is in compliance.
- Develop respectful and productive working relationships with us to produce research projects that are conducted with our free, prior and informed consent.
- Engage with us at each stage of the research as genuine partners.

- Actively engage with us to develop research that aligns with our aspirations, goals and strategies, and that the research design responds to the challenges that we identify.
- Conduct research that values and reinforces our knowledge, traditions, rights and responsibilities to Country, experiences and multiple perspectives.
- Formally acknowledge and protect our ownership of Gunditjmara Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property.
- Work towards the development of new knowledge in partnership with us and wherever appropriate co-author publications, reports and articles.
- Develop research that adds value to ongoing Gunditjmara projects and ideas and does not drain our resources (financial, staffing or equipment).
- Formally acknowledge our contribution to the research, and acknowledge the co-creation of knowledge in all publications, reports and articles.
- Assist us to evaluate the correlation between our aspirations and the policy directions of federal, state, and local governments, and to identify strategies to deal with the differences.
- Produce high quality and appropriately designed research projects that give the same weight to achieving our aspirations as the obligations our partners have to their employers or other funders.
- Develop appropriate ways to present research findings and project outcomes that are relevant and useful to our community.
- Assist us to identify opportunities for mutually beneficial partnerships that build upon existing relationships.
- Commit to long term and ongoing partnerships that foster trust and confidence to support the co-creation of research.

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### 5.3 STAGES IN DEVELOPING RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS

The stages in developing a research partnership are directed at developing genuine and mutually beneficial partnerships and building ongoing relationships.

#### **Relationship building**

Contact the GMTOAC Senior Policy and Research Officer  
Where appropriate engage with GMTOAC and Gunditjmara at the conceptualisation stage  
Consult in relation to GMTOAC research or community development priorities  
Discuss what is involved in obtaining informed consent



#### **Developing the research or project proposal**

Collaborate with GMTOAC and Gunditjmara to develop clear research goals  
Reach agreement on Gunditjmara involvement and resource input  
Discuss potential difficulties and create procedures to handle disputes or conflict  
Obtain GMTOAC approval, and where appropriate relevant university and/or other ethics clearance  
Reach agreement on intellectual property, confidentiality, and knowledge creation  
Develop publication approvals process and agreement on dissemination of knowledge  
Reach agreement on analysis and reporting requirements and form of ongoing partnership  
Finalise and enter into project agreement



#### **Implementing and monitoring the project**

Maintain ongoing communication  
Fulfil agreed number of research conversations, meetings and other engagements  
Monitor opportunities for training, education and development for Gunditjmara participants  
Submit progress reports as agreed



#### **Analysing results**

Provide opportunity for GMTOAC and Gunditjmara to contribute to project analysis and to co-author publications  
Meet with GMTOAC personnel and arrange workshops to report on preliminary findings  
Provide preliminary reports as agreed for feedback and amendment



**Reporting**

Produce findings in an agreed format that is relevant and useful to GMTOAC and Guditjmarra

Ensure compliance with publication approval protocols

Maintain confidentiality as requested

Ensure Guditjmarra cultural knowledge is protected

Ensure appropriate acknowledgments of GMTOAC and Guditjmarra engagement and co-authorship



**Maintaining community partnerships**

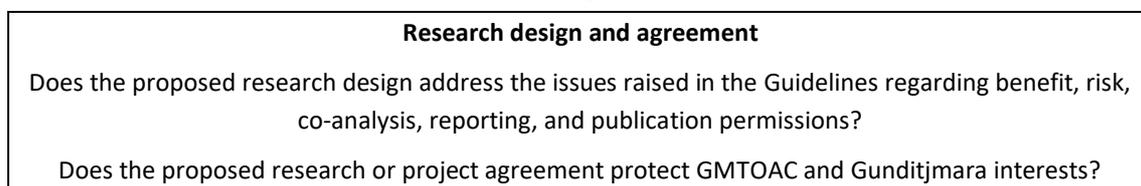
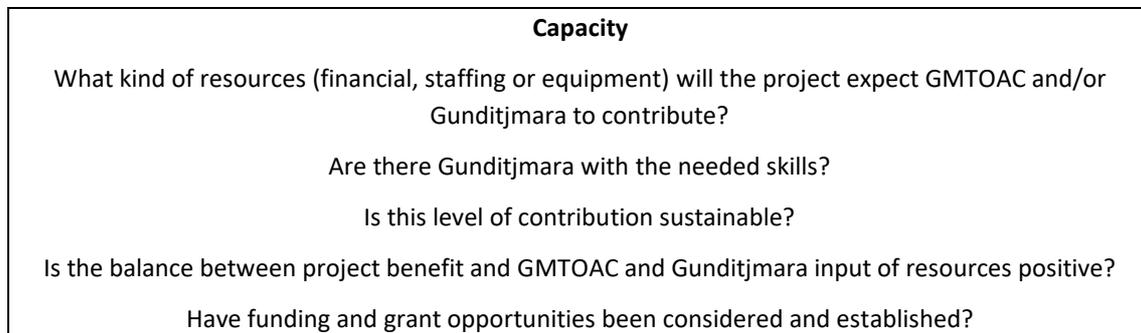
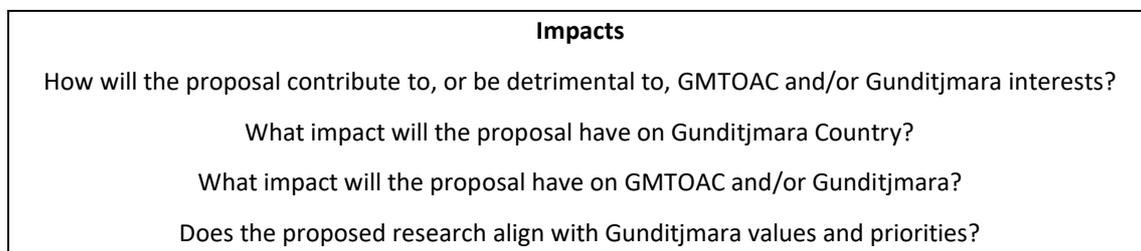
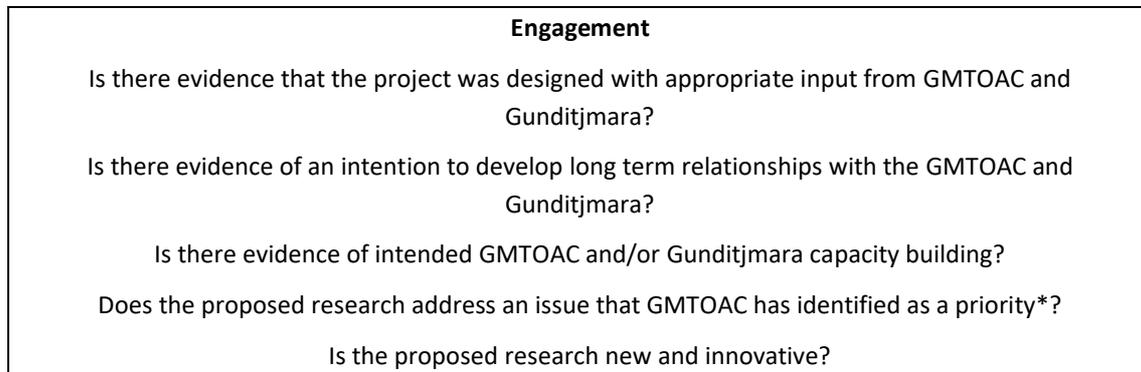
Continue ongoing engagement and conversations

Investigate opportunities for further research and engagement

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#### 5.4 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA FOR GUNDITJMARA APPROVAL OF RESEARCH OR OTHER PROJECT

Research and other project proposals will be assessed against the following criteria:



\*GMTOAC research priorities can be obtained by contacting the GMTOAC Senior Policy and Research Officer.

## 6. HOW THE RESEARCH SHOULD BE CONDUCTED

### 6.1 RESEARCH OUTPUTS AND PROJECT OUTCOMES

#### 6.1.1 STORAGE OF DATA AND SECURITY

With regard to data storage and security, researchers will develop protocols with GMTOAC about:

- Where data, materials, and created knowledge will be stored,
- Who will have access to data, materials, and created knowledge,
- Whether data, materials, and created knowledge will be collected that will need sensitive storage,
- Where and how sensitive data, materials and, created knowledge should be stored, and
- Who owns the knowledge that is created. If Gunditjmara own the knowledge, researchers will develop procedures to return or destroy Gunditjmara knowledge with GMTOAC in line with best practice in regard to Indigenous cultural and intellectual property rights, copyright and moral rights.

With regard to sensitive information and confidentiality, researchers will:

- Respect the sensitivity of Gunditjmara's and Gunditjmara individuals'/families'/clans' information:
  - Including special attention to maintaining confidentiality outside the research or project team,
- Respect Gunditjmara research participants rights to confidentiality,
- Provide anonymity for Gunditjmara who request it (to the extent possible),
- Submit drafts of reports or publications to GMTOAC and/or Gunditjmara research participants for approval as agreed, and
- Welcome feedback on any reports or publications.

#### 6.1.2 PROTECTION OF GUNDITJMARA CULTURAL AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

All researchers and research methodologies must address GMTOAC policies in relation to Indigenous cultural and intellectual property rights, copyright and moral rights.

#### 6.1.3 PUBLICATION PERMISSIONS

With regard to publishing quotations, stories or information from interviewees, researchers will:

- Allow any research participant who is to be quoted an opportunity to amend or remove quotations,
- Respect research participants' right to determine how they are described in publications. For example, participants might be identified by name, by title/job description or by some more general description of their choice (e.g. community worker, Elder, organisation employee), and
- Provide 'anonymity' for interviewees when requested (to the extent possible).

With regard to acknowledging the partnership with GMTOAC, researchers will:

- Include a paragraph in publications that acknowledges that the knowledge created throughout the project has been co-created in partnership with Gunditjmara individuals, GMTOAC and/or the Gunditjmara.

With regard to analysis of results, researchers will:

- Share draft reports and publications with project participants/interviewees for comment and correction, and
- Share draft reports and publications with GMTOAC for comment and correction.

With regard to reporting findings, researchers will develop protocols and agreements with GMTOAC to:

- Provide a clear and concise statement of research findings that is meaningful for Gunditjmara.
- Present results to Gunditjmara in an appropriate format as determined by GMTOAC, and
- Wherever possible, engage with representatives of the Gunditjmara when presenting results to external parties and, wherever possible, co-present findings.

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## 6.2 RESEARCH INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORMS

With regard to information about the project that is going to be disclosed to research participants, best practice suggests that, at a minimum, the following information should be included in information materials and consent/affirmation forms:

- A description of the purpose of the research, or other project, program, or activity,
- What will be required of the potential research participant should they decide to participate in the study,
- Any risks to research participants in the study,
- That potential research participants who are requested to participate in the research project have the right to refuse without consequence,
- That research participants who have agreed to participate in research or other project, program, or activity have the right to withdraw their consent at any stage without consequence,
- Information about publication approvals processes,
- Information about whether research participants who have agreed to participate in research will be quoted, or how information that they provide will be used and how consent to this will be obtained,
- Information about research participants' right to amend or remove quotations,
- Information about research participant's right to review how information or stories that they have disclosed will be used and right to withdraw consent to their use,
- Information about confidentiality protection,
- Whether audio or video recordings will be made of the research or project participant and what will happen to those recordings, and
- Information about who to contact if the person has concerns, queries or complaints about research activities.

All information collected during this process will be considered private and confidential and will only be used for the purpose of gaining research approval or collaborative funding through grant applications.

## 7. COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES

Regarding research undertaken that is expected to have a commercial outcome, researchers will:

- Fully disclose to the GMTOAC the nature of any potential commercial activity at the outset,
- Develop protocols and agreements in relation to the commercial benefit to the GMTOAC and/or the Gunditjmara that will arise from the research, and
- Develop protocols and agreements in relation to reporting of research findings and project outcomes in a manner that is relevant and useful to Gunditjmara.

Regarding Gunditjmara Cultural Knowledge (and in particular Gunditjmara scientific, spatial, agricultural, technical, biological, and ecological knowledge) that may contribute to any commercial activity, scientific discovery, patent or may be put to any use whatsoever, researchers will:

- Develop protocols and agreements as to how Gunditjmara Indigenous cultural and intellectual property rights, copyright and moral rights will be acknowledged and ownership protected, and
- Develop protocols and agreements in relation to the commercial benefit to the Gunditjmara that will arise.

## 8. DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCEDURES.

Following approval of a research or other project and prior to commencement researchers and GMTOAC must develop internal and external dispute resolution procedures in line with the current GMTOAC Disputes Complaints Compliments and Feedback Policy.

## 9. TERMINATION OF AGREEMENT

If either GMTOAC or researchers wish to terminate the research partnership, researchers will develop protocols with GMTOAC in relation to:

- a) The terms of termination, including, but not limited to:
  - Reasonable grounds for termination, such as breaches of these Guidelines, and
  - Suitable timeframes for termination.
- b) The consequences of termination, including, but not limited to:
  - Payment of any outstanding, reasonable costs, and
  - Return or destruction processes for any confidential information, cultural knowledge, or other material created during the research project.

## PART III THE GUNDITJMARA REVIEW AND APPROVAL PROCESS FOR PROPOSED RESEARCH

After initial engagement with the GMTOAC Senior Policy and Research Officer to conceptualise and develop the project, the research proposal must obtain approval from the GMTOAC Executive Group **before** research commences. The application process is as follows:

1. The applicant should obtain the Gunditjmara Research Approval Form (found at GUNDITJMARA RESEARCH APPROVAL FORM below) and the GMTOAC Research Guidelines from the GMTOAC website.
2. The applicant should review the *AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research* and the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and any other relevant Human Ethics requirements imposed on the project by Universities or institutions.
3. The applicant should engage with the GMTOAC Senior Policy and Research Officer to discuss the proposed project, whether the research aligns with GMTOAC priorities, how the research could benefit GMTOAC and the Gunditjmara or Gunditjmara Country, and the methodology and logistics of the project, as well as any other relevant information.
4. Once the Research Application Form is completed, it is submitted to the GMTOAC Senior Policy and Research Officer, who will undertake a preliminary review to ensure that the application is complete and that all required information has been submitted.
5. If the application is incomplete and more information is required (especially in relation to how the proposal will benefit the long-term aspirations of the Gunditjmara), the Senior Policy and Research Officer will provide the opportunity to collaborate on updating and resubmitting the proposal.
6. If the application is complete and complies with Gunditjmara research principles, the applicant may be invited to give a ten-minute presentation to the GMTOAC Executive Group and Heritage, Policy and Research team to provide a brief overview of the project and describe the proposed benefits to GMTOAC and the Gunditjmara. [Note that this is a strict time limit].

Applicants should be prepared to answer questions on such matters as:

- how the research methodology for the project will be collaboratively developed with the Gunditjmara and/or GMTOAC,
- how the proposed research will benefit the Gunditjmara AND/OR GMTOAC,
- which Gunditjmara or GMTOAC staff were engaged in developing the proposal,
- what kind of commitment will be required from Gunditjmara organisations and groups, and
- what kind of ongoing partnership the proponents of the research, project, proposal, or activity are planning.

[Please note that this is not an exhaustive list]

7. The GMTOAC Executive Group will review the proposal, and will either recommend support of the proposal, refer the proposal back to the applicant for further refinement and amendment, or decline the proposal.
8. If the GMTOAC Executive Group supports the proposal, the research, project, program, or activity team will be required to enter into a Statement of Commitment and Research Partnership Agreement with the GMTOAC that outlines the researchers' commitment to Guditjmarra research principles and protocols and describes how all parties intend to work together.
9. If the GMTOAC Executive Group requires amendment or further refinement, the proponents of the research, project, program, or other activity will need to submit an amended application. If the GMTOAC Senior Policy and Research Officer is satisfied that the amended application addresses the concerns sufficiently, the research, project, program, or activity team will be required to enter into a Statement of Commitment and Research Partnership Agreement with the GMTOAC.
10. If the GMTOAC Executive Group declines the proposal, and if the applicant would like to make another attempt to engage Guditjmarra and/or GMTOPAC in a partnership, the applicant will need to recommence the application process.

To obtain more information about this process, contact the GMTOAC Senior Policy and Research Officer.

## GLOSSARY

**Aquaculture:** The rearing of aquatic animals or the cultivation of aquatic plants for food. In these Guidelines, Gunditjmara aquaculture refers to the Gunditjmara system of constructing and utilising channels, weirs, dams, ponds, and sinkholes to manage water and water flows and systematically trap, harvest, and farm kooyang (eel).

**Country:** An Aboriginal-English word that refers to a knowledge system and concept with a whole-landscape meaning. For contemporary Australian Aboriginal people, the concept of 'caring for Country' is a complex notion related to both personal and group belonging, and to maintaining and looking after the ecological and spiritual wellbeing of the land and of oneself.

**Elder:** An Aboriginal person who has gained recognition as a custodian of knowledge and law, and who has permission to disclose knowledge and beliefs. Aboriginal people typically refer to an Elder as 'Aunty' or 'Uncle', which are used as respectful terms of address.

**Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation:** A Gunditjmara community organisation that was established in 2005 to continue Gunditjmara connection to Gunditjmara Country and to progress the rights and interests of Gunditjmara cultural identity, social justice, native title, cultural heritage, and land justice.

**GMTOAC Executive Group:** Senior management of GMTOAC made up of CEO, Senior Advisor and Executive Manager of Programs.

**GMTOAC Senior Policy and Research Officer:** The GMTOAC Senior Policy and Research Officer will undertake an initial review of the proposed research to ensure that the application is complete and then will either return it to the applicant for amendment and resubmission or will forward it to the GMTOAC CEO for approval.

**GMTOAC Chief Executive Officer:** GMTOAC is governed by an elect Board of Directors from across the fourteen Gunditjmara Apical Ancestors and the CEO is appointed to manage GMTOAC.

**Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation:** Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation is a community-controlled organisation located in South Western Victoria. It was established in 1991 because of members within the community wanting to provide better health, education, and employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in the area.

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## GUNDITJMARA RESEARCH APPROVAL FORM



**GUNDITJ MIRRORING**  
 Traditional Owners  
 Aboriginal Corporation  
 RNTBC

### **GUNDITJMARA RESEARCH APPROVAL FORM:**

Note: the following questions are designed to elicit information Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owner Aboriginal Corporation want to know about people applying to do research with Gunditjmarra or on Gunditjmarra Country.

<b>Name:</b>	
<b>Address:</b>	
<b>Email:</b>	
<b>Phone:</b>	
<b>Formal qualifications or relevant experience shown in a one page CV</b>	
<b>Is an institution hosting the proposed research?</b>	
<b>School/department/organisation/group/individual:</b>	
<b>What is your institution's commitment to working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples?</b>	
<b>For what purpose will you be undertaking this research?</b>	
<b>Supervision: who will be supervising this research?</b>	
<b>What is the working title of your proposed research?</b>	
<b>Will this research require ethics approval through your institution? Or how have ethics been considered?</b>	
<b>Do you have experience working with Indigenous communities or in cross-cultural situations?</b>	
<b>Please provide a short summary or abstract of your proposed research:</b>	
<b>Please provide a detailed outline of the proposed research (attach relevant documents if necessary):</b>	

<b>Do you need to provide any additional supporting documentation?</b>	
<b>Have you spoken with GMTOAC staff or Gunditjmarra about your research proposal?</b>	
<b>Have you a timeframe in mind?</b>	
<b>How will Gunditjmarra and/or GMTOAC benefit from your research?</b>	
<b>What will be the major methodologies used in your research?</b>	
<b>What is your initial plan for storing data gathered?</b>	
<b>What is your initial plan for sharing the research with Gunditjmarra and/or GMTOAC?</b>	
<b>Please acknowledge you have read the Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owner Aboriginal Corporations Research Guidelines and agree to abide by them.</b>	