

Guidelines to Good Manners

Introductions:

- 1) Give warning: fax/letter explaining visit; provide photo
- 2) On arrival always go to the council office first
- 3) Let people see you; wind down windows
- 4) For duration of visit be accompanied by local person/TO/Research Nintirringtjaku worker
- 5) Remember, however long you are there you are always a visitor. Don't get bossy!



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Appropriate dress

(not prescriptions, but suggestions):

- Be aware of how Aboriginal people dress
- Women: skirts and dresses, no cheeky skirts (“umbrella skirts”, instead, long loose skirts). But if wearing trousers then not too tight, or team with loose shirt
- Men: no shorty shorts

Comportment:

- Modest and respectful

Insert partner
organisation
logos here



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Communication:

- If someone appears shy/can't talk, then perhaps they aren't the right person to talk
- Be sensitive of avoidance relationships; one person can't talk with everybody and people may sit apart
- Be cautious of calling deceased names ("kumantjayi" is one term of avoidance in the desert)
- Consult with the right people – ask. Different projects will require different expertise
- 'Yes' doesn't always mean yes – take the time to listen as much as talk
- Speak good clear plain English

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Perceptions of space

- Space (as well as knowledge) is often gendered; men will sit with men and women with women. The expectation is that visitors will also follow this pattern
- This is why it is important to have a male and female researcher
- Don't drive into a camp, park 50 meters away (say) and walk up to people. This isn't just polite, it also reduces dust
- If a group of people are sitting playing cards don't assume that this means nothing and walk straight up to them. Wait and see, be polite.

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Time:

- Be flexible with time, understand that there are competing interests and priorities
- Aboriginal perceptions of time may differ (often go by the sun, not a watch)
- Be patient that meetings might take place with family around, informality and noise
- Be sensitive to 'sorry business' and that certain times of the year there are ceremonies. You may have to postpone the discussions

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People may worry:

- People may worry and take some responsibility for you; they worry that you understand
- Check where the right place is to camp. Also for end of day stroll in the bush – check where it's OK to walk
- No visiting 'sacred sites'
- Be aware of dogs and be prepared to defend yourself
- Relationships should be ongoing – talk to the community after the research is finished – return with draft report/ check that the ideas are the right ones



Values (NHMRC)

- Values underpin what we perceive, believe and do. In the research context, to ignore the reality of the inter-cultural difference is to live with outdated notions of scientific investigation. It is also likely to hamper the conduct of research, and limit the capacity of research to improve human development and wellbeing.