



# ABORIGINAL PRIVACY PROJECT INSIGHTS REPORT

COMMISSIONED BY THE OFFICE  
OF THE VICTORIAN  
INFORMATION COMMISSIONER

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# WHO WE ARE & WHAT WE DO

Experts in culturally sensitive research, policy and evaluation



Research conducted in more than 20 languages with culturally and linguistically diverse communities

Research conducted in urban, regional and remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

Market research including concept testing and campaign research and evaluation

Program evaluation and review

Social research including qualitative and quantitative methodologies

High level insight and strategy development

# RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

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Qualitative research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in Victoria to explore:

- their range of cultural attitudes and perspectives in relation to information privacy
- Whether certain forms of data collection, data use and data disclosure are considered culturally insensitive, inappropriate or intrusive
- What organisations can do to build trust when collecting, using and disclosing peoples' personal information.



# FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS (n=12)

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## Inclusion criteria:

- Identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- Reside in the state of Victoria
- Aged 18 years old or over
- Technologically confident to participate in an online focus group



## Exclusion criteria:

- Members of political parties
- Employees of any tier of Government
- People with specialised knowledge about information privacy

## Diversity considerations:

- Balanced mix of genders
- Balanced mix of age groups
- Diversity of First Nations
- Diversity of sectors that participants share data with



# FINDINGS – DATA COLLECTION

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# DATA COLLECTION METHODS

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*Applying in person vs. phone vs. online*

- **Most prefer in person or online, depending on circumstances**
  - In-person preference: *'For many of our mobs, applying in person works best for them. Not everyone knows how to do things online. I think whoever is serving you or talking on phone should be culturally aware of dealing with people' - Female, 60+*
  - Online preference: *'Broadly speaking, it is hard to say. If the organisation was Indigenous then it wouldn't bother me which method I used to apply. However, if the organisation is government or private rather than an Indigenous community organisation or something alike, I would prefer to apply online' - Male, 18-35*

# INDIRECT DATA COLLECTION

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*How would you feel if you were applying for a service and you were asked to provide information about the people you live with?*

- **Just one person felt it would be acceptable in certain circumstances, and all others had concerns**
  - *Instance of when it would be acceptable: ‘When you enrol your child into school, the form asks who lives in the house, etc. I wonder what that has to do with anything. But when Centrelink asks that question, you kind of understand because they just want to ensure you receive the correct payments’ - Female, 35-60*
  - *‘I definitely believe that this safety concern. Sharing that much information is... like against our basic human rights... it’s not culturally appropriate to share personal information of our Elders or peers... with people outside our immediate or even part extended family’ - Female, 18-35*
  - *‘A cultural concern could be if police are notified of certain situations... in regards to like family violence... children’s safety, etc. and how some situations are escalated by distrust of police’ - Female, 35-60*



# FINDINGS – DATA USES





# RE-USE OF DATA WITHIN ORGANISATIONS

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*How would you feel if you signed up for 'Service A', but the organisation uses that data to contact you about signing up for 'Service B'?*

- **All but one participant felt uncomfortable with this scenario, and the one said it would be okay only under certain circumstances**
  - *Instance of when it would be acceptable: 'During school... I had access to events and support services and extra activities because I was identified as Aboriginal' - Female, 18-35*
  - *'I would question the process of Service A and Service B... It comes back to trust and historical issues. We were not counted, and now they want to... [It] sometimes feels like a form of harassment with service providers' - Male, 18-35*
  - *'In this situation, I personally don't feel good about it... I think by being provided with clear and explicit details about how my information will be used within the organisation, along with my rights to challenge or query their process, would make me feel better... I feel that it would allow me at the very least to develop some type of trust with the organisation, rather than being uninformed about who will be able to access my information' - Male, 18-35*



# FINDINGS – DATA SHARING

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# DATA DISCLOSURES TO THIRD PARTIES

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*‘How would you feel if an agency that held personal information about you shared this information with another organisation, which was legally allowed to request it?’*

- **All participants felt uncomfortable with this scenario**

- *‘[Regarding] criminal history, when someone is young, [there’s] a concern with that coming back to affect someone’s future... I would not want my information to be shared... Incorrect data may mean our community being denied a service. If [I] don’t have the right to review, it stays there... Honesty would be a best approach... getting the information and approval from the source... Some of the organisations do not have the right processes...’ - Female, 35-60*
- *‘Just because it is lawful, doesn’t mean it is right. I would need more information about why the other organisation needs the data and how it would be used. Again, consent and knowledge is important so that people know their data will be shared and could opt out... Robodebt is a good example of how data sharing can go terribly wrong’ - Male, 18-35*



FINDINGS –  
TRUST IN DATA-  
HOLDING  
ORGANISATIONS

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# TRUST LEVELS IN INSTITUTIONS

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- **Trust was low among participants, for a variety of reasons:**
  - **Pervasive distrust in public institutions:** *'[There's a] lack of trust with Government historically for our people' (Female, 35-60)*
  - **Colonial legacies:** *'We have 232 years of data collection since colonisation. That data is collected by all agencies. There is concern that there is too much gate keeping... Before the land was stolen, the laws/lores were different...'* - Male, 35-60
  - **Power imbalances** favouring data-collecting orgs over Indigenous peoples from whom data is collected.
  - **Lack of cultural sensitivity :** *'A high percentage of government orgs and community services don't actually have any culturally appropriate processes in place to share sensitive information about, for, and on behalf of Aboriginal people'* - Female, 18-35
  - **Distrust in** Government, private sector, and community sector
  - **Some faith in Government principles** of transparency and accountability; the issue is living up to them

# WAYS TO BUILD TRUST

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## 1. Genuine consultation

- *'More consultation and transparency... There just needs to be more work and effort put in by government agencies to make sure they are doing adequate consultation with us before implementing policy. May take more time but it is better to get it right rather than rush things through' - Male, 18-35*

## 2. Human-centred approach

- *'[Be] honest, open and build a relationship. We are not a number. Create a family-type approach' – Male, 35-60*
- *'There needs to be an acknowledgment of the diversity of Aboriginal people. Sometimes forms and process are very narrow and alienate people from participating' – Male, 18-35*
- *'[To] personalise the interaction of engaging in the actual service, they can provide more options like... taking it to the homes or community centres for Aboriginal people to access' – Female, 18-35*

# WAYS TO BUILD TRUST (CONT'D)

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## 3. Organisational reform

- *'Make sure... [to] have policies and procedures in place that are suited to the ways of Aboriginal people... Orgs need to understand the methodology to work with the mob... They can create men's/women's services and train in not only cultural awareness but also our ways of being so our basic human rights are not forfeited in any way' – Female, 35-60*

## 4. Effective communication

- Tailor communication approaches to people with differing levels of formal education, literacy and digital literacy
- Minimise jargon
- *'Use Koori-friendly infographics' - Female, 35-60*
- *'Demystify the process for community' - Female, 35-60*
- *'Orgs can learn to contextualise info so it's... more cultural and respectful' - Female, 35-60*

# WAYS TO BUILD TRUST (CONT'D)

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## 5. Informed consent

- *'Without consent or prior knowledge, I always have a problem with data sharing' - Male, 18-35*
- *'Making sure our Elders have support when attending services to know what they are signing' - Female, 35-60*

## 6. Transparency and accountability

- *'Have a review process that if an organisation holds information on me I should be able to review and see what that information is and fix [it] up... [There needs to be] reciprocal rights to the information' – Female, 35-60*

## 7. Community control

- *'Now more than ever Government should be helping to fund Aboriginal orgs to do the work and store the data so there is oversight by mob of how it is used' – Male, 18-35*



Further questions? Please contact:  
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DISCUSSION AND  
QUESTIONS?

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