

# Knowledge Translation

This information sheet may be useful for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations who are interested in research, thinking about being involved in research or have recently become involved in research.



We, as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, have always known what is best for our health and wellbeing. We are the holders of knowledge, and knowledge translation in research needs to be valued and respected in a way which aligns with our cultural values.

Dr Janine Mohamed, CEO, Lowitja Institute,  
Narrunga Kurna

## What is knowledge translation?



The Lowitja Institute defines knowledge translation as:

*The complex series of interactions between knowledge holders, knowledge producers and knowledge users, with the goal of research impact, which is the positive and sustainable long-term benefit for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples<sup>1</sup>.*

These interactions begin when forming the initial research or project idea, through to implementation, and then communicating the project and research findings<sup>2</sup>. Knowledge gained in research must be translated into changes in policy and practice for there to be benefits and to ensure the impacts flow to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, families, and communities<sup>2</sup>.

**Knowledge translation = getting the right information, to the right people, at the right time in a format that can be used to influence decision making<sup>3</sup>.**

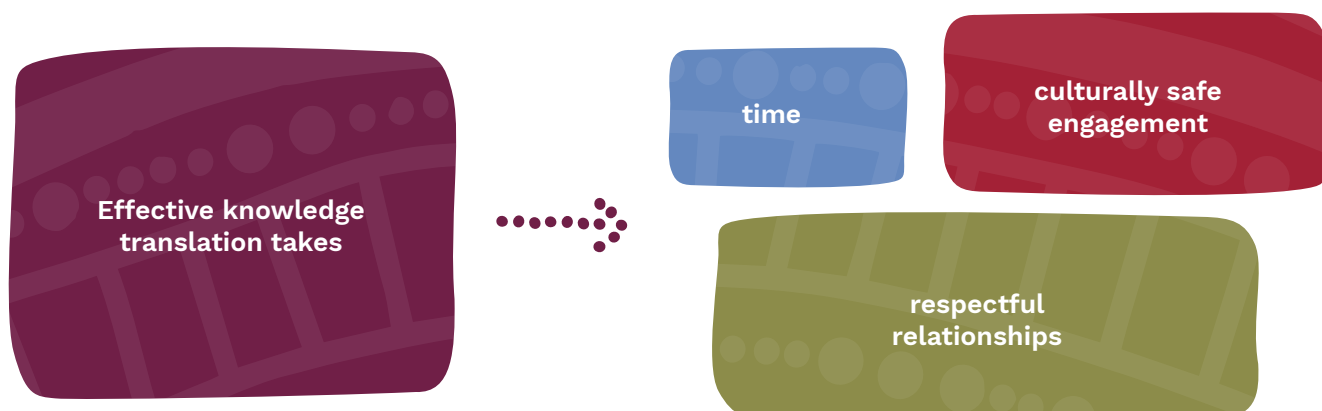
Knowledge translation helps us understand how knowledge is generated and used to:

- explain clinical and organisational behaviour
- inform strategy selection
- understand its impact and outcome<sup>4</sup>.

Knowledge translation is the process of moving research results into policy and practice. It brings together users' knowledge of the topic and implementation context with researchers' expertise in methods. Through this, relevant, actionable findings that are more likely to be used to improve care are produced<sup>4</sup>.

## What are the features of effective knowledge translation?

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have the right to lead and co-design all levels of the research process, from being community participants to being the lead chief investigators. To achieve effective knowledge translation, local knowledge and voices need to be privileged alongside the knowledges of researchers, both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous, who partner and work collaboratively with us.



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I think for policy makers there sometimes is a challenge because the level of collaboration and relationship [needed] takes some time. One of the things I find people don't do when they have been thinking about embedding Indigenous knowledges is allowing enough time for those relationships to be developed, for that listening and sense making, and that re-checking and constant process of checking in with the local community. So, if you are a policy maker or a manager and you are looking to do a research project to inform the work you do...make sure you allocate a lot of time and you engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples at all levels.

Dr Summer May Finlay, Yorta Yorta



## How can I ensure knowledge translation occurs when leading or participating in research?

Knowledge generation and translation is meaningful if it results in lasting and positive impacts on the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples – including people involved in the research and people whom the research seeks to support. This is more likely to be achieved if our voices, as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, are privileged throughout the knowledge translation journey. We need to be involved in interpreting data to ensure this is done accurately and reflects our worldviews. The information collated and learnings gained through a research project back must be provided back in a meaningful way to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations involved.

Knowledge translation activities can include workshops and forums, report publication, social and traditional media engagement, and development of resources for use in policymaking and health services<sup>5</sup>. Through this, key learnings are communicated on a broader scale in a way that impacts policy, projects, and outcomes and reflects what Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations know will make a positive difference.

All the principles of ethical research, Indigenous Data Sovereignty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership and Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property Rights apply during knowledge creation and translation. Knowledge translation should be conducted ethically, rigorously and be responsive to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

## EMPOWERING



### Want to learn more:

In addition to the resources mentioned above, you can visit:

- See our page on knowledge translation here [Knowledge Translation | Lowitja Institute](#)
- Watch the Webinar and read the resource [Profiling Excellence: Indigenous Knowledge Translation](#), Lowitja Institute, Melbourne
- Listen to the [video and podcast](#) by Dr Summer May Finlay.

### REFERENCES

1. Lowitja Institute 2020, [Annual Report 2020](#), Lowitja Institute, Melbourne.
2. Lowitja Institute (n.d), [Knowledge Translation](#).
3. Knowledge Translation Australia (n.d), [What is Knowledge Translation](#).
4. Laycock, A., Bailie, J., Matthews, V., Baillie, R. 2019, [Using Developmental Evaluation to Support Knowledge Translation: Reflections from a large-scale quality improvement project in Indigenous primary healthcare](#), *Health Research Policy and Systems*, vol. 17, article 70.
5. Smith, L. 2018, [Turning Research into Action Through Knowledge Translation](#), *Health Voices*, Consumers Health Forum of Australia.

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