

# Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of NSW

## HREC Statement

### Readability of Participant Information Statements and Consent Forms

V1.0 March 2021



**Aboriginal  
Health & Medical  
Research Council  
of NSW**

**Office address**  
Level 3, 66 Wentworth Ave  
Surry Hills NSW 2010  
[www.ahmrc.org.au](http://www.ahmrc.org.au)

**Postal address**  
PO Box 1565  
Strawberry Hills NSW 2012

**T** +61 2 9212 4777  
**F** +61 2 9212 7211  
**E** [ahmrc@ahmrc.org.au](mailto:ahmrc@ahmrc.org.au)

## **Background**

The AH&MRC Human Research Ethics Committee (The HREC) reviews proposals to conduct Human Research in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007 updated 2018) and the Ethical Conduct in Research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and Communities: Guidelines for researchers and stakeholders (2018). These National Guidelines provide a framework for a thorough review of applications for HREC approval.

### **Readability of Participant Information Statements and Consent Forms:**

The National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007 updated 2018) outlines that researchers must present information in ways that participants make good choices about their participation and that they are supported in their decision. There is a wealth of research available to suggest that many public documents are inaccessible to most of the intended audience.

The HREC suggests that the most effective way to ensure that your participant information sheet and consent forms are readable and culturally appropriate for Aboriginal participants is to design it with Aboriginal people and communities who are representative of the group that it is planned to consult with, this will ensure that it is appropriate for their community.

The below information is intended to assist researchers to develop simple, easy to understand and readable documents in a culturally appropriate way.

- Aboriginal people must be given the opportunity to design, review and make changes to the document.
- Employ Aboriginal people from the local community.
- Use simple, easy to read words; this includes avoiding jargon, lengthy words with multiple syllables and lengthy documents.
- Consider whether different approaches to communicating information, is it better to communicate in written, verbal, visual, or a combination.

The Australian Government provides additional support around plain language and word choice, to seek further information, please check out: <https://www.stylemanual.gov.au/format-writing-and-structure/clear-language-and-writing-style/plain-language-and-word-choice>

If you are seeking further information regarding this statement, please contact the Ethics Secretariat at [ethics@ahmrc.org.au](mailto:ethics@ahmrc.org.au)