

Questions & Answers

Lived Experience Research – Request for Tender

1. Organisational Information

- a) I've looked at your website and don't seem to be able to see the people of your organisation. Who makes up your organisation? Is there a board? Where do First Nations people sit within your organisation, and importantly who are they?

We have a number of partners and collaborators that we work with for our different projects, both First Nations People and non-Indigenous people. This includes an Elders Group from across three states, a Think Team of First Nations academics and educational professionals, a board, and curriculum writers and advisers, who contribute to the leadership and knowledge sharing within the organisation. We've also worked with a research team, headed up by Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education, on both previous and current research. The previous research is publicly available and that team included John Guenther, Robyn Ober, Sam Osbourne (UniSA) and Majon Williamson-Kefu.

We're currently doing a revamp of our 'About us' page and seeking permissions (for privacy reasons, I can't give you their names at the moment) to include some of the groups, consultants and collaborators mentioned above on our website. There'll soon be more visibility of our relationships and collaborators.

2. School locations

- a) What schools do you work with in Western Australia?

We have partnerships with school associations, including Christian Schools Australia (CSA), including Christian Aboriginal Parent-directed Schools (CAPS) and Lutheran Education South Australia, Northern Territory and Western Australia (LESNW). We've also been working with a Christian Education National (CEN) school, and its principal in Geraldton. Several other WA teachers use our resources, but we haven't yet worked with their schools in a whole-school approach.

We're happy to help with identifying school sites, where you want to use schools that have existing connections with Australians Together. Alternatively, the research team can select sites that are convenient for themselves, where they have existing relationships. We're particularly interested in the schools selected representing a diversity of contexts.

- b) What about Covid-related travel restrictions?

We're aware of travel's current unpredictability and willing to accommodate necessary alternatives. However, building relationships with participating communities is essential to the research, and this should remain a priority.

- c) How would Australians Together feel about selecting schools from only one state?

We understand this may be more practical given the current unpredictability of Covid-related issues and restrictions. The priority for Australians Together is ensuring the schools selected represent a diversity of contexts, as opposed to generalisability across the country.

3. Number of schools

a) Exactly how many schools would need to be involved?

The number of schools we'd like to see involved in this project is between three and ten schools. We want to establish a baseline for future continuation of this research across diverse contexts. We also understand that this may be limited by the size of the research team, the research team's contacts, and the approach they take. This will be a design aspect that's discussed and compared between the research proposals received.

b) How many schools are already working with Australians Together?

We have highly productive relationships with a number of school associations that have member schools across all states and territories. While we've worked with a variety of the schools in intentionally whole-of-school approaches, we're also happy for the research team to select schools where they have existing relationships, or that's convenient for them, and work with those schools, assuming the researchers have or can ensure buy-in from school leadership.

4. School selection

a) Has Australians Together already identified the schools that will be participating in this research?

We have several partner schools and school associations who've expressed an interest in being involved in this research. We're also happy to be directed by the research team and what's convenient and practical for them, and work with those schools, assuming the researchers have or can ensure buy-in from school leadership.

b) How would Australians Together feel about the research focusing on only one grade, with the intention to follow that cohort longitudinally?

This, in itself, isn't an issue. We want research teams to consider that we'd like the research to focus on the lived experiences of First Nations students, their families and communities. It may be difficult to access students from a single grade across all schools involved, and still represent a diverse context of schools.

c) What is the role of Early Childhood Care and Education Centres within this research?

While Early Childhood Care and Education Centre resources are in our plans, we haven't yet released any specifically for this section of the education sector. As such, we'd prefer the research focused on schools. However, where schools have on-site Early Childhood Care and Education Centre/s we'd be interested in the impact (or lack thereof) in that space, especially as a baseline for likely future change.

5. Focus of the research – including the role of teachers

a) What role will teachers and teacher practice play in this research?

The focus of this research will be around the lived experiences of First Nations students, their families and communities, and examining any change in these experiences related to the use of Australians Together resources. As such, we'll need to monitor whether and how teachers are using such resources to gauge the relationship between resources use and the change in lived experiences. However, we're not aiming to focus on the change in teacher practice primarily. That should be supplementary and only examined to the extent required to relate it to the change in lived experiences of the First Nations students, and their families and communities.

6. Timeframe

- a) **There is mention of the project being delivered over two years instead of three – how would that work?**

We're flexible with the timeframe being either two or three years. Our preference is for three years, because we're aware of the length of time ethics processes can take and the need to build relationships with schools and communities to deliver this research. If there's justification by the research team around shortening the timeframe, we'll also consider projects proposed over a two-year timeframe within the budget specified.

7. Budget and scope

- a) **How is the budget affected by the timeframe?**

As noted above, we'd ideally like for this project to run over three years. However, where a research team has explained their need for it to run over two years instead, we'd also consider this option with the same \$260,000 budget for the shorter timeframe.

8. Research approach

- a) **How important's the combination of quantitative and qualitative research?**

As an organisation, we're relational and greatly value the power of storytelling. However, we also recognise the importance and succinct nature of quantitative research, data and analysis. As such, it's critically important that this research, as the first phase of a larger longitudinal project, speaks to both research approaches.

- b) **What does Australians Together expect the broader longitudinal research project to look like?**

At this stage, we're yet to secure funding to continue this research but recognise the need for gathering data over a longer period of time to track relevant change, especially when referring to the change in someone's lived experience, and when aiming for sustained change. Because of this, Australians Together are emphasising the need for a research framework that could potentially be carried forward independently if future research funding wasn't secured. We're also considering other options for funding future phases of the research, including cross-sectoral collaborations.

9. Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property (ICIP) and Background Intellectual Property (IP)

- c) **How will Australians Together protect ICIP?**

We're committed to ensuring ICIP is recognised, understood and protected in our research contracts, and will take culturally-informed legal advice to ensure this is delivered.

- d) **How will Australians Together acknowledge and treat background IP?**

We're committed to ensuring background IP is recognised, understood and protected in our research contracts, and will take culturally-informed legal advice to ensure this is delivered.

10. Ethics

- a) **What will happen if the ethics process takes longer than the period scheduled in the Request for Tender documents?**

We understand that ethics processes aren't always predictable or straight forward, but as long as appropriate and necessary actions are taken in a timely manner, we're willing to work around the

necessary timeframes. We've previously used AIATSIS Ethics processes, but also understand that research in public schools may need to go through state government gatekeepers and processes.

11. Conflict of interest

a) What process needs to happen if there's a potential conflict of interest?

We've taken steps to avoid any issues related to conflicts of interest, including making the tender publicly available, both on [our website](#) and [AustralianTenders.com](#), and ensuring there are multiple perspectives represented on the panel that will make the final recommendations. We'll also be sharing a criteria rubric that clarifies the weighting of the selection criteria noted in the Request for Tender. If you've identified a potential conflict of interest, please note this in your Application for Tender documents.

12. Word format for Applicant Response Template

a) Can the Applicant Response Template be shared as a Word document?

Yes, we've added this as an attachment.