

In Queensland and north west NSW the appropriate term is 'Murri'. Torres Strait Islanders do not identify with the term Murri.

Much of the language used to portray Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples has been, and still is, extremely negative and stereotypical. References such as 'half caste', or 'full blood' are not only outdated, but insulting, as are other terms that trivialise and misrepresent important cultural practices such as 'walkabout'. The term 'Aboriginal', when referring to Aboriginal Australians should always be written with a capital as would any other similar term such as 'Malaysian', or 'British'. Aboriginal peoples should not be referred to as 'aborigines', which is the generic term for a representative of the original inhabitants of any country. For example, the Celts are aborigines of Scotland and Ireland and the Maoris are aborigines of New Zealand.

The University of Queensland has a Reconciliation statement which states its commitment to "the process of national reconciliation with its indigenous peoples" and acknowledges "the traditional owners of the lands on which the University now operates." For example traditional owners of the land at the St Lucia campus are the Jagera and Turrbal people. The University encourages staff and students to formally acknowledge the traditional owners prior

to the commencement of any University ceremony or event.

The University has an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Support Unit. When in doubt about what language to use or any other issue related to ensuring appropriate respect and sensitivity to Indigenous Australian matters – seek advice!

► **Language and disability**

In addition to derogatory and offensive labelling, non-inclusive language in relation to people with a disability often focuses on the disability rather than the person, which positions them as a one-dimensional object of sympathy rather than a person with a full life. People with a disability often comment that they experience disadvantage because of the way in which society is structured, not because of their disability.

<i>Instead of</i>	<i>You can say</i>
Handicapped or disabled	Person with a disability
Mentally handicapped	Person with an intellectual disability
Spastic	Person with cerebral palsy
Deaf	Hearing impaired person
AIDS victim	Person who is HIV positive

► **Contacts and further information**

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A guide to using Inclusive Language

► **Valuing diversity**

The University of Queensland has a number of policies related to equity and diversity, which assist the University develop an environment that respects and values the diversity of its staff and student population and ensures people can work and study in an environment free of harassment and discrimination. Such an environment is created through the interpersonal behaviour of individuals and in the language of communication used in interactions.

The expectations about the way in which we relate to others in the University as an educational institution and a workplace are different from the way we might relate to people in our own home. In great part, this is because the University is a 'public place' rather than a private space. As an employer, and as an education provider, The University of Queensland is legally obliged to ensure people can work and study in an

environment that is free of harassment and discrimination and which is not hostile or demeaning. The use of inclusive language by members of the University community is an important aspect of creating such an environment.

► **Language is important**

It is the rich diversity of our staff and students that is the University's biggest asset. In our University, it is wise to assume that in any group, there will be people from a number of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, with visible or hidden disabilities, representing different genders and sexual preferences, and holding different religious and spiritual beliefs. Each of us has a responsibility to be sensitive to the diversity of our audience, whether this is talking informally with one person, in a lecture, or addressing a meeting. We must not only intend to be inclusive in our speech

and language – we also have a responsibility to make sure that reasonable members of our audience do not perceive what we say as being sexist, racist, homophobic, discriminatory, or otherwise offensive. Jokes made at the expense of others depend on and propagate demeaning stereotypes. Even where no harm is intended, such jokes can be deeply offensive and should be avoided.

Language is a powerful tool; it shapes our realities. Language is used to present and perpetuate particular views of society and of ‘others’. Language can consciously or unconsciously offend, intimidate, reinforce harmful stereotypes and contribute to the unequal status of individuals. This is particularly important when people are in positions of relative power, or where there are limited opportunities for the audience to challenge and question what is being communicated (e.g. in a lecture).

Language is a dynamic medium, and many terms and phrases used in the past are no longer acceptable. For example ‘Inuit’ has replaced ‘Eskimo’, and ‘intersex’ is used instead of ‘hermaphrodite’.

► What is inclusive language?

Using inclusive language is sometimes referred to as using non-discriminatory language. **Essentially it means that we should use language that does not demean, insult, exclude, stereotype, or trivialise people on the basis of their membership of a certain group or because of a particular attribute.**

Many offensive and derogatory terms which refer to specific groups exist within everyday language. The University has a leadership

role in the community and as such, the use of such language is unacceptable.

Using inclusive language does not mean having to use terms that are difficult, or grammatically incorrect, rather it means avoiding terminology that may be offensive, and selecting other suitable terms. Using inclusive language recognises that all people are full and valued participants in our society. It does not portray any group in a negative stereotype, as dependent or powerless, nor does inclusive language trivialise or denigrate groups of people on the basis of a single attribute such as gender, race, disability or other aspect.

Inclusive language should be used in all forms of communication, verbal and written, to another individual or to a group. Where discriminatory or offensive language is being used, be prepared to challenge this and to provide alternative phrases and words.

► Language and gender

Language that privileges one gender over another, and/or which diminishes the role and status of one gender or invisibilises them is often termed sexist. Traditionally, such language has tended to diminish women and privilege men. Language that marginalises or parodies people who are transgender or intersex is also unacceptable and possibly discriminatory.

Demeaning and trivialising language should be avoided. Terms such as dear, sweetie, love, ladies, chicks, girls, are often patronising and condescending in certain situations. The use of ‘man’ in the generic sense, as a verb or in compound words, should also be avoided.

Instead of	You can say
The office girls	The administrative staff
The tea lady	The attendant
Manning the booth	Staffing the booth
Mankind	Humankind, humanity
Workman	Worker
Headmaster	Principal
The Head of School and his staff...	The Head of School and their staff...
Woman lawyer	Lawyer
A mother of two has been appointed...	Professor Blogs has been appointed...
Tranny	Use the pronoun which represents the gender expressed by the transgender person – i.e. him or her, she or he.

► Language and sexuality

Language that categorises people negatively solely on the basis of their actual or assumed sexual preference is often extremely negative and offensive. In circumstances where reasonable people would never make comments about other personal attributes, it is still common to hear derogatory remarks made about lesbians, bisexuals or gay men. Phrases such as ‘That’s so gay’ are demeaning and are not acceptable. While members of the lesbian, gay and bisexual community have reclaimed some terms as a means of empowerment, it is not generally acceptable to use terms such as ‘dyke’ or ‘queer’. Often the term ‘gay’ is used generically to include both men and women.

Use inclusive terms such as ‘partner’, rather than ‘husband, or ‘wife’, for example when issuing invitations for staff functions.

► Language and culture

Ethnic and racist labels perpetuate inaccurate stereotypes of certain groups of people. Such language is usually derogatory and offensive and often paternalistic. Traditionally the ‘norm’ against which ‘others’ have been described has been the Anglo-Celt majority.

The great diversity of the Australian population includes people with many different religious and spiritual beliefs. The traditional Judeo-Christian culture of Australia tends to obscure the manner in which this is privileged in our way of life and hence language. For example, you could use the terms ‘preferred name’ or ‘given name’ instead of ‘Christian name’.

Awareness of and sensitivity towards the Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders, as the Indigenous peoples of Australia, are of particular importance.

Before colonisation, there were over 200 distinct languages spoken in Australia and despite the deliberate attempt to wipe these out, over 20 remain as primary languages of Indigenous Australians today and others are being revived. This linguistic diversity is also reflected in the rich cultural diversity of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island peoples. Many Indigenous Australians now refer to themselves, and prefer to be referred to, by the traditional term relevant to the area where they apply, such as Koori (NSW), Goori (North Coast NSW), Yolngu (NE Arnhem), Anangu (Central Australia).