

FACT SHEET 6
Longitudinal Study of Indigenous
Children Data Protocols

Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children Data Protocols

All applicants for the LSIC dataset must provide additional information at '**For LSIC Applicants only**' of the Deed of Confidentiality for organisation applicants or the Deed of Licence for individual applicants and sign the LSIC Data Integrity Statement before their applications will be considered.

Protocols

1. **Standpoint:** Applicants and licensed users must openly acknowledge their standpoint in their application and in the reporting of data outputs in reports or publications. This is a declaration of the context in which the data analysis is being generated, including their institutional context and their personal context.
2. **Cultural Competency:** Applicants must be culturally competent. Cultural competency refers to the need to respect, understand and acknowledge the benefits, values and realities of Indigenous people and communities. This includes being mindful of Indigenous peoples' right to have different values, norms and aspirations to non-Indigenous people. LSIC data users should recognise that Indigenous communities are diverse, with different languages, cultures, histories and perspectives, as well as the diversity of individuals within these communities. Researchers need to be cognisant of diversity by showing an understanding and appreciation of these differences in the analysis, interpretation and reporting of the data.
3. **Research:** Data users need to provide DSS with their final research material so that the department can honour its commitment to give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities (particularly those involved in the study) feedback on how the data is being used and a summary of research project findings. By making publicly available a bibliography of all final research material using LSIC data our aim is to encourage uptake of findings, avoid research duplication, facilitate collaboration and the progressive building upon research findings.

Rather than providing your research directly to DSS, all users of the datasets must upload the bibliographic details of their finalised research into FLoSse Research. The website address is <http://flosse.dss.gov.au>

4. **Additional Data Sources:** In order to build a complete picture or obtain other information, it may be necessary to use other sources of data for the research. Any additional data sources the applicant intends to use in their research should be listed in this section. Note that while it is permissible to use other data sources to provide further perspective of a situation, it is not permissible to combine other data sources with LSIC data in any way to provide additional information about individual respondents.

Details about the data should include the name of the dataset, the years covered, the source and the information the data will provide.

LSIC Data Integrity Statement

The LSIC Data Integrity Statement forms a legally binding part of the Deed of Licence, or Deed of Confidentiality signed by the applicant. In the case of Commonwealth Government departments or agencies signing an MOU, agreement with the LSIC Data Integrity Statement is an essential part of the arrangements for access to the LSIC Data. This Statement can be found at 'For LSIC Applicants only' on the deed.

It is a condition of having access to the LSIC dataset that all applicants agree to abide by the conditions set out in the LSIC Data Integrity Statement which should be read carefully by all applicants so that they can consider whether they are able and willing to abide by the conditions set out in the statement before signing it. If applicants do not feel able to abide by the conditions in the statement, they should not sign it.

Note that it is a requirement of signing the LSIC Data Integrity Statement that you read Appendix A.

Appendix A – LSIC Protocols

This section contains three key interrelated protocols that LSIC data users need to follow when working with the data, in addition to the formal requirements set out in the relevant Licence Deeds. These have been developed in consultation with a subcommittee of Aboriginal members from the LSIC Steering Committee. Applicants need to provide a response regarding adherence to the protocols in the application form.

People are encouraged to obtain advice from DSS's LSIC project team if uncertain about any aspect of these protocols or would like support in or ideas about how to enhance their cultural competency in interpreting and reporting the data. LSIC staff can be contacted on 1800 106 235 or at lsicdata@dss.gov.au

DSS, in partnership with the LSIC Steering Committee, will regularly review LSIC data outputs for adherence to culturally sensitive practices in the analysis, interpretation and reporting of data.

Protocol 1 – Acknowledge Standpoint when reporting LSIC data

It is accepted that researchers using the LSIC data in the public domain will hold different lenses through which the meaning of the data will be filtered. Applicants and licensed users will be asked to openly acknowledge their standpoint in their application and in the reporting of data outputs in reports or publications.

Scholar Maggie Walters² writes about **standpoint** in social science research as, “How we see the world is not a neutral, objective understanding, but is inevitably influenced by the filters and frames of our life experiences and circumstances and our social, cultural, economic and personal identity location” (p11). In application to the LSIC data this means reflecting on the assumptions a researcher holds about which knowledge is valued (epistemology) and the framework used to understand the situation of Indigenous peoples (ontology). It is a process of understanding one's values system and those of the group and/or institutions that the researcher is operating in (axiology). Walters (p.12) recommends a series of reflexive questions be asked to unearth a researcher's values position including:

- Why have we chosen the research question we have?
- Why have we settled on that aspect?
- How did we decide that topic was worth researching – as opposed to others?

As Walters argues, “Our standpoint, who we are socially, economically, culturally and even politically, underpins the questions we see, the answers we seek, the way we go about seeking those answers and the interpretation we make, the theoretical paradigms that make ‘sense’ to us” (p.11). Declaring openly one's standpoint position requires a researcher to become conscious of who they are, and their embedded ways of making sense of the world around them.

Acknowledging the standpoint of the researcher allows people using another's research material to be able to do so knowing the way the researcher has approached and understood the LSIC data. Indigenous data users may have a different worldview on many topics from their non-Indigenous colleagues; people in different academic disciplines are likely to view the dataset from different perspectives (sociology versus psychology) as might government researchers versus community based ones.

² Walters, M. (ed) (2009). *Social Research Methods: An Australian perspective*, 2 Ed. Oxford University Press: Melbourne

In summary, this protocol states that LSIC data users need to make a declaration of the context in which the data analysis is being generated, for example their institutional context and whether in a university, government department, community organisation or cross sector partnership. This should also include declaring ones personal context, such as cultural background, work background, depth of experience liaising with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and prior research/publications in the area.

Protocol 2 – Competency in the cultural context of the LSIC data

In addition to having social research method competency and self-reflective capacity LSIC data users should strive to be culturally aware, culturally sensitive and culturally competent. Cultural competency refers to the need to respect, understand and acknowledge the benefits, values and realities of Indigenous people and communities. This includes being mindful of Indigenous people's right to have different values, norms and aspirations to non-Indigenous people. Analysts should recognise that Indigenous communities are diverse, with different languages, cultures, histories and perspectives, as well as the diversity of individuals within these communities. Researchers need to be cognisant of the diversity by showing an understanding and appreciation of these differences in the analysis, interpretation and reporting of the data.

Attention should be paid to the limitations in extrapolating to all Indigenous people based on analysis derived from the LSIC data. Whilst the sample is reflective of a diverse range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within the research sites, the data is not designed to be used as representative of the whole Australian population of Indigenous people. Indigenous culture is relationally based and best understood within a specific local context. The LSIC data collection locations cover remote, regional, urban sites but these were not randomly selected or stratified due to pragmatic considerations and resource limitations.

The study was designed to provide an in-depth understanding of the holistic nature of Indigenous children's pathways in growing up over time, rather than a nationally representative snap shot of Indigenous children's social circumstances. The ABS National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (2008) data, released in 2009, does have a specific module that captures a representative sample of Indigenous children's social circumstances.

Martin³ (2008, p.133) offers some key parameters for a researcher to use to self-regulate their behaviour and enhance their cultural accountability. Martin suggests that all researchers must show respect for: land, laws, elders, culture, community, families and support Indigenous people's visions for their futures. Cultural respect is the important element emphasised by Martin and one that LSIC data applicants need to demonstrate. Actualising this requires a level of active demonstration of responsible and accountable behaviour by the researcher so that the way they manage their research projects respects the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families who have openly shared personal information that has allowed the building of the dataset. This can be a process of self-regulation where one actively takes the time to 'come alongside' (a phrase suggested by Martin) the issue being researched. This means implicating oneself in understanding more deeply the Indigenous perspective on the topic at hand rather than just purely treating the data as an external object of science that can be expertly known at a distance.

Protocol 3 – Contributing knowledge to build better outcomes from LSIC data

The sharing of findings from the data output is an essential component of being accountable to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities who have given their time in the hope that the LSIC study would build better outcomes for their children and families. The more accessibility people have to the final research material generated from the LSIC data, in

association with the researchers' standpoint, the better quality the analysis and interpretation of the data.

Data users need to provide DSS with their final research material so that the Department can honour its commitment to give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities (particularly those involved in the study) feedback on how the data is being used and a summary of research project findings. This also allows DSS to make publicly available a bibliography of all final research material using LSIC data to encourage uptake of findings, avoid research duplication, and facilitate collaboration and the progressive building upon research findings.

It is important that the findings generated from the LSIC data are made available so they can contribute in the policy, planning, evaluation, management and delivery of services. In accordance with the Deed of Licence or MOU the final research material may also be used across the Commonwealth Government to support internal policy development and evaluation.

³ Martin, K. (2008). *Please knock before you enter*. Teneriffe Qld: Post Pressed