INTERNATIONAL INDIGENOUS DESIGN CHARTER

Protocols for sharing Indigenous knowledge in professional design practice
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The International Indigenous Design Charter acknowledges the traditional owners of countries throughout the world and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and culture. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. The authors also acknowledge the Kulin Nation, the traditional owners of country where this document was developed.

PREFACE

The International Indigenous Design Charter (the Charter) was co-authored by Dr. Russell Kennedy and Dr. Meghan Kelly from Deakin University, Mr. Jefa Greenaway (Wailwan, Gamilaraay) from Indigenous Architecture and Design Victoria (IADV), Greenaway Architects and the University of Melbourne, and Professor Brian Martin (Muruwari, Bundjalung, Gamilaraay). The document was developed by Deakin University in collaboration with its Institute of Koorie Education (IKE), Indigenous Architecture and Design Victoria (IADV), and the management and executive board of the Design Institute of Australia (DIA) in consultation with Australian and international community representatives (see Appendix 4.2).

The Charter has been created to serve as a living document to guide best practice when working with Indigenous knowledge in commercial design projects. Supported by the International Council of Design (ico-D), the International Indigenous Design Charter considers the needs of the diverse design communities and cultures globally.
International Indigenous Design Charter

The development of International Indigenous Design Charter involved research activity and community engagement around the world. The ongoing consultation process for this professional practice document was punctuated with its official launch at the World Design Summit Congress in Montreal, 2017.

The following statement is drawn from comments made by Mr Damien Miller, former Ambassador to Denmark, Iceland and Norway (Piercy, 2016). Mr Miller acknowledges the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) support for the research into the International Indigenous Design Charter undertaken in the Nordic regions with both Inuit and Sami communities and design stakeholders.

As Australia’s first Indigenous Ambassador I was delighted to support Deakin’s Was.Is.Always project, which aims to start a conversation about an International Indigenous Design Charter. The aim of the Charter would be to encourage the design community to think about the appropriate representation and use of Indigenous designs and traditional symbols. The idea for an international charter grew out of Deakin’s work on the Australian Indigenous Design Charter (launched in 2016). Through a DFAT International Cultural Diplomacy Grant, Deakin was able to hold a series of initial discussions and workshops in Greenland, Denmark and Sweden, including with Indigenous designers and artists, with the University of Greenland and the Copenhagen School of Design and Technology. One of the highlights of the program was seeing seven Australian Indigenous artists visit Greenland – finding new artistic inspiration; meeting Greenlandic designers and artists; and forging new links with Inuit peoples.

I want to congratulate Deakin for taking this initiative and also for agreeing to relaunch, in conjunction with the International Council of Design, “INDIGO,” a global Indigenous design network. DFAT launched an Indigenous Peoples Strategy in 2015. Our headquarters and posts are focused on advancing the rights of Indigenous peoples, strengthening links between them, and encouraging Indigenous business engagement. The Deakin workshops helped us advance all three objectives.

Damien Miller (Gangulu)
Former Australian Ambassador to Denmark, Norway and Iceland
Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Design Company: Deakin University
Designers: Troy Campbell, Sichu Cao, Angelina Gisela, Olivia Moody, Todd Murphy, Sophie Sirninger Rankin
Creative Director: Jefa Greenaway (Wailwan, Gamillaraay), Director, Indigenous Architecture and Design Victoria (IADV)
Discipline: Communication Design
Title: Was.Is.Always: on route to an International Indigenous Design Charter
Location: Melbourne, Australia
Date: 2016

Photograph courtesy of the University of Melbourne.
PARTNERS, SUPPORTERS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

INTERNATIONAL INDIGENOUS DESIGN CHARTER

Deakin University, School of Communication and Creative Arts
Deakin University, Institute of Koorie Education
Indigenous Architecture and Design Victoria
DIA: Design Institute of Australia
ico-D: International Council of Design
INDIGO: International Indigenous Design Network
Koorie Heritage Trust
Creative Victoria
Good Design Australia Award 2018 – Indigenous Designer Award
Premier’s Design Awards 2018 – Best in Category (Design Strategy)
Premier’s Design Awards 2018 – Award of the Year

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PART 1: INTERNATIONAL INDIGENOUS DESIGN CHARTER

When working on projects involving the representation of Indigenous culture, design practitioners and buyers of design (non-Indigenous and Indigenous) are expected to adhere to the following ten points.

1. Indigenous led
2. Self-determined
3. Community specific
4. Deep listening
5. Indigenous knowledge
6. Shared knowledge (collaboration, co-creation, procurement)
7. Shared benefits
8. Impact of design
9. Legal and moral
10. Charter implementation
Indigenous led

Ensure Indigenous stakeholders oversee creative development and the design process.
Self-determined

Respect the rights of Indigenous peoples to determine the application of traditional knowledge and representation of their culture in design practice.

Design Company: Grace Lillian Lee Productions.
Designer: Grace Lillian Lee
(Torres Strait Island descent-Australia).
Discipline: Fashion Design.
Title: Dress Code.
Model: Shantel Miskin-Ripa
(Torres Strait Island descent-Australia).
Photographer: Wade Lewis.
Location (exhibition): Museum of Brisbane, Brisbane, Australia.
Date: 2018
Community specific

Ensure respect for the diversity of Indigenous culture by acknowledging and following regional cultural understandings.
Deep listening

Ensure respectful, culturally specific, personal engagement behaviours for effective communication and courteous interaction. Make sure to be inclusive and ensure that recognised custodians are actively involved and consulted.
Indigenous knowledge

Acknowledge and respect the rich cultural history of Indigenous knowledge including designs, stories, sustainability and land management, with the understanding that ownership of knowledge must remain with the Indigenous custodians.
Shared knowledge
(collaboration, co-creation, procurement)

Cultivate respectful, culturally specific, personal engagement behaviours for effective communication. This involves courteous interactions to encourage the transmission of shared knowledge by developing a cultural competency framework to remain aware of Indigenous cultural realities.
Shared benefits

Ensure Indigenous people share in the benefits from the use of their cultural knowledge, especially where it is being commercially applied.
Impact of design

Consider the reception and implication of all designs so that they protect the environment, are sustainable, and remain respectful of Indigenous cultures over deep time: past, present and future.
Legal and moral

Demonstrate respect and honour cultural ownership and intellectual property rights, including moral rights, by obtaining appropriate permissions where required.
Charter implementation

Ask the question if there is an aspect to the project, in relation to any design brief, that may be improved with Indigenous knowledge. Use the Charter to safeguard Indigenous design integrity and to help build the cultural awareness of your clients and associated stakeholders.
PART 2: OVERVIEW

2.1 CONTEXT

Despite the existence of protocols for the creation, distribution and ownership of Indigenous visual and media arts, architecture and the built environment in many countries, there remains a lack of information, guidance and professional leadership regarding the appropriate creation and commercial expression of Indigenous knowledge in design practice. The International Indigenous Design Charter responds directly to the identified need to address these concerns at an international level across all design disciplines.

Professional Design Associations

The cultural protocols included in this Charter recognise the diverse cultures and traditions of Indigenous communities worldwide and suggests that appropriate representation of Indigenous peoples is best achieved when effective and respectful partnerships are established between relevant stakeholders. The International Indigenous Design Charter has the support of the International Council of Design (ICoD), a peak body of design associations around the world, including the Design Institute of Australia (DIA).

2.2 ROLE OF THE CHARTER

The International Indigenous Design Charter can be used to help facilitate accurate and respectful representation of Indigenous knowledge in all disciplines of design and associated media. The role of the Charter is to assist design practitioners, design clients and the buyers of design within the context of the Charter discussion is important because all stakeholders (clients, designers, cultural custodians) must understand the sensibilities and processes involved in respectful design practice.

The Charter reinforces the rights of Indigenous peoples to achieve cultural self-determination as recognised by the United Nations in their Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The UN declaration describes the right of Indigenous peoples to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional expressions of their cultures, including designs (United Nations, 2007, p.11). The Charter is a cultural innovation tool to be used by designers to explain the benefits of authentic cultural representation to their clients and to help them understand the process required when engaging Indigenous knowledge and cultures in commercial design practice.

This document takes the position that all design stakeholders need to understand that co-creation and the sharing of Indigenous knowledge must be undertaken responsibly and that Indigenous participants are not simply to be referenced. Instead, projects must be Indigenous led, with Indigenous stakeholders as active participants in the design process. The sensibilities and sensitivities associated with sharing Indigenous knowledge requires community engagement with cultural custodians and knowledge keepers. Respectful exchange, open thinking, deep listening and a genuine commitment to learning must be based on the premise of relationality. Building relationality ensures respectful and ethical practices are established and maintained through trust and inter-connectedness.

The International Indigenous Design Charter recommends that designers involve their clients and the buyers of design in the discussion of Indigenous knowledge and its relationship to their organisation. It provides the guidance for designers to show leadership in promoting cultural innovation to their clients by encouraging them to commission design work that includes Indigenous content. Designers and their clients are encouraged to use preferred suppliers who also follow professional Indigenous design best practice standards as outlined in the Charter.

This document serves as a guide for the design professions and associated disciplines, including communication design, digital design, environmental design, architecture and the built environment, landscape design, fashion design, advertising and strategic design practice.

The Charter recommends the following supplier/designer combinations when commissioning Indigenous-themed design:

- Indigenous owned and operated design companies who pledge to comply with professional practice standards for Indigenous design engagement as outlined in the International Indigenous Design Charter.
- Indigenous design companies or consultants who subcontract creative work to other design companies (Indigenous or non-Indigenous) and comply with professional practice standards for engagement as outlined in the International Indigenous Design Charter.
- Non-Indigenous designers/companies who pledge to comply with professional practice standards for engagement as outlined in the International Indigenous Design Charter.
- Non-Indigenous designers/companies who pledge to comply with professional practice standards for engagement as outlined in the International Indigenous Design Charter, but also procure Indigenous expertise or engage Indigenous consultants and suppliers when applicable.

2.3 LEGAL CONTEXT

The International Indigenous Design Charter is a self-regulated, professional best practice guide. It supports existing policies, procedures and protocols that ensure the rights of Indigenous stakeholders, including their intellectual property rights, and emphasises the crucial right for fair and informed negotiation and remuneration. The document does not claim to be the definitive answer to appropriate representation of Indigenous culture in commercial design practice. Instead it aims to encourage a climate of learning through active practice to guide designers to produce informed, authentic and respectful outcomes in the future. It should not be viewed as a ‘how-to’ guide for creating Indigenous designs, but instead a guide to develop open and respectful cross-cultural engagement and exchange.

The International Indigenous Design Charter is an open document which will be reviewed on a regular basis and modified as required. Where there is conflict or inconsistency between the principles contained in the International Indigenous Design Charter and any territorial law, then the law shall prevail to the extent of the conflict or inconsistency.

2.4 INCLUSIVE PRACTICE EXEMPLAR

The International Indigenous Design Charter has been conceived and written for both non-Indigenous and Indigenous designers, fostering cultural innovation through inclusiveness. This inclusive practice exemplar aims to encourage awareness through respectful and ethical knowledge sharing and increased visibility. It promotes the best practice, moral principles and engagement methods (collaboration, co-creation, permissions, procurement) required by designers to represent Indigenous cultures authentically in their practice.

The Charter calls on designers to develop applied research methods and principles that incorporate effective communication and permissions alongside associated collaboration and co-creation processes (co-authorship/co-beneficiary). The World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) provides guidance in the area of cultural innovation and representation. However, it cautions designers to exercise vigilance in the protection of Indigenous knowledge. “The protection of traditional knowledge should contribute toward the promotion of innovation, and to the transfer and dissemination of knowledge to the mutual advantage of holders and users of traditional knowledge, and in a manner conducive to social and economic welfare and to a balance of rights and obligations” (WIPO 2014, p.3).

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PART 3: CHARTER POINTS EXPANDED

This section expands on each Charter point by setting out the protocols, explaining the context and then proposing actions.

1. Indigenous led
   Ensure Indigenous stakeholders oversee creative development and the design process.
   The International Indigenous Design Charter clearly states Indigenous peoples have the right to oversee the creative development and design process of design work that seeks to engage with Indigenous knowledge. The International Indigenous Design Charter asks designers to:
   - engage with local Indigenous designers who are connected with the relevant communities and provide opportunities for them to oversee the creative development and design process; and,
   - employ Indigenous staff or consultants where possible.

2. Self-determined
   Respect the rights of Indigenous peoples to determine the application of traditional knowledge and representation of their culture in design practice.

3. Community specific
   Ensure respect for the diversity of Indigenous culture by acknowledging and following regional cultural understandings.
   Designers need to develop a cultural awareness to recognise the sensibilities and diversities of each Indigenous culture. This includes acknowledging the diversity of Indigenous cultures as represented in urban, rural and remote communities. Designers need to understand they may only be given information or knowledge when the community has established trust and is prepared to share.

4. Deep listening
   Ensure respectful, culturally specific, personal engagement behaviours for effective communication and courteous interaction. Make sure to be inclusive and ensure that recognised custodians are actively involved and consulted.
   It is recommended designers start a conversation with the intention to learn—not to teach—and demonstrate the practice of being courteous, patient and listening deeply. Designers and their clients need to develop dedicated research practice methods for Indigenous-themed projects and be aware of the budgetary impact associated with such considerations.

5. Indigenous knowledge
   Acknowledge and respect the rich cultural history of Indigenous knowledge, including designs, stories, sustainability and land management, with the understanding that ownership of knowledge must remain with the Indigenous custodians.
   The rich cultural history of Indigenous knowledge is a living entity that continues to evolve. By developing a cultural competency framework, those engaging with Indigenous knowledge remain aware of the complex cultural reality that regenerates, advances and grows.

6. Shared knowledge
   Cultivate respectful, culturally specific, personal engagement behaviours for effective communication. This involves courteous interaction to encourage the transmission of shared knowledge by developing a cultural competency framework to remain aware of Indigenous cultural realities.
   The International Indigenous Design Charter recommends designers:
   - have patience to cultivate respectful, culturally specific, personal engagement, without undue pressure;
   - ensure the appropriate cultural custodians and knowledge keepers are present when consulting or co-creating;
   - demonstrate open, transparent and inclusive consultation processes;
   - ensure all stakeholders understand that consultation may require an extended period of time to enable consideration of and consultation with community members;
   - understand it is important to collaborate from the outset of the design process rather than seek approval at the end;
   - share and disseminate information and any findings with the relevant Indigenous stakeholders;
   - engage with courteous interaction to encourage the transmission of shared knowledge by developing a cultural competency framework to remain aware of Indigenous cultural realities; and,
   - provide copies of design works (where possible) to the people involved.

7. Shared benefits
   Ensure Indigenous people share in the benefits from the use of their cultural knowledge, especially where it is being commercially applied.
   The International Indigenous Design Charter encourages designers to share the benefits of the commercial outcomes with the traditional owners of the cultural knowledge.
8. Impact of design

Consider the reception and implication of all designs so that they protect the environment, are sustainable, and remain respectful of Indigenous cultures over deep time: past, present and future.

The International Indigenous Design Charter asks designers to ensure the representation of Indigenous cultures:
- reflects their cultural values and respects their customary laws;
- protects and respects the environment and honours the values of Indigenous cultures;
- arranges an authentic reflection of Indigenous knowledge;
- empowers Indigenous peoples: past, present and future; and,
- positively impacts Indigenous peoples who are both the subject and producers of the story: past, present and future.

9. Legal and moral

Demonstrate respect and honour cultural ownership and intellectual property rights, including moral rights, by obtaining appropriate permissions where required.

Designers must be aware of their professional and moral responsibility and the need to understand the power they have to influence opinions. For this reason, the International Indigenous Design Charter emphasises the importance of respecting copyright, moral rights, and cultural rights. It also emphasises the need to understand the importance of appropriate acknowledgements and credits, as per the legal requirements of the country in which the cultural knowledge resides.

Designers need to be aware that some aspects of Indigenous representation may be unsuitable for public scrutiny. Privacy and confidentiality must be respected.

10. Charter implementation

Ask the question if there is an aspect to the project, in relation to any discipline, that may be improved with Indigenous knowledge. Use the Charter to safeguard Indigenous design integrity and to help build the cultural awareness of your clients and associated stakeholders.

4.1 DEFINITIONS

Indigenous Grouping Terminology

INDIGENOUS – a term used to describe people who identify as having a set of specific rights based on their historical ties to a particular territory, and their cultural or historical distinctiveness from other populations that are often politically dominant. Also identified as First Nations, Aboriginal and custodians of traditional knowledge. The authors have made a stylistic decision to capitalise the word Indigenous in all instances in the International Indigenous Design Charter.

The terms Indigenous and Indigenous peoples have both been used in this Charter. The International Indigenous Design Charter acknowledges that the word Indigenous can be a contentious term; however, for efficiency and in the absence of a more appropriate single word alternative, the International Indigenous Design Charter has opted to comply with the judgment of the United Nations (2013) Forum on Indigenous Issues which states:

Considering the diversity of Indigenous peoples, an official definition of ‘Indigenous’ has not been adopted by any UN-system body. Instead the system has developed a modern understanding of this term based on the following:
- self-identification as Indigenous peoples at the individual level and accepted by the community as their member;
- historical constraints: pre-colonial and/or settler societies;
- strong link to territories and surrounding natural resources;
- distinct social, economic or political systems;
- distinct language, culture and beliefs;
- form non-dominant groups of society; and,
- receive to maintain and reproduce their ancestral environments and systems as distinctive peoples and communities (United Nations, 2013, p.5).

INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE – a term used to describe ways of knowing, seeing, and thinking that are passed down orally and visually, from generation to generation of Indigenous peoples.

Design Practice Terminology

DESIGN – in this document the term has been used to describe a profession of associated disciplines. The term “design” encompasses communication design, digital design, environmental design, architecture and the built environment, landscape design, fashion design, visual language, advertising and design strategy.

DESIGNER – the following is the official International Council of Design (ico-D) definition of a designer:

Design is a constantly evolving and dynamic discipline. The professionally trained designer applies intent to create the visual, material, spatial and digital environment, cognisant of the experiential, employing interdisciplinary and hybrid approaches to the theory and practice of design. They understand the cultural, ethical, social, economic and ecological impact of their endeavors and their ultimate responsibility towards people and the planet across both commercial and non-commercial spheres. A designer respects the ethics of the design profession (ico-D, 2015).

COMMUNICATION DESIGN – the term used to describe the profession, which encompasses the disciplines of both graphic, digital and interactive design. This definition reflects the global shift from focusing on design as the production of an artifact to design as a strategic process.

GRAPHIC DESIGN – the term for a profession, which is now more commonly referred to as ‘communication design’ or ‘visual communication design’ because of the trending shift from print media to digital and interactive design applications that engage with both visual and non-visual senses (see communication design).

RELATIONAL – concerning the way in which two or more people or things are connected.

RELATIONALITY – the state or condition of being relational.

STAKEHOLDER – a person, group, organisation, escrow agent or custodian with a legitimate interest in a given situation, action or enterprise.

COLLABORATION – the act of working with someone to produce something.
4.3 REFERENCES


ICP-D Regional Meeting
Santiago, Chile. January 2017

ICO-Platform Meeting
Montreal, Canada. October 2017
Presenters: Indigenous Indigenous Design Charter Elly Chatfield (Gamilaraay – Australia) Jeda Greenaway (Wailwan, Gamilaraay – Australia) Dr. Meghan Kelly (Australia)

World Design Summit:
Montreal, Canada. October 2017
Panel Members: Indigenous Indigenous Design Charter discussion
Douglas Cardinal (Metis, Blackfoot, Kainai, Algonquin – Canada)
Elly Chatfield (Gamilaraay – Australia)
Daniel J. Glenn (Crow – USA)
Philippe Meilleur (Mohawk – Canada)
Miguel Hernandez (Chile)
Frida Larios (Maya, Pipil – El Salvador)
Ana Masut (Canada)

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Philippe Meilleur (Mohawk – Canada)

4.3 REFERENCES


