

## **PREAMBLE**

The Australian Archaeological Association is committed to the highest standards of conduct in archaeological practice. The Code of Ethics identifies a common set of values informing the ethical principles upon which members of the Association base their conduct. Ethical responsibilities often exceed legal obligations and are based upon values, principles and conforming practice, as well as adherence to social policy regarding the moral and ethical principles of archaeological conduct. The Code of Ethics outlines the manner and method by which members should fulfil their ethical responsibilities to the interest groups with whom they work. In doing so, it does not seek to limit legitimate freedoms but to emphasise that the discharge of obligations detailed herein is crucial to proper conduct. Adherence to the Code of Ethics is necessary for the well-being of all groups with whom members engage and vital to the integrity of the archaeological profession. In accepting these ethical principles, members shall endeavour to follow them consistently. Where members transgress the Code of Ethics, they may be subject to disciplinary procedures as defined by *Section 32* of the Constitution.

## **1. PRINCIPLES RELATING TO THE ASSOCIATION**

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1.1 Members will serve the interests of the Association by adhering to its objects and purposes as defined by this Code of Ethics and the Constitution, specifically: to promote the advancement of archaeology; to provide an organisation for the discussion and dissemination of archaeological information and ideas in archaeology; to convene meetings at regular intervals; to publicise the need for the study and conservation of archaeological sites and collections; and to publicise the work of the Association.

## **2. PRINCIPLES RELATING TO THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORD**

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2.1 Consonant with their obligations arising from government and international agreements, legislation and regulations, members will advocate the conservation, curation and preservation of archaeological sites, assemblages, collections and archival records.

2.2 Members will endeavour to ensure that archaeological sites and materials which they investigate are managed in a manner which conserves the archaeological and cultural heritage values of the sites and materials.

2.3 Members will neither engage in nor support the illicit trade in cultural heritage.

2.4 Members recognise the importance of repatriation of archaeological materials for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities of concern and they support and advocate the necessary conditions to properly manage archaeological materials in accordance with agreements with communities of concern.

2.5 Members will negotiate with and use all reasonable endeavours to obtain the informed consent of representatives of the communities of concern whose cultural heritage is the subject of investigation. Members cannot assume that there is no community of concern.

2.6 Members will “Show or distribute restricted material only with express permission from those who provided or are responsible for it. [Members will] Consider the impact of disclosure on the wider cultural source group, and whether wider consultation is required prior to disclosure. This is particularly relevant where first disclosures and publications are likely” (AIATSIS Guide to Applying the AIATSIS code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research 2020, p. 27).

### **3. PRINCIPLES RELATING TO INDIGENOUS ARCHAEOLOGY**

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3.1 Members will use all reasonable endeavours to negotiate equitable agreements between archaeologists and the Indigenous communities whose cultural heritage is being investigated. AAA endorses and directs members to the current guidelines regarding such agreements published by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies ([https://aiatsis.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-10/aiatsis-guide-applying-code-ethics\\_0.pdf](https://aiatsis.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-10/aiatsis-guide-applying-code-ethics_0.pdf)) and to the vision statement of the Chairs of Australia’s national, state and territory Indigenous heritage bodies (<https://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/resources/8582db94-6daa-4097-b77e-079a797ef67d/files/dhawura-ngilan-vision-atsi-heritage.pdf>.)

3.1.1 Although it is recognised that there is no single acceptable standard agreement for collaborative research/CHM, at a minimum Members will endeavour to ensure that in any agreement between Members and Indigenous project collaborators, the Indigenous voice is embedded within academic/CHM paradigms in research/project design, implementation and communication.

3.1.2 Although it is recognised that there is no single acceptable standard agreement for collaborative research/CHM, at a minimum Members will endeavour to ensure that in any agreement between Members and Indigenous project collaborators, Indigenous representation will be foregrounded in terms of project governance, design and conduct of research, analysis of finds, and interpretation/communication of results.

3.1.3 Although collaborative partnerships are encouraged as best practice goals for all Members working on collaborative research/CHM projects with Indigenous heritage owners/managers, it is acknowledged that a range of conditions (e.g. land council research contracts, court-imposed limitations, funding restrictions, auditing review requirements) may, at times, limit or even preclude full adoption of the stated aims of this Code of Ethics. In such circumstances we encourage Members to implement the spirit of the AAA and AIATSIS Codes of Ethics, as far as is practicable, and to be transparent about limitations where these occur.

3.2 Members acknowledge the importance of cultural heritage to Indigenous communities.

3.3 Members acknowledge the special importance to Indigenous peoples of ancestral remains and objects and sites associated with such remains. Members will treat such remains with respect in accordance with the desires of the communities of concern as codified in agreements archaeologists and the Indigenous communities whose cultural heritage is being investigated.

3.4 Members acknowledge Indigenous approaches to the interpretation of cultural heritage and to its conservation. “Indigenous peoples have unique laws, languages, cultures, practices, histories and perspectives that should inform the research” (AIATSIS Code of Ethics, p. 13).

3.5 While noting the great importance attached to section 3.4, AAA recognises that interpretations arising under provisions of section 3.4 are not the only interpretations that can be attached to such material. Agreements should make provision for this, where it is deemed necessary to recognise that different interpretations may exist.

#### **4. PRINCIPLES RELATING TO CONDUCT**

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4.1 Members will treat each other in a professional manner and abide by the Association’s policies on Sexual Harassment, Discrimination and Equal Opportunity, and the Event Code of Conduct.

4.2 Members will disseminate the results of their work as widely as possible using plain language where appropriate.

4.3 Any person can notify the Executive Committee of a member’s conduct which they believe to be detrimental to the interests of the Association. Complaints may activate procedures outlined in Section 32 (Expulsion of Members) of the Constitution, including rights of appeal.

4.4 Personal information provided to the Association by members will be kept confidential.