

# Ethical and integrity dilemmas for engaging with humanity's oldest living knowledge systems

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# Thanks and recognition

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**Dr Paul Taylor -**

**For bringing Research Integrity into a focus; and a  
practice**

# The purpose of research

**Research: organises, generates, sustains, stabilises and advances knowledge and knowledge systems.**

# Why do we research...and with whom?

Research is motivated by a need and demand for social good, for the continuation of society, for benefit of society

It is think link between knowledge, knowledge systems and the practices of knowledge.

Advancing knowledge for the sake of knowledge is an impossibility.

# Research Knowledge

**Research knowledge is a component of a broader knowledge system/s and is evidenced through the practice of knowledge.**

# Trust in research

Research knowledge exists independent of motivations and can therefore be used in infinite ways.

It is difficult to foresee the use or impact of research – unless it is practiced within an ethical dimension.

Because of this we must/have to be able to trust research

It is on the basis of trust that we use research, so we must be able to determine if it is worthy of our trust – therefore ethical for the purpose of the society in which it is being framed.

# Two senses or uses of integrity

This reveals both meanings of “Integrity”

1) Integrity in the sense of research conducted or administered with integrity.

2) Integrity in the sense of the wholeness of knowledge.

# Research with Integrity

**Research that contains all the dimension of Integrity generates knowledge that is trustworthy; remains whole knowledge; that persists and evolves, plays a critical role in society that we want it to**

**Research without integrity negatively affects the trustworthiness, continuation and coherence of knowledge systems.**

**Knowledge that cannot be trusted does not/cannot stay as a function of the system and therefore cannot be kept, nor remain, in the system**



# Expressions of research integrity

Although research integrity appears to be intrinsic and the norm of research, our descriptions and increasing understanding of research integrity appear to be relatively new – but the practice of research integrity is old.

Articulations of research integrity appear to have recently emerged in response to different motivations, in order to: address financial fraud, mitigate risks, restrict certain research, define ethical acceptability, build research cultures – and stabilise societies.

# The Singapore Statement

**The Singapore Statement on Research Integrity is perhaps the best recent example of the presentation of principles and responsibilities rather than rules to support research integrity.**

**Created in 2010 at the 2nd World Conference on Research Integrity in Singapore, the Statement presents four high-level principles and 14 responsibilities. The simplicity and broad applicability of the Singapore Statement has encouraged new codemakers to adopt a similar approach.**

# Singapore Statement on Research Integrity

Preamble. The value and benefits of research are vitally dependent on the integrity of research. While there can be and are national and disciplinary differences in the way research is organized and conducted, there are also principles and professional responsibilities that are fundamental to the integrity of research wherever it is undertaken.

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## PRINCIPLES

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***Honesty*** in all aspects of research

***Accountability*** in the conduct of research

***Professional courtesy and fairness*** in working with others

***Good stewardship*** of research on behalf of others

# Principles of the Australian Code



Honesty



Rigour



Transparency



Fairness



R-e-s-p-e-c-t



Recognition



Accountability



Promotion



# Practices and principles of integrity in Indigenous knowledge systems

Indigenous Australian knowledge systems have persisted and evolved over a long period of time, and in the face of many threats



# Recognising something old, and creating something new

If attempts to articulate research integrity are relatively recent, the practice of research integrity cannot be.

*Why not?*

Because research has created knowledge that has persisted and evolved over deep time

Understanding research integrity, then, is not a only matter of creating something new, but also a matter of reflecting on and using what is true.

# Looking to enduring knowledge systems

If there is a necessary connection between research conducted with integrity and research that has integrity/wholeness, then we might look for an answer to the question of how to conduct research with integrity, to enduring knowledge systems, knowledge systems that have persisted and evolved over a long period of time

The fact of their persistence and evolution means that these knowledge systems carried with them principles and practices of research integrity.

These principles and practices are what have allowed these systems to persist and evolve

# Knowledge exchange

**Knowledge systems that persist necessarily evolve, for if they do not evolve in the face of new problems and puzzles, they become ineffective, they cannot play the role we need them to, they cannot help us navigate the world**

**The exchange of knowledge between and across knowledge systems is essential to the evolution of a knowledge system**



# Characteristics of Indigenous knowledge systems

## Based on published works:

Continuation over deep time – 120,000 years

Gatekeeping and bounded knowledges

Storytelling - Eastern Australia sea-level change over deep time

Kinship systems – scientific

Rock art – technological advance

authorship and authority - knowledge in speaking for and as country; knowledge as place – place and country

# Principles and practices we can see in these examples

What principles of research integrity can we glean from looking at Indigenous knowledge systems?

The 'gatekeeping' of knowledge (as a contrast to the notion of open research)

Storytelling as both data management and the dissemination of research knowledge

Practices around the exchange of knowledge across systems (as in, the red ochre example)

**What does this mean for the question of how we conduct our research with integrity?**

**What does this tell us about what it means to conduct research with integrity?**

**In other words, how does this help us think about an answer to this question, so that we might conduct our research with integrity and ensure the public's trust in it?**



**It should make us pause and reconsider what we have taken for granted as practices and principles of integrity**

**Open research;**

**Practices around knowledge exchange (e.g. how Western trained researchers currently go about conducting research on Indigenous communities. )**

# Solutions and Provocations

**We might be inclined to think that this gives us solutions:  
here's what practices and principles we should put in place in  
order to have research integrity.**



**Perhaps this is the wrong way of thinking about it?**

**Perhaps what this whole lecture is an exercise in *knowledge exchange***



**It's not about taking from Indigenous knowledge systems**

**It is about recognising that Indigenous knowledge systems have integrity**

**That Indigenous knowledge systems have practices and principles that have given it that integrity**



**We therefore have something to learn from Indigenous Knowledge systems - by way of practice.**

**We also and on the other hand, offering other perspectives/thoughts on research integrity, so that this becomes an exchange (rather than just taking/appropriation)**

**We can all further our thinking on research integrity.**