



MaiaM nayri Wingara

Indigenous Data Sovereignty

Communique

Indigenous Data Sovereignty Summit

20th June 2018, Canberra, ACT



AUSTRALIAN
Indigenous
Governance
INSTITUTE

This Communique, from the MaiaM nayri Wingara Indigenous Data Sovereignty Collective and the Australian Indigenous Governance Institute, is addressed to all individuals and entities involved in the creation, collection, access, analysis, interpretation, management, dissemination and reuse of data and data infrastructure in Australia.

Indigenous Data Sovereignty is a global movement concerned with the right of Indigenous peoples to govern the creation, collection, ownership and application of their data¹. Indigenous Data Sovereignty in Australia is derived from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples inherent right to govern our peoples, Country (including lands, waters and sky) and resources as outlined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP),² for which Australia has declared its support.

Data is a cultural, strategic, and economic asset for Indigenous³ peoples. Indigenous Australians have always been active in what is now known as 'data'. Yet in modern times we have been isolated from the language, control and production of data at community, state and national levels. This has resulted in data that are overly focused on Indigenous peoples as the problem. Existing data and data infrastructure does not recognise or privilege our knowledges and worldviews nor meet our current and future needs.

In response to this, the MaiaM nayri Wingara Indigenous Data Sovereignty Collective and the Australian Indigenous Governance Institute convened the *National Indigenous Data Sovereignty Summit* (the Summit) on 20 June 2018 in Canberra, ACT. Over 40 Indigenous delegates attended the Summit, including representatives from peak bodies, the public service and academia as well as community leaders. Delegates came from every State and Territory in Australia and were joined by four representatives of Te Mana Raraunga Māori Data Sovereignty Network and the Data Iwi (Tribal) Leaders Group.

The aim of the Summit was to progress Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Indigenous Data Governance through developing shared understandings and initiating an Australian set of Indigenous Data Governance protocols. Delegates attending the summit endorsed the following foundational statements:

- In Australia, '*Indigenous Data*' refers to information or knowledge, in any format or medium, which is about and may affect Indigenous peoples both collectively and individually.
- '*Indigenous Data Sovereignty*' refers to the right of Indigenous peoples to exercise ownership over Indigenous Data. Ownership of data can be expressed through the creation, collection, access, analysis, interpretation, management, dissemination and reuse of Indigenous Data.
- '*Indigenous Data Governance*' refers to the right of Indigenous peoples to autonomously decide what, how and why Indigenous Data are collected, accessed and used. It ensures that data on or about Indigenous peoples reflects our priorities, values, cultures, worldviews and diversity.

¹ For more information see Kukutai, T. and Taylor, J. eds. 2016. *Indigenous Data Sovereignty: Towards an Agenda* (Vol. 38) ANU Press.

² UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples articles 3, 4, 5, 15(i), 18, 19, 20(i), 23,31, 32, 33, 38 and 42.

³ The term 'Indigenous' refers to Australia's First Peoples, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Exercising Indigenous Data Governance enables Indigenous peoples, our representative and governing bodies to accurately reflect our stories. It provides the necessary tools to identify what works, what does not and why. Effective Indigenous Data Governance empowers our peoples to make the best decisions to support our communities and First Nations in the ways that meet our development needs and aspirations.

The Summit delegates asserted that in Australia, Indigenous peoples have the right to:

- Exercise control of the data ecosystem including creation, development, stewardship, analysis, dissemination and infrastructure.
- Data that is contextual and disaggregated (available and accessible at individual, community and First Nations levels).
- Data that is relevant and empowers sustainable self-determination and effective self-governance.
- Data structures that are accountable to Indigenous peoples and First Nations.
- Data that is protective and respects our individual and collective interests.

Enacting Indigenous Data Governance requires Indigenous leaders, practitioners and community members with the skills and infrastructure to advocate and participate across all sectors and jurisdictions. Indigenous communities retain the right to decide which sets of data require active governance and maintain the right to not participate in data processes inconsistent with the principles asserted in this Communique.