

# Recruitment for a Qualitative Study of Falls in Elderly Aboriginal People

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Original Artwork by:  
Terence Allen Jnr, Aboriginal  
Artist, Tamworth, Australia

The painting is the artist's impression of the research project. It was developed after in-depth discussions between the researcher and the artist.

The non-Aboriginal researcher is depicted by the person wearing a hat. The sharing around the fire is symbolic of the "burning" of misunderstanding & fear & developing mutual respect, trust & healing.

The overall background signifies the artist's affinity with the land he comes from.



The researcher (Judy Coates) identified the need to move into the environment of the local Aboriginal community to share & learn, to build trust & gain an appreciation of the history and culture.

It is only by moving out of the non-Aboriginal environment that an appreciation of the local Aboriginal culture & land can begin.

Appreciation & learning forms the basis of true understanding which is the backbone of research with Aboriginal communities.

**R** – respect is often lacking or only given "lip service"

**I** – intolerance of the differences

**F** – focus of research is often on what non-Aboriginal people think is important

**T** – more time than normal is required to conduct the research



**A** – awareness of many aspects of Aboriginal culture

**R** – respect for Aboriginal history, people & culture. Should be mutual. Must be earned

**C** – commit & care: about what you do, how you do it & why you do it

**H** – humility: know & accept you are not always right or do the right thing

## MY JOURNEY

**MY INITIAL PERCEPTION & UNDERSTANDING** of how my research project would progress has changed significantly since it's initial conception. Chiefly, I was guilty of believing I had some understanding of the Aboriginal culture & of assuming that by reading I would learn what I needed to know about how Aboriginal people think & feel. I thought this was what I needed for my project.

**WHAT HAS CHANGED?** Increased understanding of the importance of mutual RESPECT; identification of my own racial thoughts; increased awareness of DEPTH of Aboriginal culture / understanding the role of family & land, feeling & knowing. The focus of Aboriginal life is spiritual & emotional.

**I MADE A CHOICE** to identify the factors that contribute to the **RIFT** or gap in the recruitment process. After this personal "exposure", I experienced feelings of frustration, being let down, not being respected, degraded & reverse racism. It was only then I was able to identify the skills I would need to build the **ARCH** to bridge the gap and develop the mutual respect & trust required to engage with the local elderly Aboriginal community.