

Policy and Protocol for Use of *palawa kani* Aboriginal Language, 2019

palawa kani means 'Tasmanian Aborigines speak'. It is the only Aboriginal language in lutruwita (Tasmania) today.

palawa kani is authentic Tasmanian language retrieved from the original languages but is not exactly the same as any of them. Not enough words or information were recorded of any of the original languages to rebuild any one of them exactly as it was. So *palawa kani* combines words retrieved from as many of the original languages as possible.

Names of places in *palawa kani* are always derived from the language which was originally spoken in that place, if the name in that language survives.

The Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre is acknowledged both within and outside the Aboriginal community as the body with responsibility for the retrieval and revival of *palawa kani*. This work draws on an extensive body of historical and linguistic research and Aboriginal community knowledge and is guided by principles agreed by the Aboriginal community in statewide meetings since the 1990s.

Policies determining Aboriginal language use are based on the fundamental principle of Aboriginal control. These policies are set by the Aboriginal community through the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre.

Protocols for gaining permission to use Tasmanian Aboriginal language are as follows:

1. All *palawa kani* place names are freely available for the public to use.
<https://tacinc.com.au/pulingina-to-lutruwita-tasmania-place-names-map/>
2. There is no need for any Tasmanian Aboriginal person to seek permission to use Tasmanian Aboriginal language for their own purpose. *palawa kani* Language Program can advise and assist Aborigines with their language use.
3. Aboriginal people seeking language for the use of their non-Aboriginal employer or a non-Aboriginal organisation, are not seeking language for their own purpose.

Since the language is to be used for the purpose of the non-Aboriginal employer or organisation, the Aboriginal person or any committee or any other body of which they are a part, should advise the employer/organisation to make written application as in 4 below.

4. Any non-Aboriginal person, group or organisation wishing to use Aboriginal language for any purpose may submit their request by email to language@tacinc.com.au or by mail to *palawa kani* Language Program, Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre, PO Box 531 Launceston, Tasmania 7250. At least a two week period should be allowed for responses. The application must state the purpose for which the language is to be used, by whom and the intended audience.
5. Several categories of language can be shared with non-Aborigines on application as above. Words and simple phrases in several categories including but not limited to natural objects such as flora and fauna, features of the landscape and natural environment, actions, greetings are among those which can be shared.
6. Applications are assessed on a case by case basis. Approval will depend on the context of the proposed use and its alignment with Aboriginal values and aspirations.

Once the application has been assessed, applicants will be notified of the decision in writing.

7. All approvals for the use of *palawa kani* are conditional upon the users displaying with the approved words or phrases an acknowledgement with this wording: 'In *palawa kani*, the language of Tasmanian Aborigines', and that the *palawa kani* language is not used in conjunction with inauthentic forms of the language.

8. Some resources which showcase *palawa kani* can be accessed on the TAC website and Facebook pages.

[Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre – palawa kani Information and Entertainment \(tacinc.com.au\)](https://tacinc.com.au)

CDs of children's songs can be provided to schools. Dictionaries and resources which enable learning the full language are only available within the Aboriginal community.

