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Documentation and Publication

This chapter outlines standard procedures for publishing in a range of archaeological venues. Publication is the act of communicating information to the public. Making your work available to others who have an interest in it—i.e. publishing in some form the results of your fieldwork, analysis, and assessment—is an important ethical responsibility. You should write up and publish the results of your research as quickly as practicable, with the aim of informing as wide an audience as possible. The major publication venues for archaeologists are:

- Technical (or consultancy) reports.
- Community reports.
- Academic books and journals.

While publishing your results is an ethical obligation, it also gives you the pleasure of sharing your knowledge and experiences, and voicing your opinion. In addition, the act of writing for publication prompts you to think through the results of your research more deeply than you might otherwise.

10.1. Technical Reports

The Australian standards for organizing and presenting the results of archaeological fieldwork in a written report have been developed by AACAI and the various state heritage bodies which publish standards for archaeological fieldwork and reporting. The most important standard to bear in mind when writing a technical report is to make your data and results comparable with those of others. This means that you need to be absolutely clear about what methods you used, the limitations you faced, the definitions you used, and the data you collected and analysed. Precise descriptions of the extent of survey areas and the amount of coverage the survey achieved are essential (and, indeed, are mandatory in some states) and wherever possible should be supplemented with clear diagrams showing the size and location of your transects, survey areas or sampling zones.

Each state has its own systems and standards, and it is important that you familiarize yourself with the documents that apply to your particular situation. These are

the standards to which your report will be held and may well lead to it either being accepted or rejected. To get a handle on Australian standards for technical reports you should consult some of the state government publications that are available online. Since procedures and guidelines are continuously evolving, it makes sense to use internet versions rather than printed copies, especially if these were printed some time ago. In New South Wales, for example, the Cultural Heritage Branch of the Department of the Environment and Conservation publishes an *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage: Standards and Guidelines Kit* (Byrne, 1997) (available on-line at <http://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/npws.nsf/Content/Publications>), which outlines precisely what information consultancy reports in Indigenous archaeology in NSW should contain, and how this information should be presented, as well as standards for archaeological practice in Aboriginal heritage management. In Victoria, a variety of useful documents can be downloaded from <http://www1.dvc.vic.gov.au/aav/heritage/forms>. These include the Aboriginal Affairs Victoria (AAV) publication, *Guidelines for Conducting and Reporting Archaeological Surveys in Victoria*, and a range of important forms, including a site inspection form, preliminary report form and excavation permit application form. The AAV also has guidelines for filling out their site cards and other essential reporting forms. The Department of Indigenous Affairs in Western Australia also has a *Heritage Manual* that can be downloaded from <http://www.dia.wa.gov.au/Heritage/HeritageManual/default.aspx>, as well as a range of applications and report forms. Similarly, the Heritage Unit in the ACT is currently developing a set of heritage guidelines and a manual for Aboriginal heritage which will be made available online from their website. While all of the above documents will give you a sense of standards for archaeological reporting in Australia, it is important to remember that there can be significant variation between states, so if you are writing a report you will need to be certain that it fulfils the criteria for the particular state in which the work has been undertaken.

10.1.1. Formatting

A technical report must have at least six main sections, although each of these can be split up in various ways if required:

- Abstract/Executive Summary.
- Aims/research questions.
- Methods.
- Results.
- Discussion.
- Recommendations.

The *aims* section tells the reader what was done and why, what the report will cover and how the research articulates with other projects, or fits into current theoretical debate. If you have research questions arising from a previous research design, then you can also outline them here. Definitions and assumptions can be outlined in this section, although they can also be placed in a glossary. This section may