Common problems with forms submitted to the Committee

With regard to the content of applications, the most common area in which the Committee requires changes to be made by applicants is in information sheets and consent forms for research participants. Most of these problems would be avoided if applicants followed Committee guidelines.

Deficiencies which frequently occur in submitted documentation for informed consent are:

- Omission of required details (e.g., title of project, student's course of study and School);
- Inclusion of proscribed information (e.g., home or business telephone numbers);
- Use of jargon/technical terms rather than plain English;
- Lack of user-friendliness;
- Incorrect contact details for researcher or supervisor (e.g., name of the former Faculty rather than School and Division);
- Typographical and spelling mistakes;
- Lack of the mandatory statements – “This is for you to keep” – Information Sheet and This means you can say NO – Consent Form.

Other common pitfalls in applications include:

- Inadequate explanation about project design or precisely what the researcher intends to do (to reduce the likelihood of this problem, it may be helpful to ask a colleague or fellow student unfamiliar with the project to review the draft application); and
- Accompanying documentation such as questionnaires supplied in draft rather than final form (e.g., lacking directions for use or details of demographic information to be requested from participants).
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander criteria has not been addressed in respect to each of the 6 values and how the research will benefit Aboriginal peoples.
- Lack of signatures – Principal researchers, Organisational Head accepting responsibility for the study (the question to be asked is if this project were to fall over, who takes responsibility?)
- Lack of documentation from communities supporting the research – letters of support. Letter of support from Remote Health Services.