

# Tricks of the Trade: Fieldwork

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# Fieldwork experience

- Homeless – Newcastle, NSW
- Homeless young women, Western Sydney
- Non-custodial single fathers, Newcastle
- Single mothers, North Sydney
- Integrated Transport Plan - City of Port Phillip
- Activity Centres Policy – Department of Infrastructure
- High density housing, Melbourne CBD
- Medium density housing, Inner Melbourne
- Student Housing, Melbourne CBD,
- Student Housing, Gippsland,
- Treechange - Castlemaine, Vic.

# Data collection methods

- Participant observation
- Cold call surveys
- Surveys
- In-depth interviews
- ABS statistical analysis

# Importance Tip

1. Preparation
2. Identifying Key Informants
3. Gaining Trust
4. Ethics of conduct

# Preparation

Includes:

- Knowing everything about the organisation, group or individuals before undertaking research
- Want to avoid spending valuable time getting acquainted
- Understand the power dynamics that will operate

# Example: Youth Homeless

- First point was a service provider
- Very few relationships with homeless youth – antagonistic
- Wasted 6 weeks
- By chance found their ‘aunty’
- Negotiated with key informant for an ‘introduction’

# Identifying Key Informants

- Know who might be an impediment or blockage to your research
- Know who will be of most assistance
- Utilise a multi-tiered approach
- Devise a matrix of potential people

# Gaining Trust

- Trust is important in relation to key informants , but also individuals at the centre of the research
- Knowing that you might be ‘tested’ by a participant (eg – homeless girls)
- Once trust is established, people are willing to divulge information about themselves (eg High-rise housing developers)

# Ethical Conduct

Two pronged approach:

1. How to conduct myself – conflicts over ethics and gaining trust
2. Writing up of the results – ‘in whose best interest’ in the dissemination of information