Engaging with Indigenous Communities for Biosecurity — Summary

1. **Foundations of Engagement**

- Begin with respectful acknowledgment of Traditional Owners, Elders past, present, and emerging.
- Recognise that Indigenous connection to Country, culture, and community is central to their identity and decision-making.
- Engagement must go beyond consultation — it should be co-designed and collaborative.

2. **From Transactional to Meaningful Relationships**

- Transactional relationships are short-term and driven by funding or project outcomes ("money and short-term vision"). Be prepared to pay for these transactions.
- Meaningful relationships prioritize trust, reciprocity, and long-term vision, even if they involve fewer financial resources.
- The emphasis should be on mutual learning, shared purpose, and continuity beyond specific projects.

3. **Building Trust and Leadership**

- The key message: "Trust us and let us lead."
- Indigenous people should not just be stakeholders but leaders and partners in biosecurity planning, response, and communication.
- Authentic engagement means enabling self-determination and respecting community-led approaches.

4. **Co-design and Shared Planning**

- Collaboration should happen from the start — invite Indigenous voices to help plan, design, and evaluate biosecurity activities.
- Co-design fosters ownership, relevance, and sustainability of biosecurity initiatives.
- Encourage dialogue and sharing.

5. **Communication and Connection**

- Start conversations with passion and people, not policy — "Lead with your passion, and conversation will come."
- Use accessible communication styles that reflect cultural values (storytelling, community gatherings, informal discussions). Be prepared to sit behind and wait to be called on, rather than to lead and direct.
- Recognise that relationships drive outcomes, not the other way around.

6. **Future Vision**

- Look beyond immediate issues: where will biosecurity and Indigenous engagement be in 5, 10, or 50 years?
- The call to action: "We are waiting — come and join us."
    - This reflects an open invitation for the broader biosecurity community to partner genuinely and respectfully with First Nations peoples and communities.

7. **Key Takeaways**

- Start with acknowledgment, respect, and listening.
- Prioritize relationship over transaction.
- Trust and empower Indigenous leadership.
- Co-design solutions that reflect community priorities.
- Think long-term and walk together in biosecurity management.