

Welcome to Country Acknowledgement of Country

Welcome to Country is a ceremony provided by Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Elders, or Traditional Custodians who have been given permission, to welcome visitors onto traditional lands.

Protocols for welcoming visitors to Country have been part of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures for thousands of years. Traditionally, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups had clear boundaries separating their Country from that of other groups. Crossing into another group's Country required a request for permission to enter. When permission was granted, the hosting group would welcome the visitors, offering them safe passage and protection during their journey.

Today, these protocols have been adapted to fit with contemporary life. However, the essential elements of welcoming visitors and offering safe passage remain in place. A Welcome to Country occurs at the beginning of a formal event, and can take many forms, including singing, dancing, smoking ceremonies, or a speech in traditional language and/or English.

Source: www.reconciliation.org.au

To organise a Welcome to Country provided by a Kaurna person, contact Kuma Kaaru Cultural Services who can assist in this process:
kumakaaru@outlook.com

Welcome to Country

Acknowledgement of Country

Acknowledgement of Country is an opportunity for anyone to show respect for Australia's Traditional Custodians, and the continuing connection that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have to the land, sea, sky and waterways. An Acknowledgement of Country can be given by anyone, and is generally offered at the beginning of a meeting, speech or formal occasion.

Source: www.reconciliation.org.au

There are no set protocols or phrasing for an Acknowledgement of Country, however, below is an example of a Statement of Acknowledgement that can be read out at the commencement of gatherings held within the Adelaide region (Kurna Country).

We would like to acknowledge that the land we meet on today is the traditional lands for the Kurna people and that we respect their spiritual relationship with their Country. We also acknowledge the Kurna people as the traditional custodians of the Adelaide region and that their cultural and heritage beliefs are still as important to the living Kurna people today.

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Why Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country are so important...

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have experienced a long history of exclusion from Australian history, and for many years, Australian democracy. This history of dispossession and colonisation lies at the heart of the disparity between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people today.

Including recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in events, meetings, and national symbols, is one part of ending the exclusion that has been so damaging. Incorporating welcoming and acknowledgement protocols into official meetings and events recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australians and as the Traditional Custodians of the land. It promotes an ongoing connection to place for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and shows respect for Traditional Custodians.

Source: www.reconciliation.org.au