

Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country

Welcome to Country is a ceremony delivered by Traditional Custodians, or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who have been given permission by Traditional Custodians, to welcome visitors onto their Country.

Protocols for welcoming visitors to Country have been part of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures for thousands of years. Boundaries between different groups were clear and 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, while these protocols have been adapted to contemporary circumstances, the essential elements remain: welcoming visitors and respect for Country. 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: <https://www.reconciliation.org.au/>

Kuma Kaaru is an Aboriginal owned and operated business located on Kurna Yarta (Land). They offer a range of cultural services including Welcome to Country, Smoking Ceremony, Cultural Dance and Didgeridoo performance.

Kuma Kaaru predominantly provides Welcome to Country on Kurna Yarta, however some Kuma Kaaru members can provide Welcomes outside of Kurna Country.

email: kumakaaru@outlook.com

website: <https://kumakaaru.com.au/>

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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 peoples have to Country. An Acknowledgement of Country can be delivered by anyone, and is generally offered at the beginning of a meeting, speech or event.

There is no specific wording for an Acknowledgement of Country, however, it is important to be sincere and, if possible, do some research on the Country being acknowledged.

source: <https://www.reconciliation.org.au/>

Below are some examples of Acknowledgement statements that can be read out at the commencement of gatherings held within the Adelaide region (Kurna Country).

We (or I) 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.

We (or I) acknowledge the Kurna people as the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we work and live. We pay respect to Elders past and present and extend that respect to all First Nations people and their connections to Country.

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Why Acknowledging Country is important

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have experienced a long history of exclusion from Australian history, and for many years, Australian democracy as well. 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 peoples in events, meetings, and national symbols, contributes towards ending the exclusion that has been so damaging for many Aboriginal people and communities.

Incorporating welcome and acknowledgement protocols into official meetings and events, recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Traditional Custodians of the land and promotes the ongoing connection to place for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Acknowledging Country also demonstrates respect for Aboriginal people and cultures, and provides opportunities to build and enhance relationships and contribute to the reconciliation process.

source: <https://www.reconciliation.org.au/>