

Acknowledgement of Country Guidelines for Online Meetings and Learning

As many organisations turn more and more to online meetings and learning, especially under the current developments of COVID-19 and social distancing, it is important to remember that many face-to-face meeting protocols remain in place – including Acknowledgement of Country.

Starting a meeting or a learning session with an Acknowledgement of Country, no matter where it is held, is both a display of respect and assists in creating a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander attendees. This is even more important in an online environment where a connection between attendees can be difficult to establish.

Traditionally, Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country occur on a specific place or Country.

WELCOME TO COUNTRY

Welcome to Country is a traditional protocol where an Elder or Aboriginal community member (that has been given the cultural permission) welcomes people to their traditional country.

The Elder or community member has ancestral connections to the country that the gathering is taking place, for example a Gadigal Elder will give a Welcome to Country on traditional Gadigal lands.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Acknowledgement of Country is a sign of respect to the Traditional Custodians and can be given by any Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal person.

It is recommended to learn about the importance of the traditional protocol before giving an Acknowledgement.

In the online environment, attendees can be situated anywhere across the state, country or across the globe. This means that providing a Welcome to Country would be difficult, however the Chair of a meeting or the organiser of the learning session (for example the lead presenter, consultant or teacher) can still give an Acknowledgement of Country that pays respect to the different countries and places that attendees are engaging from.

What do I need to know before giving an Acknowledgement of Country online?

- Start by watching this video on [Welcome to Country](#) and reading [Reconciliation Australia's Welcome to and Acknowledgement of Country](#) overview to develop an understanding of the cultural significance of the protocols.
- When in the planning stage of your meeting or learning session, include the Acknowledgement of Country in the agenda.

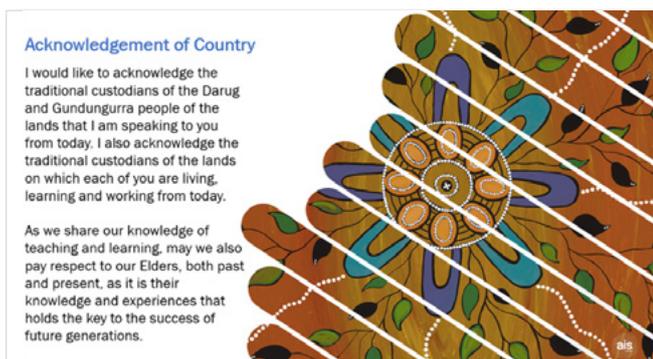


Example agenda

- Then, identify the Traditional Country which you will be located on during the session. This will bring a personal context to your Acknowledgement. Looking at local government council websites can usually provide you with the traditional name of the country you are located on.

What wording should be used for an Acknowledgement of Country that is given online?

The wording that you use will differ to what is used during a face-to-face meeting. An Acknowledgement of Country that is given in an online environment will acknowledge where all attendees are engaging from. For example:



Where can I access further support in understanding Acknowledgement of Country and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols?

To find out more, contact the AISNSW Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Consultant, [Roz Thomas](#).

The additional readings below may also provide you with further understandings of Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.

- Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Inc. [Protocols Fact Sheets](#).
- [Welcome to Country app](#) is free to download on apple devices and provides Welcome to Country videos from across the nation.
- [Australians Together's Welcome to and Acknowledgement of Country](#): a concise overview of Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country protocols from a Christian perspective.
- TEDx Talk – [Welcome to Country?](#) Presented by Jade Kennedy, University of Wollongong: challenging common perceptions and meaning of Welcome to Country protocols.
- Narragunnawali's [Welcome to Country](#): a Professional learning guide for school leaders and teachers.
- ABC Education – [Why a Welcome to Country is never boring](#): a teaching and learning resource for students.