

Welcome to Country & Acknowledgement of Country

Cultural Significance of 'Welcome to Country' and 'Acknowledgement of Country'

Traditionally, when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people travelled, they would not enter another's Country until they were welcomed by the Traditional Owners of the land.

"Country is a living entity with a yesterday, today and tomorrow."

Deborah Bird Rose, Nourishing Terrains

Aboriginal people have a unique relationship with the land, involving the responsibility to look after the environmental and spiritual wellbeing of their Country.

What is Welcome to Country?

Welcoming people to Country is a traditional practice, which has special significance. The Welcome to Country should **only be delivered by Aboriginal people** in their own local homelands and community. This could be an Elder, or an adult who belongs to that Country.

Welcome to Country

As a representative of the _____ people of this land, I would like to welcome you to our Country and pay respect to our Elders who have gone before us and to all Aboriginal people who are present here today. I would also like to recognise our non-Indigenous people who have joined us today.

For further information and advice

- Aboriginal Land Council www.alc.org.au
- Reconciliation Australia www.reconciliation.org.au a "Q&A" on Welcome to Country ceremonies or offering an Acknowledgement of Country.
- Meet with local Aboriginal community organisations and find out what is happening in your community.

What is Acknowledgement to Country?

This can be performed by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, both children and adults. Here are some suggestions for your use.

Acknowledgement of Country - Example 1

I begin by acknowledging the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we are meeting. I would also like to pay my respects to Elders both past and present and extend that respect to any Aboriginal people present here today.

Acknowledgement of Country - Example 2

Before we commence we wish to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land, and their Elders past, present and future and welcome any Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people here with us today.

We acknowledge and respect their continuing culture, the world's oldest living culture, and the contribution they make to the life of this region and our country.

We would like to acknowledge that this meeting is being held on Aboriginal land and recognise the strength, resilience and capacity of Aboriginal people.