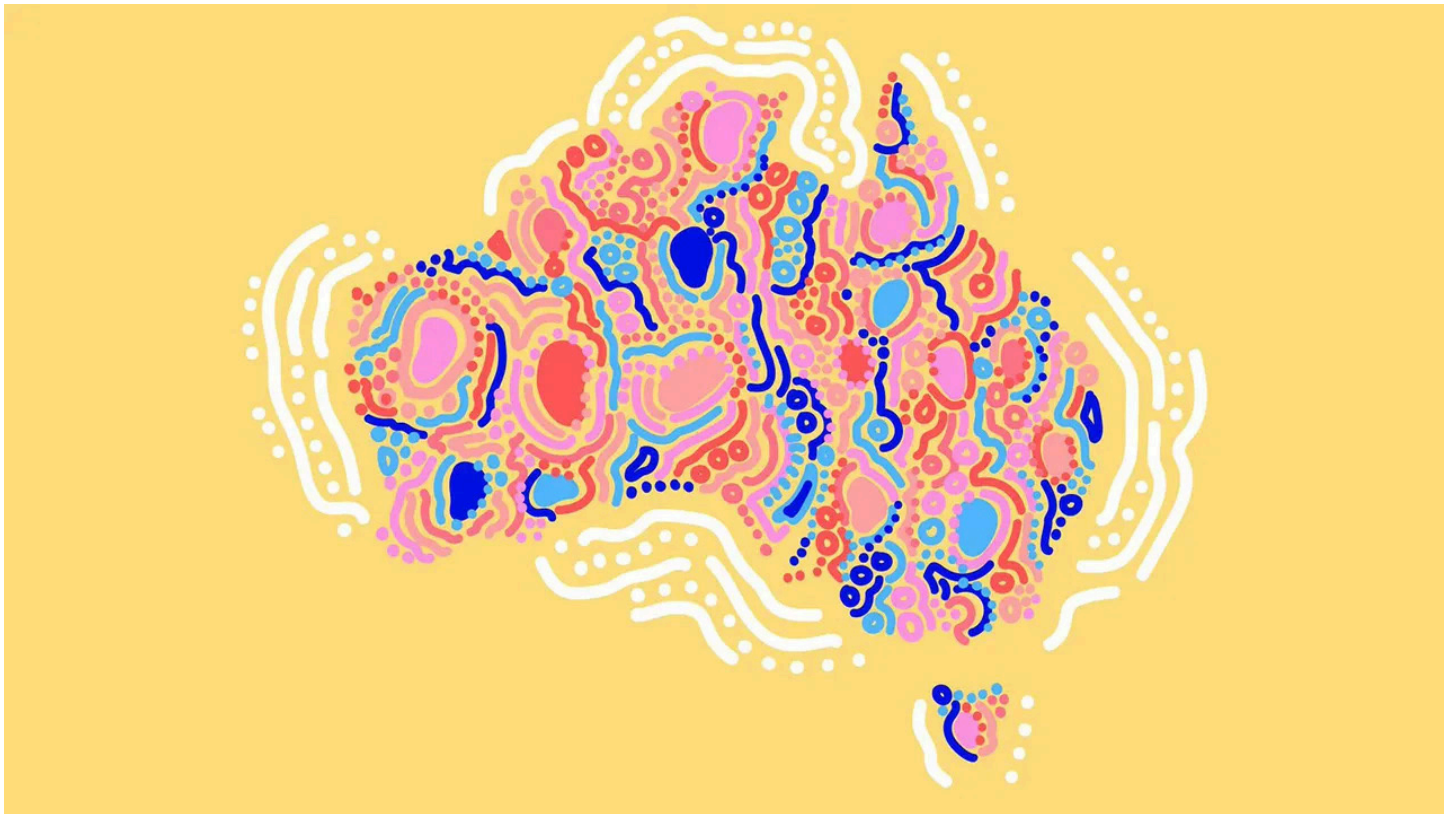


How to Personalise an Acknowledgment of Country

An Acknowledgement of Country is an opportunity for anyone to show respect for Traditional Owners and the continuing connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to Country.



An Acknowledgement of Country can be offered by any person and like a Welcome to Country, is given at the beginning of a meeting, speech, or event.

There is no specific wording for an Acknowledgement of Country, just be sincere and, if possible, do some research on the Country you are acknowledging.

Acknowledgement of Country can be adapted and expanded to reflect different contexts. For example, an author might acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the land's first storytellers; or a meeting of scientists might Acknowledge the contributions and sophistication of First Nations knowledges.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have experienced a long history of exclusion from Australian history books, the Australian flag, the Australian anthem and for many years, Australian democracy. This history of dispossession and colonisation lies at the heart of the disparity between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and other Australians today. Including recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in events, meetings and national symbols contributes to ending the exclusion that has been so damaging.

(<https://www.reconciliation.org.au/reconciliation/acknowledgement-of-country-and-welcome-to-country/>)

There is no “correct” way to deliver an Acknowledgement of Country, just ensure it's meaningful, and you understand why you're delivering it. When mob travelled into or through another mob's area they had to be “welcomed”, this welcoming was to allow safe passage and made sure that the visiting mob would respect the Country they were visiting. It was a mutual agreement between mob this is what we should remember when delivering an Acknowledgement of Country, we are on land that is not ours, land that we take for granted.

Important aspects of an Acknowledgment of Country are firstly knowing the traditional owners of the land you are on.

For our TMOS Nodes it is as follows:

- Canberra is Ngunnawal country, [Resource Link](#)
- The City of Melbourne is land of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and Bunurong Boon Wurrung peoples of the Eastern Kulin. [Resource Link](#)
- Sydney is the land of the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation. [Resource Link](#)
- Perth City is located in the ancient country of the Whadjuk Nyoongar people. [Resource Link](#)

There are three types of Acknowledgement of Country:

Generic – this should be used if you don't know the name of the people on whose land you are gathered, or if there are disputes about the land (multiple Aboriginal peoples identify as Traditional Custodians for that area).

The words are:

'I begin today by acknowledging the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we <gather/meet> today and pay my respects to their Elders past and present. I extend that respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples here today.'

Specific – this should be used where there are no disputes, and you know the name of the people on whose land you are gathered.

The words are:

'I begin today by acknowledging the <insert name of people here (e.g. Ngunnawal)> people, Traditional Custodians of the land on which we <gather/meet> today, and pay my respects to their Elders past and present. I extend that respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples here today.'

General (Australia wide – webinar / website / printed material)

The words are:

'In the spirit of reconciliation, the [organisation] acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.'

The above are a good starting point for an Acknowledgement of Country, however as mentioned above there is no one way to deliver this. Another aspect to keep in mind is the language you use, never start an Acknowledgement of Country with “before we begin” this means you are putting the Acknowledgement outside what you are doing where it should be the start. Try and refraining from saying “I would like to

Acknowledge” this is diminishing the message you are conveying. Make sure never to say “Our first nations/indigenouness people” this conveys ownership which very offensive.

Node Acknowledgments:

“Canberra” -The Australian National University acknowledges, celebrates and pays our respects to the Ngunnawal and Ngambri people of the Canberra region and to all First Nations Australians on whose traditional lands we meet and work, and whose cultures are among the oldest continuing cultures in human history.

“Melbourne”/Naarm - 1. RMIT University acknowledges the people of the Woi wurrung and Boon wurrung language groups of the eastern Kulin Nation on whose unceded lands we conduct the business of the University. RMIT University respectfully acknowledges their Ancestors and Elders, past and present. RMIT also acknowledges the Traditional Custodians and their Ancestors of the lands and waters across Australia where we conduct our business.

“Melbourne”/Naarm - 2. The University of Melbourne acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the unceded land on which we work, learn and live: the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Bunurong peoples (Burnley, Fishermans Bend, Parkville, Southbank and Werribee campuses), the Yorta Yorta Nation (Dookie and Shepparton campuses), and the Dja Dja Wurrung people (Creswick campus). The University also acknowledges and is grateful to the Traditional Owners, Elders and Knowledge Holders of all Indigenous nations and clans who have been instrumental in our reconciliation journey.

We recognise the unique place held by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the original owners and custodians of the lands and waterways across the Australian continent, with histories of continuous connection dating back more than 60,000 years. We also acknowledge their enduring cultural practices of caring for Country.

We pay respect to Elders past, present and future, and acknowledge the importance of Indigenous knowledge in the Academy. As a community of researchers, teachers, professional staff and students we are privileged to work and learn every day with Indigenous colleagues and partners.

“Sydney” - UTS acknowledges the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, the Boorooberongal people of the Dharug Nation, the Bidiagal people and the Gamaygal people, upon whose ancestral lands our university stands. We would also like to pay respect to the Elders both past and present, acknowledging them as the traditional custodians of knowledge for these lands.

“Perth” - The University of Western Australia acknowledges that its campus is situated on Noongar land, and that Noongar people remain the spiritual and cultural custodians of their land, and continue to practise their values, languages, beliefs and knowledge.

If you want to learn more here are useful links:

- <https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/map-indigenous-australia>
- <https://www.reconciliation.org.au/>
- <https://www.indigenous.gov.au/>
- <https://www.wurundjeri.com.au/>
- <https://www.sydneybarani.com.au/>
- <http://www.ngambri.org/about.html>
- <https://www.noongarculture.org.au/>