

# First Nations Guide



Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners  
Internal Protocols



## About our Guides

This guide has been developed to provide an overview of respectful protocols and practice to appropriately acknowledge the Traditional Owners or organise a Welcome to Country at the Endeavour Foundation Group. Incorporating these protocols and practices into meetings, gatherings and events demonstrates respect by upholding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Protocols.

## Welcome to Country

Protocols for welcoming visitors to Country have always been a part of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. While the Welcome to Country protocols have been adapted to contemporary circumstances, the essential elements remain: welcoming visitors and demonstrating respect for Country ([Reconciliation Australia](#)).

### When should a Welcome to Country be organised?

A Welcome to Country should be organised for major, formal functions, where official guests and dignitaries are in attendance. A Welcome to Country occurs at the beginning of a formal event and can take many forms including singing, dancing, smoking ceremonies, and/or a speech.

### Who should deliver the Welcome to Country?

A Welcome to Country can only be delivered by Traditional Owners – or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who have been given permission from Traditional Owners - to welcome visitors to their Country.

### How should a Welcome to Country be organised?

Your local Aboriginal Land Council or Native Title representative body can advise on organising a Welcome to Country by a Traditional Owner in your area. You can find local offices at: <https://www.indigenous.gov.au/regional-network>.

It is necessary for the speaker who follows immediately after the Welcome to Country ceremony to provide a response. Part of the response should acknowledge the person who delivered the Welcome to Country, and should be respectful and professional, but delivered with a sense of the personal.

The following response may be used as a guide:

*I respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Owners past and present of this land on which we are meeting, the <Traditional Owner's name/s> peoples. It is a privilege to be standing on <Traditional Name> Country. We are honoured to be able to work on this land and to provide advocacy and support for people living with a disability.*



## Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

An Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners also called 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.

### When should an Acknowledgement of Country be delivered?

The Acknowledgement of Country is given at the beginning of a meeting, speech or event. Some examples of events where an acknowledgement should be offered include:

- At team or business unit gatherings and when bringing people from across the organisation together (including online).
- When hosting a meeting with people from outside the organisation.
- When people have travelled to meet together or at a conference.
- It is especially important when discussing issues related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

### Who should deliver the Acknowledgement of Country?

Anyone can deliver an Acknowledgement of Country. Inviting team members to participate by delivering the Acknowledgement is a great way to include everyone in these important protocols. When inviting a team member to deliver the Acknowledgement, ask them prior to the meeting or event so they have time to consider and prepare their own authentic and personalised version.

### What should we say when acknowledging Traditional Owners?

The wording used in the Acknowledgement of Country is less important than the intent. Be sincere and, if possible, do some research on the Country you are acknowledging.

The following examples may be used as an Acknowledgement:

*I acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we live, work and learn. I pay respect to Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.*

*I acknowledge and pay my respects to the <insert traditional name/s> peoples of <traditional name/s> country and their elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples here today.*



## Acknowledgement of Country for Signage

Endeavour Foundation sites operate on many different lands across Australia. An Acknowledgement of Country should be displayed on entry into each site. Please use the below templates to display which should include the Country you are acknowledging.

You can find out more on the Country you are acknowledging via <https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/map-indigenous-australia>.

[Acknowledgement Poster](#) – Intranet (endeavour.com.au)

## Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners for Email Signature

Including an Acknowledgement of Country in your email signature block is another way to pay respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. An Acknowledgement of Country automatically appears in our email signature for external emails only.

Our Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners also appears on our intranet and internet as below.

*Endeavour Foundation acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognises the continuing connection to lands, waters and communities. We pay our respect to Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.*

## Payment for Cultural Services

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who provide cultural services such as Welcome to Country, smoking ceremonies and artistic performances are using Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) and should be fairly compensated for the time and contributions involved. Their fee may vary depending on the status of the Eldership and professional standing.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who provide cultural services, such as Welcome to Country, smoking ceremonies, and artistic performances, draw upon Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) and should be fairly compensated for the time and effort involved. Their fees may vary according to Eldership status and professional standing.

## More Information

External Publications and Resources

<https://www.reconciliation.org.au/reconciliation-moving-beyond-acknowledgement-of-country/>

### Contacts

For more information on Reconciliation Action at Endeavour Foundation, contact [rap@endeavour.com.au](mailto:rap@endeavour.com.au)

