

First Nations Fact Sheet

Wominjeka- Welcome

Welcome to Country

This can only be done by a recognised Elder of the land you are meeting on.

Acknowledgement of Country

This can be done by anyone and is a way of showing awareness of, and respect for, the Traditional Owners of the land where a meeting or event is held.

When

An Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners should be given at formal events, forums and functions such as Government and Local Government meetings, conferences, school assemblies, concerts, board meetings, and official openings.

The first speaker at an event (following a Welcome or in the absence of a Welcome) should give the Acknowledgment of Traditional Owners.

Subsequent speakers may also give an Acknowledgement.

What

Generic Acknowledgement - If the Traditional Owners have not been formally recognised for the land on which your event is taking place, you should acknowledge Traditional Owners generally, without making a reference to the name of any specific Traditional Owners. See below example:

I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land on which I am on and all the lands and waters that make up Victoria. I extend this respect to any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities here today.

I recognise the tremendous contribution that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people make to sport, in particular to netball in Victoria. I acknowledge the power of netball to promote reconciliation, enhance belonging and reduce inequality.

Specific Acknowledgement – *I would like to acknowledge the Wurundjeri People as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land I am currently on in Parkville, and pay my respects to Elder's past, present and future. I extend this respect to all the lands we are meeting from today.*

I recognise the tremendous contribution that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people make to sport and I acknowledge the power of sport to promote reconciliation, enhance belonging and reduce inequality.

How do I know who my Traditional Owners and Custodians are?

Victorian Map - <https://achris.vic.gov.au/weave/wca.html>

How do I book or contact an Elder?

Once you have determined the Traditional Owners of Land/Country you are on, you can contact the Land Council to request an Elder to do a Welcome to Country.

Find your Traditional Owner corporations here:

<https://www.firstpeoplesrelations.vic.gov.au/acknowledgement-traditional-owners>

Language Guide:

‘Indigenous’

As a society we are moving away from the term ‘Indigenous’ and shifting to First Nations.

In some parts of the country, the term ‘Indigenous’ can be considered offensive and has historically been used to describe Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as part of the flora/fauna rather than the human population of Australia.

Note: There are some exceptions, and it is important to consult with the community you are referring to first.

‘Past, present, and future’

Past, present, and future is preferred OR just past and present.

“Past, present and emerging” can be seen as controversial with Elders as emerging suggests you can be on your way to becoming one and even learn to become an Elder rather than earning this title.

Naarm (Melbourne)

Naarm (or Narm) is the Aboriginal place name for the area where the city of Melbourne.

Kulin Nation

The Kulin Nation is an alliance of five language groups that traditionally lived in the Port Phillip region.

Do I refer to ‘Country’, ‘People’ or ‘Land’ when acknowledging the Traditional Owners and Custodians?

There is no right or wrong and is dependent on your Traditional Owners. Any of the above are considered appropriate and is always worth checking with Land Councils or Elder - Rob Hyatt, Koorie Heritage Trust Cultural Education Manager.

Koorie/ Koori/ Gurri

Koorie/Koori/Gurri is a generic term used by contemporary Aboriginal people and communities of Victoria and Southern New South Wales to identify and differentiate themselves from Aboriginal groups from other parts of Australia. Aboriginal people and communities in Queensland refer to themselves as Murris, Nunga in South Australia and Nyoongar in southern Western Australia – Koorie Heritage Trust.

Terms to avoid:

- Native/native Australians
- Aboriginies
- Disadvantaged

