

Acknowledgement of Country & Welcome to Country

For over 65,000 years, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the First Peoples of this land, have cared for Country: the land, waters, skies, and all living beings.

When we give an Acknowledgement of Country or receive a Welcome to Country, we are showing respect and recognising this deep, ongoing connection. These are not formalities. They are acts of truth, respect, and relationship.

We are on Aboriginal land. Always was, always will be.

What is a Welcome to Country?

- Given **only** by a Traditional Custodian (Elder or community member with authority).
- May include speech, song, dance, story, or smoking ceremony.
- Like being invited into someone's home, only the host can welcome you.
- Usually arranged for major events or public gatherings.

What is an Acknowledgement of Country?

- Can be given by **anyone** – Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal.
- A short statement paying respect to Traditional Custodians and Elders past, present, and emerging.
- Used at meetings, workshops, and everyday gatherings.

Examples:

- *Simple:* "I acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land we meet on, and pay my respects to Elders past and present."
- *Personalised:* "I acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, and honour their deep connection to land, waters, and community."

Acknowledgement and Welcome to Country are about respect and belonging. They connect us to the past, ground us in the present, and guide us toward a more just and inclusive future.