

UNSW Protocol

Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country

Never Stand Still

Nura Gili

Protocols for Acknowledgements and Welcome to Country

The difference between a Welcome to Country and an Acknowledgement of Country are often not understood. It is important for those organising a Welcome or Acknowledgement to understand the differences between them and know who to contact for an elders to conduct a welcome ceremony.

A Welcome to Country is performed by a local Aboriginal person of significance to symbolise the traditional owners giving blessing to an event taking place on the land. These welcomes are undertaken by Elders of the traditional owners of the land where the event is to be held.

An Acknowledgement of Country is a way of showing awareness of and respect for the traditional Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander owners of the land on which a meeting or event is to take place. It also recognises the continuing connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to their Country. This Acknowledgement can be provided by both Indigenous and Non-Indigenous people.

Negotiating a Welcome to Country

It is important that the correct Aboriginal representative organisation has been contacted by telephone well in advance of the event and then through a formal letter of invitation. All arrangements thereafter for the Welcome to Country should be mutually negotiated between the Local Aboriginal Lands Council (or relevant Aboriginal Incorporated organisation), the Elder who has been selected to carry out the Welcome and the University.

It is very important that the Aboriginal representative/s has been involved in, and is comfortable with the arrangements. This may include the format of the ceremony, who has been invited, what type of 'Welcome to Country' is to be held and how that person will be recognised for their time and commitment.

Discussions on the Welcome to Country options should be made to the relevant Local Aboriginal Lands Council to discuss costs that are associated. Performing a Welcome to Country or having Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander dancers perform is not a free service and prices can vary depending on experience or type of welcome that is required.

The Lands Councils to contact in regards to a Welcome to Country for the different campuses of UNSW are:

Kensington -La Perouse Lands Council (02 9311 4282)

City and UNSW Art and Design - Metropolitan Lands Council (02) 8394 9666

UNSW Canberra at ADFA – Ngunnawal Lands Council (02) 62974152

If you are planning on having a Welcome to Country at the Medicine Clinical Schools the following Lands Councils will need to be contacted:

Albury Wodonga - Albury Local Aboriginal Land Council (02) 6025 7075

Coffs Harbour - Coffs Harbour Local Aboriginal Land Council (02) 6652 8740

Port Macquarie - **Birpai Local Aboriginal Land Council (02) 6584 9066**

Wagga Wagga - **Wagga Local Aboriginal Land Council (02) 6921 4095**

Helpful suggestions for your events:

Welcome to Country

The University of New South Wales main campus of Kensington is situated on the land of the Bedegal people, the City and UNSW Art and Design Campuses are on the land of the Gadigal people and UNSW Canberra at ADFA is on the land of the Ngunnawal people. The Traditional Custodians of the land, usually a senior representative of the local Aboriginal community or a respected Aboriginal Leader within the local Aboriginal Community should undertake the "Welcome to Country Ceremony".

Acknowledgement of Country

An Acknowledgement of Country is a way that people can show their respects for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Culture and People. Acknowledgement of Country can be given by both Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal People. It is a respectful practice that can be conducted at meetings or events within the University. Some examples of an Acknowledgement of Country for the main University Campus (Kensington) are:

"I would like to show my respects and Acknowledge the Bedegal people who are the Traditional Custodians of the Land, of Elders past and present on which this meeting takes place."

"I would like to acknowledge the Bedegal people that are the Traditional Custodians of this land. I would also like to pay my respects to the Elders both past and present and extend that respect to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders who are present here today."

If you require any further information on Welcome to Country or Acknowledgement to Country you can either contact Nura Gili on Nuragili@unsw.edu.au or visit the Department of Aboriginal Affairs (NSW) <http://www.daa.nsw.gov.au>

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