

SUGGESTIONS FOR ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

On grounds, in buildings, newsletters and websites:

The _____ acknowledge the _____ people, the Traditional Owners who have walked upon and cared for this land for thousands of years. We acknowledge the continued deep spiritual attachment and relationship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to this country and commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of Reconciliation.

On published documents (paper and electronic):

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are respectfully advised that this publication/production may contain the words, voices, names, images and/or descriptions of people who have passed away.

Acknowledgement of Country where the language group is not known:

"I would like to show my respect and acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land, of Elders past and present, on which this event takes place."

Acknowledgement of Country using a specific nation:

"I would like to acknowledge the _____ people who are the Traditional Owners of this land. I would also like to pay respect to the Elders past and present of the _____ and extend that respect to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples present."

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PRAYER OF THE ABORIGINAL PEOPLE

Father of all, you gave us the Dreaming.
You have spoken to us through our beliefs.
You then made your love clear to us
in the person of Jesus.
We thank you for your care.
You own us.
You are our hope.

Make us strong as we face the problems of change.
We ask you to help the people of Australia
to listen to us and respect our culture.
Make the knowledge of you
grow strong in all people,
so that we can make a home
for everyone in our land.

Amen.

Prayer composed for the meeting between Pope St John Paul II and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in November 1986.



WELCOME TO COUNTRY AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF TRADITIONAL OWNERS 2016



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NATIONAL
ABORIGINAL AND
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ISLANDER CATHOLIC
COUNCIL
www.natsicc.org.au



AUSTRALIAN
CATHOLIC BISHOPS
CONFERENCE
www.catholic.org.au

WELCOME TO COUNTRY

A 'Welcome to Country' is a ceremony where **traditional owners**, usually Elders, welcome people to their land.

This is a significant recognition and is made through a **formal process**. The Traditional Owner will decide on the ceremony. It also depends on the location of the event and the practice of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, which can vary greatly according to the region.

During a 'Welcome to Country', the Elders welcome those in attendance, guests, staff and visitors to their Country. It might be just a simple speech or a performance, such as a song, traditional dance, a didgeridoo piece or any combination of these.

'Welcome to Country' **should always occur at the opening of the event** and preferably as the first item.

Protocols for welcoming visitors to country have been a part of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture for thousands of years.

(www.creativespirits.info)

The use of Acknowledgements or Welcome to Country have become more common place since the creation of Reconciliation Action Plans (RAPs), which places an Acknowledgement or Welcome to Country as an important step in the process of practical Reconciliation in this country.

A Welcome to Country must be conducted by an Aboriginal person that is a Traditional Owner of the land upon which the event is being held

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF TRADITIONAL OWNERS

An 'Acknowledgement of Country' is a ceremony that pays respects to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owners of the area on which the meeting or event takes place and the surrounds, or where a speech, event or presentation is taking place.

An 'Acknowledgement of Country' is a way that **all people** can **show awareness and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture** and heritage, and the ongoing relationship the Traditional Owners have with their land.



Both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people can perform 'Acknowledgement of Country'. It is a demonstration of respect dedicated to the traditional custodians of the land (or sea) where the event, meeting, function or conference takes place. It can be formal or informal.

Guidelines for Parishes

A recent survey* of parishes in Australia indicated a strong desire of recipients to pay respect and acknowledge those that walked upon and cared for the land for thousands of years and still continue to do so.

To show respect and acknowledgment within the Sunday Eucharist, parishes may like to implement these steps at the beginning of Mass.

- Welcome to the parish, theme of readings and any notices
- Pause to show respect and acknowledgment (about 30 seconds)
- For a Welcome to Country, the commentator introduces the Aboriginal Elder.
- For an *Acknowledgment of Traditional Owners*: for example; *I would like to acknowledge the _____ people who are Traditional Owners of this land. I would also like to pay respect to the Elders past and present of the _____ and extend that respect to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples past and present*
- Pause to show respect and acknowledgment (about 30 seconds)
- Invitation to stand for Processional hymn or Introductory Rite

Other ways to Acknowledge Traditional Owners

- Acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which the building stands in a physical form (signage, plaque)
- Provide an Acknowledgement to the Traditional Owners in Mass booklets, websites and other media produced
- Regularly advertise Acknowledgements or Welcomes to Country on the Liturgical Calendar and notices of significant days.

* 2015 NATSICC SURVEY
www.natsicc.org.au

