

## Guidance note on providing an Acknowledgement of Country

*This guidance note was prepared in consultation with Uncle Colin Ahoy, Errol Clarke, Guido Posthausen and a number of staff from the Oorala Aboriginal Centre.*

Incorporating a Welcome to Country or Acknowledgement to Country protocols into meetings and events recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australians and custodians of their land. It promotes an awareness of the past and the ongoing connection to place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

### Welcome to Country

A Welcome to Country is a ceremony, usually performed by a recognised Elder, to welcome visitors to their traditional land. It can take many forms, depending on the particular culture of the traditional owners: singing, dancing, smoking ceremonies, or a speech in traditional language or English.

A Welcome to Country should be the first item on the order of proceedings.

### University events where a Welcome to Country is appropriate

- University wide events; e.g. Orientation
- Graduation Ceremonies
- International visitors - conferences where distinguished guests are in attendance
- Opening of university facilities
- Conferring of Special Awards
- Annual Lecture series
- Community days
- Distinguished visitors to the University
- Conferences hosted by the university

### Acknowledgement of Country

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 being held, and of recognising the continuing connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to their Country. It can be delivered by anyone, Indigenous or non-Indigenous.

An Acknowledge of Country can be used at:

- Small events
- At the beginning of a weekly lecture or tutorial (It may be appropriate to invite students to take turn in delivering an Acknowledgement of Country)
- Formal staff meetings

## In the Armidale / New England region

The following statements are considered culturally acceptable for a UNE staff member to use to provide an Acknowledgement of Country:

*"In the spirit of reconciliation, I would like to acknowledge the Anaiwan people who are the traditional custodians of this land. I would also like to pay respect to their Elders past and present and I extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who may be present here today."*

*"In the spirit of reconciliation, I would like to acknowledge the custodians of the many lands on which the University conducts its business. In doing so, I also acknowledge the Elders of those lands past, present and future as knowledge holders and as key stakeholders in the education and employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples."*

*"In the spirit of reconciliation, the University of New England respects and acknowledges that its people, programs and facilities are built on land, and surrounded by a sense of belonging, both ancient and contemporary, of the world's oldest living culture. In doing so, UNE values and respects Indigenous knowledge systems as a vital part of the knowledge capital of Australia."*<sup>1</sup>

Note: do not be afraid to add an appropriate 'personal' touch as this demonstrates that the person delivering the acknowledgement is genuine in their intent.

## Acknowledging those who are not located in Armidale / on other Country

For Zoom meetings, the person providing the Acknowledgement of Country acknowledges the country they are on in the usual way (e.g. Anaiwan) and could then invite the other participants to reflect on the country they may be situated on at the time of the meeting.

UNE Campus location	Acknowledgement
Armidale	Anaiwan
Glenn Innes	Ngoorabul
Guyra	Banbai
Inverell	Kamilaroi
Tenterfield	Ngoorabul
Narrabri	Kamilaroi
UNE Sydney (Parramatta)	Darug
Tamworth	Kamilaroi
Gunnedah	Kamilaroi
Moree	Kamilaroi
Coonabarabran	Kamilaroi
Taree	Biripi

It is important to note that the information in the above table is the most widely accepted version and that spelling and pronunciation may differ across the region.

If you require assistance with pronunciation, please contact Guido Posthausen, Acting Director of the Oorala Aboriginal Centre on 02 6773 3439 or [gpostha2@une.edu.au](mailto:gpostha2@une.edu.au).

Where events and functions are being held in other locations, it is advisable to contact the local Aboriginal Land Council <http://alc.org.au> for guidance and procedures when inviting an Elder to perform a Welcome to Country or the correct wording for an Acknowledgement of Country that identifies and acknowledges the custodians or traditional owners of the area.

<sup>1</sup> Words by Debra Bennell