

# UNE Acknowledgement of Country Guideline

The University is committed to incorporating Welcome to and Acknowledgement of Country protocols into meetings and events. This action recognises Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the First Australians and custodians of their land.

Incorporating Welcome to and Acknowledgement of Country protocols promotes an awareness of the past and the ongoing connection to place of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples. The protocols are performed in the spirit of goodwill, friendship, and cooperation to create understanding and as a step towards respect and truth-telling.

This Guideline applies to all UNE Representatives.

## Contents

<b>UNE Acknowledgement of Country Guideline .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Contents.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Welcome to Country .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>University Events .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Acknowledgement of Country .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Acknowledgements for meetings in Armidale / New England .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Acknowledgments for meetings on other Country.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Consultation &amp; Feedback .....</b>	<b>4</b>

# Welcome to Country

A Welcome to Country is a ceremony, usually performed by a recognised Elder, or a person deemed appropriate by the 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.
- The Elder (or nominated person performing the Welcome to Country) needs to be invited to the event in advance and be informed about the purpose, audience and other matters regarding the event.
- The person performing the Welcome to Country is being remunerated at an agreed rate for their time, including travel.

## University Events

University events where a Welcome to Country is appropriate are:

- Orientation;
- Graduation Ceremonies;
- international visitors and 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; and
- 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 and/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/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples to their Country.

It can be delivered by anyone, Indigenous or non-Indigenous. Non-Indigenous people need to ensure that requesting an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander colleague to perform an Acknowledgement of Country repeatedly may contribute to their cultural load and have a detrimental effect on that individual. It is recommended that acknowledgements are shared among participants, especially for

repeated meetings.

An Acknowledgement 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 turns in delivering an Acknowledgement of Country); and
- formal staff meetings.

## Acknowledgements for meetings in Armidale / New England

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.”

Or

“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.”

Or

“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>

It is appropriate for people to create their own Acknowledgement of Country. Staff may attend an Acknowledgement of Country Workshop run by People and Culture. People may also approach an Elder for advice.

---

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

## Acknowledgments for meetings on other Country

For online 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)	Burramattagal clan of the Dharug nation
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.

Where events and functions are being held in other locations, it is advisable to contact the local NSW Aboriginal Land Council 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.

## Consultation & Feedback

This Guideline was prepared in consultation with UNE Elder in Residence, Uncle Colin Ahoy, Uncle Steve Widders, Aboriginal Employment Consultant Errol Clarke and a number of staff from the Oorala Aboriginal Centre.

For feedback, suggestions and concerns, please contact UNE Training and Development at [od@une.edu.au](mailto:od@une.edu.au) or Oorala Aboriginal Centre at [ooralасupport@une.edu.au](mailto:ooralасupport@une.edu.au).