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# UNICLUBS

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY GUIDE

# HANDBOOK

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## ‘Welcome to Country’ and ‘Acknowledgement of Country’

From the [WCC Welcome to and Acknowledgement of Country Protocol Management Policy](#):

“Connection to Country is fundamental to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. The spiritual connection to land is an essential source of belonging and identity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Connection to Country must be considered in any relationship with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.

‘Welcome to Country’ and ‘Acknowledgement of Country’ are different cultural practices and protocols exist about who can perform them. The following sections outlines the cultural sensitivities and appropriate use.”

### **WHAT IS A WELCOME TO COUNTRY?**

From the [WCC Welcome to and Acknowledgement of Country Protocol Management Policy](#):

“A Welcome to Country is when a Traditional Custodian of the Land, in most cases a recognised Elder within the local community, welcomes people to their traditional land ... The practice is based on the protocol of acknowledgement of another’s Country and the permission to walk through Country that was not your own.”

If you would like to book a Welcome to Country for events in the Wollongong City Council area, please refer to the hyperlinked document above for further information on how to book and what procedures to follow.

Additional funding is possible for a Welcome to Country at club events. To access additional funding, please request a meeting with [UniClubs](#) regarding your event and ensure that you have reviewed your local fees for a Welcome to Country ceremony.

### **WHAT IS AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY?**

From the [WCC Welcome to and Acknowledgement of Country Protocol Management Policy](#):

“An Acknowledgement of Country is a way that non-Aboriginal people can show respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and the ongoing relationship of Traditional Custodians with the Land ... On occasions there may be a difference of opinion as to who the Traditional Custodians are. To avoid causing offence this can be overcome by ‘acknowledging all the Traditional Custodians of the Land or you can ‘acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of this land’ without naming those people.”

Club Presidents, Executives, or representative chairs of events and meetings are encouraged by UniClubs to conduct an Acknowledgement of Country at the start of all official club events and meetings.

## Acknowledgement of Country Wording

Below, we have included templates for clubs and societies but welcome clubs to create their own Acknowledgement of Country that may suit your club differently.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY AT MEETINGS & EVENTS**

#### **Standard acknowledgement**

*Before we begin our proceedings, the [example] Society would like to acknowledge and pay respect to the traditional owners of the land on which we meet; the Dharawal people. It is upon their ancestral lands that the University of Wollongong is built. As we share our own knowledge, teaching, learning and research practices within this university may we also pay respect to the knowledge embedded forever within the Aboriginal Custodianship of Country.*

*We would like to extend our respect to the Traditional Custodians of Dharawal Country, Elders past and present, and extend that respect to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who call this city home.*

*We recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people as the first people to live in the area. We respect their living cultures and recognise the positive contribution of their voices, traditions and histories make to the city.*

#### **Short acknowledgement**

*The [example] Society would like to acknowledge the traditional owners/custodians of the land on which we meet today. We would like to pay our respects to the Elders past and present and would like to extend my respect to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people/colleagues/staff and students who are present today.*

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY FOR DOCUMENTATION**

*The [example] Society acknowledge that Country for Aboriginal peoples is an interconnected set of ancient and sophisticated relationships. We would like to pay our respect and acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Dharawal Country, the land on which the University of Wollongong is situated. We recognise the strength, resilience and capacity of the Aboriginal community and pay our respects to the Elders past and present and extend that respect to any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people present.*

## UOW CAMPUSES

Please note that The University of Wollongong is situated on Dharawal Country. For external events, we recommend you research the Traditional Custodians of the location of your event.

**The University of Wollongong campuses are situated across several Aboriginal Nations:**

Wollongong/Innovation Campus	Dharawal
Shoalhaven Campus	Yuin
Batemans Bay	Yuin
Bega	Yuin, Monaro
Southern Highlands	Dharawal/Tharawal, Gundungurra
Loftus	Dharawal
Liverpool	Dharug
Sydney	Eora

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [UOW Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Strategy](#)
- [UOW Reconciliation Action Plan](#)
- [Wollongong City Council Welcome to and Acknowledgement of Country Protocol Management Policy](#)
- [UOW Woolyungah Indigenous Centre](#)
- [Woolyungah Indigenous Centre You can't say that! Hints and Tips](#)

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