

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY BEST PRACTICES AND TIPS



Acknowledgement Matters



Incorporating **Welcoming and Acknowledgement** protocols into meetings and events recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australians and Traditional Custodians or Owners of land. It promotes an ongoing connection to place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and shows respect for Traditional Custodian or Owners.

When Aboriginal Australians talk about **“Country”** they mean something beyond the dictionary definition of the word. They might mean homeland, or tribal or clan area. It means more than a place on the map though – it is a word for all the values, places, resources, stories and cultural obligations associated with the area. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians are still connected to the Country of their ancestors and consider themselves the custodians or caretakers of their land.

Only the traditional owners can speak for and Welcome visitors to Country or gives others the authority to do so.

When planning a meeting or learning session, it is appropriate to Acknowledge the Traditional Custodians or Owners of the Country which you will be located.

Tips for an appropriate Acknowledgement of Country:

- ✓ Find out whose land you are on – do your research and be specific. The map of Indigenous Australia at AIATSIS (<https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/map-indigenous-australia>) is a useful tool.
- ✓ Show respect – be earnest and genuine.
- ✓ Adapt to suit your context – try to write or adapt a script in your voice. Reading out a ‘standard’ acknowledgement is a start (see sample below) but try to deliver an Acknowledgment that is tailored to you and the occasion.
- ✓ For instance, what Country have you lived on? How did that impact you as a person or your career? What connections to the land or people have you formed?
- ✓ Research your local area and see if any particular landmarks are important and relevant to your meeting.
- ✓ Research a couple of local Language words or phrases – how do you say “hello” or “goodbye”?
- ✓ Be confident and speak with purpose.
- ✓ Avoid using past tense – custodians are still here.
- ✓ Use the correct terminology – do not use “Aborigines” – it is a derogatory word.

A starting script for ASTRO 3D events:

“Before we begin, it’s important for us to acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are Australia’s first astronomers. We acknowledge their long-standing systems of knowledge on which we continue to build, and we acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the unceded lands on which we are meeting today. We are on ... Country, and we would like to pay our respects to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to all First Peoples joining us here today.”

ASTRO3D is committed to inclusivity. To address the issue of under-representation, decolonisation, or community support, ASTRO3D has a comprehensive BLM action plan to educate, engage and empower individuals from underprivileged groups.

To gain a deeper understanding about Welcome/Acknowledgement of Country, watch this TEDx Talk by Kerry Neill, a Gubbi Gubbi man from the Sunshine Coast region in South-East Queensland, on Deconstructing [Welcome to Country](#).