

Acknowledging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Australia

and

Māori of Aotearoa New Zealand

at ANZCA

PURPOSE

This guide is to provide ANZCA staff and members with information on recognising the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the traditional custodians of the land at official college meetings and events in Australia and the Māori as the Tangata Whenua of Aotearoa.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

In Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have experienced a long history of exclusion from Australian history books, the Australian flag, the Australian anthem, and for many years, Australian democracy. This history of dispossession and colonisation lies at the heart of the disparity between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Australians today. Including recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in events, meetings and national symbols is one part of ending the exclusion that has been so damaging. Incorporating welcoming and acknowledgement protocols into official meetings and events recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first Australians and traditional custodians of land. It promotes an ongoing connection to place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and shows respect for traditional custodians (source: Reconciliation Australia).

In New Zealand, the Treaty of Waitangi (Te Tiriti o Waitangi) created the basis for peaceful colonisation and provided for the protection of the rights and property of Māori. Obligations under the treaty were not always properly recognised and, in 1975, the Waitangi Tribunal was set up to look at breaches by the crown.

The Waitangi Tribunal and courts have found that the Māori language — te reo — is a taonga (valued possession) protected by the Treaty of Waitangi and that there is an obligation to take action to safeguard it. The Māori Language Act in 1987 recognised Māori as an official language. Use of Māori karakia (formal greeting) is a way to acknowledge this, and to help protect and preserve the language and culture.

AUSTRALIA

WELCOME TO COUNTRY

Protocols for welcoming visitors to country have been a part of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures for thousands of years. Despite the absence of fences or visible borders, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups had clear boundaries separating their country from that of other groups. Crossing into another group's country required a request for permission to enter. When permission was granted the hosting group would welcome the visitors, offering them safe passage and protection of their spiritual being during the journey. While visitors were provided with a safe passage, they also had to respect the protocols and rules of the land owner group while on their country.

Today these protocols have been adapted to contemporary circumstances, however the essential elements of welcoming visitors and offering safe passage remain in place. A welcome to country occurs at the beginning of a formal event and can take many forms including singing, dancing, smoking ceremonies or a speech in traditional language or English.

A welcome to country is delivered by traditional custodians, or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have been given permission from traditional custodians, to welcome visitors to their country (source: Reconciliation Australia).

Suggested use

Welcome to country is delivered by traditional custodians of the land on which a meeting is taking place, or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have been given permission from traditional custodians. It would be appropriate for more formal events such as the ANZCA Annual Scientific Meeting, when held in Australia.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY

An acknowledgement of country is an opportunity for anyone to show respect for traditional custodians and the continuing connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to country. It can be given by both non-Indigenous people and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Similar to a welcome to country, an acknowledgement of country is generally offered at the beginning of a meeting, speech or formal occasion.

Suggested use

Acknowledgement of country is a brief and more informal acknowledgment that can be made by anyone. The acknowledgement of country could be offered at the beginning or end of a meeting, speech or formal occasion by a chair or host. It would be appropriate for meetings of the ANZCA Council and its committees, FPM Board, Australian regional committees, President's Christmas drinks and college wide staff meetings and other ANZCA-run events including special interest group meetings.

An acknowledgement of country should only be offered if the chair or host feels comfortable doing so.

Generally, an acknowledgment would be offered once at the start of a meeting by the chair or host.

There are no set protocols or wording for an acknowledgement of country, though often a statement may take the following forms.

General

I'd like to begin by acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet today. I would also like to pay my respects to Elders past, present and future

Specific

I'd like to begin by acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet today, the (people) of the (nation) and pay my respects to Elders past, present and future.

If you are unsure of the people on whose land the meeting is taking place, then use the general wording.

Tele/video conferencing

I'd like to begin by acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land on which this teleconference/videoconference is hosted, and the traditional custodians of the lands where my Australian-based colleagues are located today. I would also like to pay my respects to Elders past, present and future.



NEW ZEALAND

WELCOME

The offering of karakia respects the treaty and is a way to create and enhance connections between people. It is appropriate to use karakia at the beginning of a meeting to invoke spiritual guidance and maintain a safe environment, and at the end of the meeting to whakawātea or release people from the issues of that meeting.

Suggested use

Karakia can be said by anyone. It can be offered at the beginning or end of a meeting, such as NZNC meetings and other New Zealand committee and office meetings or a formal occasion.

A suggested opening karakia would be:

E te hui	For this gathering
Whāia te mātauranga kia mārama	Seek knowledge for understanding
Kia whai take ngā mahi katoa	Have purpose in all that you do
Tū maia, tū kaha	Stand tall, be strong
Aroha atu, aroha mai	Let us show respect
Tātou i a tātou katoa	For each other
	Kaitito (Author): Huirangi Waikerepuru

PŌWHIRI

Pōwhiri (a welcome ceremony) is the custom of welcoming and hosting manuhiri (visitors). Traditionally, it is a process whereby the host people welcome visitors on the marae (meeting grounds). In recent years, the pōwhiri process has also been used in other situations, such as at significant occasions or ceremonies.

Suggested use

Pōwhiri is performed by the tangata whenua (local people) and there are protocols to guide how it should be conducted.

APPENDIX

TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS - ANZCA AUSTRALIAN OFFICES

ACT

6/14 Napier Close, Deakin ACT 2600
Ngunnawal people

NSW

117 Alexander Street, Crows Nest NSW 2065
Cammaraigal people of the Eora nation

QLD

West End Corporate Park, River Tower, 20 Pidgeon Close, West End QLD 4101
Turrbal people

SA and NT

168 Ward Street, North Adelaide SA 5006
Karna people of the Adelaide Plains

VIC (Head Office)

630 St Kilda Rd Melbourne VIC 3004
Boon Wurrung people of the Kulin nation

WA

Unit 20/127 Herdsman Parade, Wembley WA 6014
Nyoongar people

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