



Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country

Why is this important?

The City of Melville recognises and respects the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners of the land and acknowledges their continuing connection to Country, culture and community. Including a Welcome to Country or Acknowledgement of Country demonstrates respect for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural practices, supports reconciliation, and recognises the cultural history of the City of Melville.

Observing these protocols helps create inclusive and respectful events and acknowledges the contributions of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to our community.

A Welcome to Country or Acknowledgement of Country is more than a formality. It is a meaningful way to recognise the Traditional Owners of the land, show respect for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and heritage, and support the City of Melville's commitment to reconciliation and inclusion.

What is an Acknowledgement of Country?

An Acknowledgement of Country is a statement of recognition and respect for the Traditional Owners of the land on which an event is taking place.

Anyone can deliver an Acknowledgement of Country, whether they are Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal. It is commonly made at the beginning of a meeting, event, presentation, workshop or community gathering.

When should it be used?

An Acknowledgement of Country is appropriate for:

- Community events
- Grant-funded activities
- Meetings and workshops
- Public presentations
- Festivals and performances
- Online events and webinars

Example Acknowledgement of Country

There is no set text for an Acknowledgement of Country and the most meaningful Acknowledgements are responsive to place. The City of Melville uses the following Acknowledgement to Country, which was developed with Noongar Elder Aunty Marie Taylor.

City of Melville standard wording:

The City of Melville acknowledges the Bibbulmun people as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which the City stands today and pays its respects to the Whadjuk people, and Elders past, present and future.

Other examples include:

We acknowledge that this event is taking place on the traditional lands of the Whadjuk people and pay our respects to Elders past and present.

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we gather today and recognise their continuing connection to Country, culture and community.

What is a Welcome to Country?

A Welcome to Country is a formal cultural protocol that welcomes visitors onto Country.

Unlike an Acknowledgement of Country, a Welcome to Country can only be delivered by a recognised Traditional Owner or Elder from the local Aboriginal community. It provides an opportunity for Traditional Custodians to share cultural knowledge and formally welcome attendees to the land.



When should it be used?

A Welcome to Country is generally appropriate for:

- Major civic events
- Large community festivals
- Significant public gatherings
- Conferences and forums
- Opening ceremonies
- National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week events

How to include these at your event

Option 1: Acknowledgement of Country

1. Include a statement at the beginning of the event. There is no set text for an Acknowledgement of Country and the most meaningful Acknowledgements are responsive to place.
2. The MC, Chairperson, Mayor, speaker or organiser can read the Acknowledgement.
3. Keep it sincere and respectful.
4. Consider also including the Acknowledgement in:
 - a. Event programs
 - b. Presentation slides
 - c. Websites
 - d. Promotional materials

Option 2: Welcome to Country

1. Engage a recognised Traditional Owner or Elder before the event.
2. Discuss the event details and any cultural protocols that may apply.
3. Schedule the Welcome to Country as the first item in the program.
4. Introduce the Elder and allow sufficient time for the Welcome.
5. Ensure a City representative or organiser greets and assists the Elder on arrival.

Who can provide a Welcome to Country?

The City of Melville maintains a list of local Traditional Custodians and Elders who may be available to provide Welcome to Country ceremonies and other cultural services. The contact list includes recognised Traditional Custodians from the Whadjuk Noongar community. Contact your Grants liaison to request this list.

Quick Guide

Situation	Acknowledgement of Country	Welcome to Country
Who can do it?	Anyone	Traditional Owner or Elder only
When is it used?	Meetings, workshops, events of any size	Significant public events and major ceremonies (but it's always okay to include a Welcome to Country)
Purpose	To acknowledge Traditional Owners	To formally welcome people onto Country
Cost	No cost	Involves an agreed fee for service
Length	30-60 seconds	Every Welcome is different, but typically several minutes