

Welcome to Country and other Indigenous Ceremonies Policy

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) The purpose of this Policy is to:

- a. describe the Macquarie University requirements for the recognition of Indigenous people at official events or at events where Macquarie University is a sponsor;
- b. acknowledge and pay respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, particularly the Dharug nation;
- c. assist with building strong connections with the Dharug community; and
- d. promote the importance of acknowledging Indigenous cultural protocols amongst students and staff at Macquarie.

Background

(2) Macquarie University promotes an inclusive and culturally safe environment for all staff and students. Ceremonies and protocols are central to Indigenous culture. Macquarie is proud to share the unique histories and cultures of Indigenous people. It is important that this unique position of Indigenous people is recognised and incorporated into Macquarie policy to enable everyone to share in Indigenous culture and facilitate better relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

(3) The use of ceremony in events at Macquarie promotes:

- a. a greater understanding of Indigenous culture throughout the wider collegiate;
- b. greater inclusivity of our Indigenous students and staff;
- c. respect to Indigenous cultures and heritage;
- d. the development of mutual respect and understanding;
- e. opportunities to witness and experience Aboriginal cultures first hand and to change perceptions by demonstrating that Aboriginal cultures are living and enduring; and
- f. relationships with Indigenous peoples and our local Indigenous communities.

Scope

(4) This Policy applies to all staff and students involved in initiating and hosting official events at all campuses and locations of the University. It is important to know that different campuses and locations acknowledge different Aboriginal nations.

Section 2 - Policy

(5) The University will recognise the traditional custodians of the land on which an official event is being held, or an event is being held where the University is a sponsor.

(6) The Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous) will determine the type of ceremony that is appropriate for the nature and size of the planned event and will coordinate all bookings for Welcome to Country, Acknowledgement of Country and other Indigenous ceremonies.

(7) All arrangements for a Welcome to Country are to be conducted through the Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous). This includes contacting the appropriate Elder or group and remuneration arrangements. No other staff member or student is to contact an Elder or group regarding a Welcome to Country before contacting the Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous).

(8) All arrangements for Acknowledgement of Country are to be made locally by the person responsible for the event.

(9) The minimum requirement for Macquarie University events is for an Acknowledgement of Country.

(10) It is important to know that different locations and campuses acknowledge different Aboriginal nations. The North Ryde campus is situated on Dharug land. The City location is on Gadigal land.

Ceremonies

(11) The Office of Indigenous Strategy will determine one of the following ceremonies to recognise the traditional custodians:

Welcome to Country

(12) A Welcome to Country ceremony is to be undertaken ONLY by a local Indigenous Custodian, locally recognised Indigenous Community spokesperson or locally recognised cultural service provider. The Welcome to Country occurs at the beginning of an event and is usually the first item on the program's agenda. The local Indigenous Custodian will choose what words they use and the Welcome can be conducted through speech, song, ceremony or a combination of these.

(13) Events or ceremonies that should include a Welcome to Country:

- a. NAIDOC (National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee);
- b. Macquarie University graduation ceremony;
- c. awards and presentation nights;
- d. conferences;
- e. state-wide and national meetings;
- f. special ceremonies;
- g. events that attract visitors from other areas of Australia or overseas;
- h. events that include attendance by Ministers, Executive, or special guests; and
- i. events that include the Indigenous community, staff and students.

Acknowledgment of Country

(14) An Acknowledgement of Country is a way for the wider community to demonstrate respect for the local Indigenous community and land. It can be performed by Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. An Acknowledgement of Country should be performed as the first item on the program agenda.

(15) An Acknowledgment of Country is used when a local Indigenous custodian is not available to attend and conduct a Welcome to Country. It can also be used if the ceremony or event is a less formal proceeding. The wording of an Acknowledgement of Country is quite different to a Welcome to the Country. It is a statement of respect made by visitors to an Indigenous community or Indigenous people from other nations and recognises the Indigenous community as the traditional custodians of the land where the meeting is being held.

(16) Events or ceremonies that should include an Acknowledgment of Country:

- a. internal meetings;
- b. committee meetings;
- c. cross-faculty meetings;
- d. week 1 lectures;
- e. Faculty or group specific orientation sessions; and
- f. local forums or presentations.

(17) Example of the wording that can be used is:

I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we are gathered and pay my respects to their Elders both past and present. I would like to extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people here today.

(18) Example of the wording that can be used at the North Ryde Campus only is:

I acknowledge the traditional custodians of the Macquarie University land, the Wallumattagal clan of the Dharug nation, whose cultures and customs have nurtured, and continue to nurture, this land, since the Dreamtime. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and future.

(19) In addition to recognising the traditional custodians through either a Welcome to Country or Acknowledgement of Country ceremony, other appropriate ceremonies that may be determined by the Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous) include (but are not limited to) Smoking, Dance and Music ceremonies.

Response to Welcome to Country or Acknowledgement of Country

(20) The speaker who follows immediately after the Welcome to Country ceremony or Acknowledgement of Country should provide an appropriate response. Part of the response should acknowledge the person who has delivered the Welcome to Country or Acknowledgment of Country. The following text can be used in response to the traditional Welcome to Country:

I would like to thank (insert name) for welcoming us to Country and would also like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we are meeting and pay my respect to the Elders, past and present, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

(21) The following text can be used in response to an Acknowledgement of Country:

I would like to thank (insert name) for their Acknowledgement of Country.

(22) It is not necessary for every speaker at an event or gathering to provide a response or an Acknowledgement of Country.

Remuneration

(23) In providing cultural services such as Welcome to Country, artistic performances and other ceremonies, Indigenous people are using their intellectual property. As such providers of these services should be appropriately remunerated. The Faculty / Division that is hosting the event will be invoiced for the cultural services.

Section 3 - Procedures

(24) Refer to the [Welcome to Country and other Indigenous Ceremonies Procedure](#).

Section 4 - Guidelines

(25) Nil.

Section 5 - Definitions

(26) The following definitions apply for the purpose of this Policy:

- a. Indigenous means all Aboriginal and / or Torres Strait Islander people of Australia.
- b. Local Indigenous Custodian means key persons and keepers of various knowledge within Indigenous communities.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	22nd February 2021
Review Date	1st June 2023
Approval Authority	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
Approval Date	4th November 2015
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Rorden Wilkinson Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
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