

Welcome to Country video protocol



A Welcome to Country is a custom where Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owners welcome others to the land of their ancestors.

Despite the absence of fences or visible borders, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups have 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. 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.

The essential elements of welcoming visitors and offering safe passage remain in place, however these protocols have been adapted to contemporary circumstances.

A Welcome to Country is delivered at the beginning of a formal event by a local Elder or delegated representative who is a Traditional Owner of the land on which people have gathered. It is different from an Acknowledgment of Country, which can be given by Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, to show respect for Traditional Owners and the continuing connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to Country.

Incorporating welcoming protocols into official Australian Catholic University events recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australians and custodians of their land.

It promotes an awareness of the past and ongoing connection to place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

Events where the Welcome to Country videos are encouraged to be used include:

- Orientation Week
- graduation
- award ceremonies
- significant community engagement forums
- conferences or large professional development events involving a wide cross-section of participants
- highly publicised events.

SUGGESTED INTRODUCTION BEFORE PLAYING THE VIDEO:

Australian Catholic University seeks to honour the important tradition of Welcome to Country. The Traditional Owners of the land on which we gather have entrusted us with this important and significant custom, which has been a part of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures for thousands of years.

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