

Welcome to Country Protocols

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide protocols for the use of Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country ceremonies or statements.

Scope

This policy applies for all Bridge Housing meetings, events and our staff email signatures.

Policy overview

This policy provides an overview of when to use a Welcome to Country or an Acknowledgement of Country and key protocols for doing so.

Policy

Acknowledgement of Country

Bridge Housing acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands on which we operate our business, and wish to show respect to the Aboriginal elders of those lands both past and present.

It is Bridge Housing practice to open every event, and significant internal meetings with an Acknowledgement of Country that is specific or appropriate to the land(s) on which that meeting or event is held. Meetings at which an Acknowledgement of Country is made include Board and Board Sub-Committee meetings, Executive meetings, quarterly All Staff meetings, and Annual General Meetings.

There are several tenant elders who can give an Acknowledgement of Country and this is sometimes an appropriate alternative. Please contact the Sustainable Communities Manager if you wish to invite a tenant to deliver an Acknowledgement of Country.

We have adopted two versions of an Acknowledgement of Country, one recognising the Gadigal people of the area where we have been based traditionally and for use specifically at Bridge Housing's office, and a more generic one for use across Sydney.

Both of these Acknowledgements have been developed in reference to existing practice, advice from Land Councils and cultural centres; and have been reviewed and endorsed by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tenant Advisory Group.

Acknowledgement of Country		
	Redfern or Bridge Housing Office ¹	For other regions
Bridge Housing/ public events	We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet, the Gadigal people of the Eora nation, and pay our respects to elders past and present, and all Aboriginal people here today.	We acknowledge Aboriginal people as the traditional owners of the land, whose culture is the oldest living culture in human history. We pay our respects to elders past and present and all Aboriginal people here today.
Bridge Housing documents	We acknowledge Aboriginal people as the traditional owners of the land, whose culture is the oldest living culture in human history. We pay our respects to elders past and present and to all Aboriginal people and their communities.	
Staff email sign off (short form)	We acknowledge Aboriginal people as the traditional owners of the land, and pay our respects to elders past and present.	

Welcome to Country

For some events, usually public ones of a large scale or high profile eg Annual General Meeting, ground breaking opening of a new residential development, launch of new service or report it is more appropriate to engage an Aboriginal elder to give a Welcome to Country. This usually requires advance notice of a few weeks and a fee is required.

Only Aboriginal people on their own country can give a Welcome to Country. Otherwise an Acknowledgement of Country is given.

Redfern, Inner West and Inner City

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tenants Advisory Group have endorsed Uncle Ray Davison and Aunty Millie Ingram as suitable local Gadigal elders to conduct a Welcome to Country in the Redfern or Inner West areas. Both can be engaged through the [Metropolitan Land Council](#).

Northern Beaches

The Metropolitan Land Council also covers the Northern Beaches area.

Eastern Suburbs

For events in the Eastern Suburbs contact the [La Perouse Land Council](#)

Western Sydney

For events in the Western Sydney Area (including Parramatta, Blacktown, Penrith) contact the [Deerubbin Local Aboriginal Land Council](#).

Consult the [NSW Land Council](#) website to identify the correct land council for any other regions.

Review

This policy is to be reviewed in 2019.

¹ Refer to map on the [NSW Land Council](#) website