



Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners and Welcome to Country at PPPS Policy

This policy outlines the process for arranging a Welcome to Country at PPPS or acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the land, and the types of occasions when we may consider these events and acknowledgements.

SUMMARY

- The Department's Marrung: Aboriginal Education Plan 2016 – 2026 envisions Victoria as a state where the rich and thriving cultures, knowledge and experience of First Nations peoples are celebrated by all Victorians.
- At PPPS, we enact this vision by:
 - arranging for Elders to conduct a Welcome to Country at significant school events
 - conducting an Acknowledgement of Country at public meetings, smaller events or gatherings and school assemblies, or when Traditional Owners are not able to provide an official Welcome to Country

DETAILS

Conducting a Welcome to Country or an Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners demonstrates respect for the Traditional Owners of the land on which the event is taking place and acknowledges the spiritual, physical and cultural connection to Country as the First Peoples.

Welcome to Country is a traditional practice that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples perform to formally welcome people to their Country.

Acknowledgment of Country can be conducted by anyone (children or adults) who wishes to pay their respect to the Traditional Owners of the land on which the event or meeting is taking place.

We aim to create a learning environment for all students that acknowledges, respects and values Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and culture.

To support this vision we:

- acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land at relevant school occasions and activities, such as assemblies, at the start of class, school council meetings and parent information sessions
- include an Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners on the school's website
- consider inviting an Aboriginal Elder to conduct a Welcome to Country at significant school events such as the opening of a new building, graduation ceremonies, school concerts or as part of Reconciliation Week

Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

An Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners should be conducted by the most senior person attending the event. However, we encourage students to conduct the Acknowledgement; for example JSCs conducting school assemblies or other significant school events. In addition, other speakers at a school event may also choose to Acknowledge Traditional Owners.

Wording for Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

Where a school assembly or other event is being held and the Traditional Owners are known, the following words for Acknowledgement can be used:

We acknowledge the Wurundjeri people, the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet today, and pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

If it is known that there are Elders and/or other Aboriginal people present, the following can be added.
We also acknowledge other Elders and Aboriginal people who are here today.

Where the Traditional Owners are not known, the following wording can be used:

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet, and pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

The same supplementary wording applies if there are known Elders and other Aboriginal people present:

We also acknowledge other Elders and Aboriginal people who are here today.

Identifying Traditional Owner groups

Schools need to identify the Traditional Owner group/s in their local area, if they are not already known.

In Victoria, Traditional Owners are recognised formally through three distinct pieces of legislation. These are the:

- Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010 (Vic)
- Native Title Act 1993 (Cth)
- Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 (Vic)

Under the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Act, Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) are appointed by the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council.

To find out if a school, event or function is within an area of formally recognised Country, refer to the State-wide map of formally recognised Traditional Owners. If the school is located within a formally recognised Country, acknowledge the Traditional Owners identified.

Schools can contact the RAP to confirm the correct name and pronunciation. For contact information see the Registered Aboriginal Parties page.

Where there is no RAP with oversight of the location in which the event is taking place, use the above wording on "*Where the Traditional Owners are not known*".

Welcome to Country

A Welcome to Country can only be conducted by a Traditional Owner of the land on which the event or meeting is taking place. The Welcome is usually performed by an Elder or can be made by a nominated representative of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people community.

Elders should be paid or otherwise remunerated for their cultural knowledge and authority within their community for conducting the Welcome.

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed in line with best practice, new legislation and guidelines.

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated in **May 2021** and is scheduled for review in **May 2024**.

Endorsed by School Council in June 2021.