

**ONE
NETBALL**



OBSERVING ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CULTURAL PROTOCOL

GUIDELINES FOR
NETBALL AUSTRALIA
& MEMBER ORGANISATIONS



Dr Richard Walley OAM, a Nyoongar man from Western Australia and a member of Netball Australia's Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group, performs the Welcome To Country at the Perth match of the 2015 Constellation Cup.

PURPOSE

Netball Australia's inaugural Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2015-2018 was launched in 2015. The RAP includes a series of 'Respect' actions to ensure protocol that acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the Traditional Owners of the land is included in netball events run by Netball Australia and the Member Organisations.

The purpose of this document is to assist staff of Netball Australia and the eight State and Territory Member Organisations to observe and understand appropriate cultural protocols at domestic and international netball events.

Incorporating protocol, as described in this Guideline, will increase cultural awareness, understanding and implementation of protocols to demonstrate respect of and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's heritage, tradition and culture through the education and engagement of our staff, volunteers and the netball community.

This document has been developed based on information provided in Reconciliation Australia's 'Welcome to and Acknowledgement of Country' resource, in conjunction with input from Netball Australia's Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group and Member Organisation contributions.

WHY DO WE ACKNOWLEDGE TRADITIONAL LAND OWNERS?

Incorporating Welcome and Acknowledgement protocols into netball events recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australians and custodians of the land. It promotes an awareness of the past and their ongoing connection to the land. It shows that the netball community is conscious of this connection and places importance on showing this respect. It also demonstrates to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander netball community that their culture is respected and welcomed.

WHAT IS A WELCOME TO COUNTRY?

A Welcome to Country is a ceremony performed by Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people to welcome visitors to their land. It can take many forms, depending on the particular culture of the Traditional Owners. It can include singing, dancing, smoking ceremonies or a speech in traditional language or English. To find a local

Elder to perform a Welcome to Country for your event, contact a local Aboriginal community organisation or local Aboriginal Land Council in your area. Local Council may also be helpful in identifying an appropriate organisation.

Examples of when a Welcome to Country may be required include (but are not limited to):

- The start of a national event or tournament, during the opening ceremony eg. National Championships
- The opening of a new building, netball courts or facility
- An official event with government representatives in attendance (government officials will often mandate a Welcome to Country at an event that they are attending) eg. Awards Dinner, international Test Match.

WHAT IS AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY?

An Acknowledgement of Country is a way that someone who is not of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent can show awareness of, and respect for the Traditional Owners of the land where a meeting or event is being held, and of recognising the long and continuing connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to their Country. It is done at the beginning of proceedings at an event. Unlike a Welcome to Country, it can be offered by a non-Indigenous person. Including an Acknowledgement of Country in the script of any external speech is good practice.

To include an Acknowledgement of Country in your speech/presentation, you should seek out the name of the Traditional Land Owners of the area upon which your event takes place. You can find this information by contacting a local Aboriginal community organisation or the local Aboriginal Land Council in that area. Alternatively, you can also ring the Local Council.

The following wording would be used at the beginning of a speech:

"I would like to start by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the land, the <insert name eg. Ngunnawal > people, on which this event takes place, pay my respects to Elders past and present, and extend that respect to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people present today."

If you are unable to establish the name of the Traditional Owners, or if they are disputed, you can use the following general wording:

"I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which this event takes place, pay my respects to Elders past and present, and extend that respect to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people present today."

Examples of when you should include an Acknowledgement of Country include (but are not limited to):

- Speaking on a panel or making a speech in a public forum such as a conference
- Corporate hospitality functions such as pre-match functions
- At the first staff meeting of the year
- Large meetings of external stakeholders who gather to meet in your office
- Large netball community clinics or events eg. Diamonds Community Clinics, ANZ NetSetGO, Come and Try clinics.
- A team launch of an ANZ Championship or equivalent team season
- In the Master of Ceremonies (MC) script of every ANZ Championship or ANL event, approximately 15 minutes prior to the game commencing

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

I am speaking at an event where a Welcome to Country has already been performed. Do I still need to acknowledge the Traditional Land Owners?

Yes. Adding your Acknowledgement (using the wording above), and thanking the Elder for their Welcome, is appropriate in this situation.

I am one of several speakers at an event and they've all done an Acknowledgement of Country in their introductions already. Should I still include my Acknowledgement in my speech?

Yes. You are personally demonstrating your awareness and respect for the land that you are on. As you are most likely speaking on behalf of your organisation, and potentially the sport of

netball, it is important to demonstrate that you are also showing this respect.

There are several pre and post-match events at our ANZ Championship game. Do we include an Acknowledgement in the script of every MC during every single event?

You will need to do an Acknowledgement for all your audiences. For example, if two pre-match functions are being held concurrently before an ANZ Championship game, then both events would feature an Acknowledgement of Country in the MC speech as there are two separate audiences. The match day MC would then also include an Acknowledgement of Country no more than 15 minutes prior to the game commencing, which would address the crowd. There are no steadfast rules, but generally applying this principle of addressing all audiences on game day should assist you to make this decision.

What comes first during an official ceremony – a Welcome To Country, or the National Anthem?

Each netball function will have different requirements from a timing perspective, however in most instances, the Welcome to Country will be performed first.

MORE INFORMATION

For more information, or for clarification on any of the information in this factsheet, visit the Reconciliation Australia website or view their resource on Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country.

Please refer to the Netball Australia Flag Protocol, for information about correctly displaying Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags at netball events.