

Acknowledgements of Country

February 2024

A request from the heart:

We recognise that this feature of modern-day Australian public gatherings does garner varied responses. Some of you may feel comfortable and enthusiastic to organise this, while others may feel uncomfortable or that it is unnecessary. Please understand our heart in asking.

SU Australia recognises the evolving nature of our national cultural mix, including establishing a specific ministry space to prayerfully develop - <https://su.org.au/culture/>. Our starting point to engage with and reach out to people from cultural stories from all around the world, is our First Australian peoples.

So it is our hope that your event might make this small, personal statement to grow in our cultural awareness and love for those around us.

Joshua Lane, SU Australia Culture Lead:

Please check out Joshua Lane's helpful acknowledgement and explanation video from Amplify Conference 2023 - <https://vimeo.com/801877933/8018ddf88d?share=copy> - as he models a statement, and also offers some reflections to explain the deeper meaning to him and many indigenous people. (This video is for your training and understanding, not for public showing.)

"In indigenous culture, an acknowledgment is more than a speech at the start of a talk or presentation. It is about recognising the presence and dignity of each other.

May we all learn a little more about this most basic of needs, to be seen. May we all look around us in the spaces of gathering where we find ourselves and see others who are guests, new or different. Maybe we can take advantage of the acknowledgement of country, as a declaration of love for others, and a desire to open up our hearts and spaces to provide inclusion to others."

Guidance:

Here are a few points of guidance to assist you in preparing your Acknowledgement of Country.

- **Heart over performance** - it is more important for this to be honest, personal and coming from your heart, even if you stumble over the words. To mean it is much better than having a crafted and accurate statement, or polished performance.
- **An opportunity to learn** - take the chance to find out about the history of your community or location, and the Aboriginal or Torres Strait nations who lived on this land before the current town or suburbs.
- **Awkwardness** - it is ok to feel a bit uncomfortable at times in sharing an Acknowledgment of Country. Ok to study your way through it, because you are actually trying. More important to do with the right heart - rather than doing it "right"

Josh is available to chat with anyone who would like to learn more.

External Resources:

Christian

- Common Grace - https://www.commongrace.org.au/acknowledgement_of_country
- Australians Together - <https://australiansitogether.org.au/resources-2/welcome-to-and-acknowledgement-of-country/>

General

- Indigenous.gov.au - https://www.indigenous.gov.au/contact-us/welcome_acknowledgement-country
- Reconciliation Australia - <https://www.reconciliation.org.au/reconciliation/acknowledgement-of-country-and-welcome-to-country/>