

Cultural Protocols Policy

Introduction

The RACGP respects and values the unique position that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples hold as First Peoples and we acknowledge that every day we live and work on unceded Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lands. The College is committed to progressing reconciliation and providing a positive and safe workplace and an environment where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are respected and valued. This includes the ongoing and genuine observation of cultural protocols across the College.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that you understand the workplace behaviours that are expected of you, know how to deliver an Acknowledgement of Country and how to organise a Welcome to Country. As breaches of this policy can have consequences, it's important that you speak with your manager if you do not understand any part of this policy.

Policy Coverage

This policy applies to anyone who performs work on behalf of the College or RACGP Training Services, including employees, the Board and Board Committee members, volunteers, contractors and agency employees.

Definitions

Welcome to Country

Protocols for welcoming visitors to Country have been a part of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures for generations. Today, the essential elements of welcoming visitors and respecting Country remain, but these protocols have been adapted to contemporary circumstances.

A Welcome to Country is delivered by authorised Traditional Owners, or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have been granted permission from Traditional Owners to welcome visitors to their Country. Connecting with and learning from local Traditional Owners is a key element of a Welcome to Country. Typically, a Welcome occurs at the beginning of an event, meeting or speech and while the format and structure can vary significantly, it may include a speech, song, dance, a musical performance, water cleansing, the use of language or a smoking ceremony. It is a mark of respect to engage a Traditional Owner to welcome non-Indigenous people onto their land.

Acknowledgement of Country

An Acknowledgement of Country is an opportunity for anyone to show respect for Traditional Owners and the continuing connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to Country.

An Acknowledgement of Country can be delivered by any person and occurs at the beginning of an event, meeting or speech. When delivering an Acknowledgement of Country, it is important to be sincere, specify the Traditional Owners of

the land if known, and if possible, research the Country and its history and culture. Consider the context in which you're meeting and adapt your wording accordingly.

Application

Welcome to Country

- All reasonable efforts should be made to organise a Welcome to Country with the local Traditional Owners at RACGP events that are held in person. This may include:
 - Fellowship ceremonies
 - Member functions
 - Education and training events
 - Conferences
 - Property openings
 - Launch events
 - Functions involving government representatives and/or members of the public
- If a Welcome to Country is not possible, an Acknowledgement of Country should be delivered by the host or chair of the event.

Acknowledgement of Country

- An Acknowledgement of Country plaque should be prominently displayed at all RACGP properties. While wording can be adjusted to suit the individual location and context, it should read to the effect of:

The RACGP acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land and waterways in which this office stands: the [example: Gadigal] people of the [example: Eora] nation. We recognise their continuing connection to land, water and culture, and pay our respects to Elders, past, present and emerging.

- An Acknowledgement of Country should be delivered at all virtual RACGP events and significant meetings. Generally, this should be delivered by the host or chair of the event. However, in some settings, the host or chair may call for a volunteer to deliver the acknowledgement or there may be an agreement that meeting attendees deliver this on a rotational basis. 'Significant' meetings may include:
 - Council meetings
 - Faculty meetings
 - Town Halls
 - Executive meetings
 - Board meetings
 - Team meetings
 - Governance meetings
 - Online training session
 - Webinars

Consequences for breaches of this policy

Consequences for breaching the Cultural Protocols policy will be determined on a case-by-case basis, however, will focus on respect and providing information and ongoing education to the individual and/or team.

Other related policies, documents, and procedures

Cultural Protocols Guideline

Working Together Policy

Reconciliation Action Plan

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Framework

Version History

Policy Owner:	Talent
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