

1. Welcome to Country and Acknowledgment of Country Policy

- 1.1 Policy number: CO-O-044.0
- 1.2 Category: Organisational
- 1.3 Approval date: September 2018
- 1.4 Revision due date: September 2021
- 1.5 Unit responsible: RACGP Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health

2. Policy declaration

This policy describes for RACGP employees, members and contractors the policies of Welcome to Country and Acknowledgment of Country and is to be used in conjunction with the Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country procedure and the Welcome to Country and Acknowledgment of Country – event checklist.

3. Definitions

- A “*Welcome to Country*” will generally involve an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Elder or representative welcoming persons to the land by providing historical and cultural information. A Welcome to Country may consist of a speech, traditional welcoming song, traditional dance, a musical performance or a smoking ceremony. It is a mark of respect to engage a Traditional Owner to welcome non-Aboriginal people onto their land.
- An “*Acknowledgment of Country*” is an Acknowledgment of traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander custodians of land and sea in order to pay respects to them.

4. Scope

This Policy applies to all employees, members and contractors of the College.

5. Principles

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners is committed to its staff and Members having a sound understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, history and health. This enables people to act with sensitivity and respect when dealing with the variety of issues that affect the health outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. This includes the incorporation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural practices or ceremonies in official events.

6. Background

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners hereby endorses this policy to govern the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (“the RACGP”) in respect of Welcome to Country and Acknowledgment of Country. This policy has been developed and endorsed by the RACGP National Faculty of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health in 2014 and reviewed in 2018.

Council have charged the RACGP Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health (‘the Faculty’) with the task of educating the RACGP in respect of this Welcome of Country and Acknowledgment to Country policy.

7. Objectives

The overarching objectives of this policy are to:

- Ensure that the RACGP appropriately acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owners of Australia.
- Recognise and pay respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and their history, diversity, cultures and heritage.
- Communicate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural practices to the broader community to promote respect and understanding.
- Demonstrate that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are living through the maintenance and practice of ceremonies and protocols.
- Lead by example by ensuring that Welcome to Country and Acknowledgment of Country are delivered where appropriate, and in a culturally appropriate way.

Adhering to the policy involves:

- Ensuring that each RACGP office displays a plaque acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the land.
- Ensuring that a Welcome to Country is delivered at official RACGP events.
- Conducting an Acknowledgment of Country when it is not possible to have a Welcome to Country.

8. Plaque of Acknowledgment

Display of Plaque of Acknowledgment

Each Manager of the respective RACGP Faculties shall ensure that the RACGP office displays a plaque visibly on the front of that office acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the land. The Plaque shall read words to the effect of:

<RACGP logo>

The RACGP acknowledges and pays respect to the <Appropriate Group> people as the traditional custodians of the land on which (RACGP state) stands. We pledge to protect and care for this land and to participate in the process of reconciliation.

9. Welcome to Country

Welcome to Country ceremonies to be arranged as per the procedure and the events check list.

10. Acknowledgement of Country

Acknowledgement of Country to be conducted by employees, members and contractors as per the procedure and the events check list.

11. Policy and Procedure implementation

Promulgation of published procedure

All RACGP employees, members and contractors will have access to this policy and the relevant procedure.

12. Review of this document

This document will have a review cycle of three years.

13. Related Policies, Documents, Legislation & Strategic Priorities

The following RACGP and Faculty policies and regulations are relevant:

- RACGP Constitution
- RACGP Faculty Regulations
- RACGP Ethics Policy
- RACGP - An introduction to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health cultural protocols and perspectives
- RACGP - Position statement on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health
- Welcome to Country and Acknowledgment of Country procedure
- Welcome to Country and Acknowledgment of Country – event checklist