

**SECTION:** Protocol Queensland

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**SUBJECT:** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Protocol - Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

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**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this protocol is to acknowledge and demonstrate respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the Indigenous peoples of Australia and recognise their ongoing ties with land and sea.
- 1.2 This policy outlines the guidelines established by the Queensland Government for all Queensland Government staff speaking at official Queensland Government business requiring acknowledgement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owners.

**2. Scope**

- 2.1 This policy applies to all Queensland Government members and employees conducting Government business at events listed under clause 4.1.

**3. Criteria**

- 3.1 The wording to be used for acknowledgement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owners is:

"I would like to respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land (insert name of the Traditional Owner group if known and appropriate) on which this event is taking place."

A short pause should be taken after the acknowledgement as a sign of respect, before progressing with the remainder of the speech.

**4. Operational Guidelines**

- 4.1 This policy would apply to external public functions including:
  - 4.1.1 Government organised, funded and co-funded functions
  - 4.1.2 Queensland Government events and functions
  - 4.1.3 Queensland Government sponsored conferences, seminars and workshops
  - 4.1.4 Official launch ceremonies for Queensland Government policies, programs and services
  - 4.1.5 Significant community engagement meetings, for example the Negotiation tables.
- 4.2 This will ensure appropriate acknowledgement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owners at all relevant government-related events.

- 4.3 An internal business meeting would not require the acknowledgement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owners.
- 4.4 The first speaker and all subsequent speakers, as appropriate, can also acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owners.
- 4.5 Government members and employees are encouraged to research the identity of the Traditional Owners of the local area.
- 4.6 Should any Government employee be uncertain as to whether the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Protocol applies to a specific function or event, advice should be sought from Protocol Queensland, Department of the Premier and Cabinet.
- 4.7 Organisers of Queensland Government hosted or funded events and functions should contact the relevant regional office of the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy (DATSIP) to confirm the name, pronunciation and appropriateness to mention the name, of the relevant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owners of the land on which the event is taking place.

## **5. Other Relevant Information**

- 5.1 A "Welcome to Country" is different to an acknowledgment of country in that it is a cultural practice performed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders or traditional owners and can be used to open significant events and formal functions. It is often used in tandem with the protocol of acknowledging traditional owners.
- 5.2 Some community-based meetings in the Torres Strait and in some mainland communities are opened with a prayer.
- 5.3 Government Officials responsible for organising an event and who require advice about the appropriateness of incorporating a "Welcome to Country" or a prayer at an event should refer to clauses 6.1 and 6.2. These clauses identify appropriate contact officers for further advice.

## **6. Actions**

- 6.1 Enquiries regarding this Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Protocol should be directed to:

The Director  
Protocol Queensland  
Department of the Premier and Cabinet  
Phone: 3239 3731

The Executive Director  
Strategic Policy and Partnerships Directorate  
Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy  
Phone: 3224 2518

- 6.2 Enquiries regarding the identity and appropriateness to mention the names of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owner groups at a Queensland Government event should be directed to:

Regional Director  
South Queensland Region  
Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy  
Phone: 3225 8982

Regional Director  
Central Queensland Region  
Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy  
Phone: 4938 4690

Regional Director  
North Queensland Region  
Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy  
Phone: 4799 7470

Regional Director  
Far North Queensland Region  
Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy  
Phone: 4039 8177

Regional Director  
West Queensland Region  
Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy  
Phone: 4744 7333

Regional Director  
Torres Strait Region  
Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy  
Phone: 4083 1001