

Motion 5. For D 69 Council Meeting in May 2013

Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country

Preamble to Motion 5

- Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country are protocols increasingly used in Australia.
- Recognition of the traditional country demonstrates an awareness and respect for Australia's and PNG's First Peoples.
- It is important that Toastmasters embrace the spirit of reconciliation between Indigenous Australians and other Australians.
- Using appropriate protocols helps promote greater understanding of indigenous culture within the Toastmasters community.
- One typical government guideline states that "In providing cultural services such as Welcome to Country, artistic performances and ceremonies, Indigenous people are using and sharing their intellectual property. As such, providers of these services should be appropriately remunerated." Fees may vary depending on the nature of the Welcome, scale of the event, and what the event organisers would like on the program.

Motion:

"That the following new procedure and practices be adopted by Toastmasters District 69:

Procedure

That a Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country practice be incorporated in the program for the District Convention, Area and Division Conferences.

Practice

- i. Where possible, the Traditional Owners¹ be invited to deliver a Welcome to Country for participants at significant Toastmasters events.
- ii. The Sergeant at Arms or Conference Chairman performs an Acknowledgement of Country when a Welcome to Country is less appropriate.
- iii. It is recommended that an Acknowledgement of Country statement be included on websites and newsletters.
- iv. A recommended procedures and practices guideline² is provided by District 69 for use at Convention and conferences."

Moved by Mercury Motivators Club # 711243

¹ Traditional Owners are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people who have traditional links to the community, are originally from that area and whose families have had custodial responsibilities from generation to generation over thousands of years.

² Attached next page.



WHERE LEADERS
ARE MADE

Toastmasters District 69

Welcome to Country / Acknowledgement of Country Recommended procedure and practices

Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country are protocols increasingly used in Australia.

Welcome to Country

The Welcome to Country ceremony originated Western Australian Aboriginal people Ernie Dingo and Richard Walley in 1976.

It is performed by a local Indigenous person of significance to symbolise the Traditional Owners of that area giving blessing to an event taking place on the land.

A Welcome to Country is held at the opening of an event and is usually the first item on the program.

The local Indigenous custodians may conduct the ceremony through a speech, song, ceremony or a combination of these things. The nature of Welcome also depends on the scale of event, and what the event organisers would like on the program.

One typical government guideline states that "In providing cultural services such as Welcome to Country, artistic performances and ceremonies, Aboriginal people are using and sharing their intellectual property. As such, providers of these services should be appropriately remunerated."

When a Welcome to Country can be performed:

- Annual District 69 Convention
- Area and Division Conferences

It is necessary for the Conference Chairman to provide a response immediately after the Welcome to Country ceremony. Part of the response should acknowledge the people who delivered the Welcome to Country.

Example of response:

*"I respectfully acknowledge the past and present Traditional Owners of this land on which we are meeting, the people. Thank you to for welcoming us to conduct Toastmasters business in this place. We acknowledge the contributions of Aboriginal people and non-Indigenous Australians to this country we all live in and share together."*³

³ PNG protocols TBC.

Acknowledgment of Country

Where the scale of the event does not warrant a Welcome to Country, and in the event that no Traditional Owner representative can attend, the Sergeant at Arms or Toastmasters Chairman can deliver an Acknowledgement of Country at the start of the gathering.

The Acknowledgement of Country is a statement made to show respect to the land and custodians. Anyone can say an Acknowledgement of Country, whereas only a traditional custodian can conduct a Welcome to Country.

Example of Acknowledgement of Country:

"I respectfully acknowledge the past and present traditional custodians of the land on which we are meeting, the⁴ people. We acknowledge the contributions of both indigenous and non-indigenous Australians to the education of all people by sharing our stories and traditions."

When an Acknowledgement of Country can be performed:

- District Convention
- Division Conferences
- Area Conferences
- Other special events, milestone meetings, changeovers etc

Newsletters and websites

Example of Acknowledgement of Country statement for newsletters and websites:

[Name] Toastmasters club respectfully acknowledges the past and present traditional custodians of the land on which our members meet, the people.

Traditional Owners

Traditional Owners are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people who have traditional links to the community, are originally from that area and whose families have had custodial responsibilities from generation to generation over thousands of years.

Who to contact about the Traditional Owners for your region:

Native Title Representative Bodies & Service Providers www.ntrb.net/publicPages/NTRBmap.aspx

Resources:

ReconciliACTION Network <http://reconciliaction.org.au/nsw/education-kit/protocols/#ra>

Protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Traditional Ownership
<http://www.det.wa.edu.au/aboriginaleducation/detcms/aboriginal-education/aboriginal-education/docs/welcometocountryaug2007.en?oid=com.arsdigita.cms.contenttypes.FileStorageItem-id-7149680>

⁴ Australian Indigenous language map www.abc.net.au/indigenous/map/