



# PROTOCOL Acknowledgement of Country November 2021

The Sandhurst Aboriginal Team adheres to the Protocol of acknowledging Traditional Custodians set down by the 'Aboriginal Heritage Council Victoria' in regard to current Registered Aboriginal Parties. Please refer to link: <https://www.aboriginalheritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/victorias-current-registered-aboriginal-parties>

## \* Note the Terminology with This Protocol

### 1. Vision

The vision for Catholic Education Sandhurst Limited (CES Ltd) is to provide, in partnership with our families, stimulating, enriching, liberating and nurturing learning environments in each of the Catholic school communities within the Diocese. At the heart of this vision is our commitment to the ongoing duty of care that we have for the safety, wellbeing, and inclusion of all children and young people.

We believe:

- that the values of the Gospel are central to who we are, what we do, and how we act
- in leadership encompassing vision, innovation and empowerment.

### 2. Welcome to Country

Welcome to Country, also known as the Traditional Welcome, is where the Traditional Owners of the region, usually an Elder, but not always an Elder welcomes people to their country. In the Sandhurst Diocese, at significant CES Ltd and school events and formal functions e.g. school openings etc this is the adopted protocol we adhere to.

In adhering to this protocol we show that we acknowledge and respect the significance of the 40 000+ years of Aboriginal occupancy of this land and their ongoing presence and significance in contemporary Australia. We also show that we celebrate living in this country whose Indigenous people is the oldest living culture in the world. The protocol takes place at the very beginning of the event.

### 3. Acknowledgment of the Country

1. **For Aboriginal people**, acknowledging the traditional owners is a way they express cultural respect when speaking on the traditional land of another group. It is recognition of the ongoing responsibilities and obligations of that group over the land. And by making such acknowledgement, it also fulfils a cultural protocol and responsibility to the Aboriginal person's own group.
2. **For Non Aboriginal people** as a sign of respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander societies it is also appropriate for non-Aboriginal speakers at meetings or public events to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the Country where that event or meeting is taking place. This protocol takes place at the very beginning of the event in CEO Sandhurst and also our schools. It is also a significant and symbolic reconciliation gesture.

'Acknowledgement of Country' may also occur when Traditional Elders are not available to provide an official 'Welcome to Country'.

### 4. Suggestions for Acknowledging Country

Some suggested examples of appropriate ways to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians are listed below **but as you learn more information, both historical and contemporary, about the cultural groups, attempt to add that into the acknowledgements you say. If unsure, please seek clarification from the Sandhurst Aboriginal Education Team or your Koorie Education Worker if applicable.**

1. I would like to acknowledge the (Traditional Custodians if known) of the land we are meeting on today, the **[insert name]**, and call on the Spirit Ancestors to walk with us today as we share and learn together.
2. We acknowledge the traditional peoples of the land the **[insert name]**, people on which we stand. We pay our respects to them for their custodianship of the land.
3. I would like to begin by acknowledging the traditional custodians of this land our school is built on the **[insert name]** people.
4. I acknowledge the living culture of the **[insert name]** people, the traditional custodians of the land we stand on, and pay tribute to the unique role they play in the life of this region.
5. I wish to begin by acknowledging that we are in the country of the **[insert name]** people. I pay respect to their tribal elders, I celebrate their continuing culture, and I acknowledge the memory of their ancestors.

6. I would like to acknowledge the **[insert name]** people, the traditional custodians of the country on which we are meeting today. I acknowledge that they have occupied and cared for this country over countless generations and I celebrate their continuing contribution to the life of this region.

### **This acknowledgement could be said together**

We acknowledge and pay respect to the **[insert name]** as the original and ongoing owners and custodians of this land - the land we are meeting on today. We commit ourselves to actively work alongside Indigenous people for reconciliation and justice.

**The Sandhurst Diocese has developed the acknowledgement below and can be used universally for any occasion or meeting.**

### **Acknowledgement of Country for the Diocese of Sandhurst**

**We acknowledge and pay respect to the [insert name] as the original and ongoing custodians of the land upon which our school is situated. We commit to actively working alongside First Nations people for healing, reconciliation and justice.**

**The Catholic education faith community is inclusive and acknowledges that we are all made in the image and likeness of God and we are created in love. People of all faiths, genders, sexualities, abilities and cultures are therefore respected equally in the Sandhurst Catholic community.**

**We acknowledge the pain and suffering of all who have been hurt in body, mind and spirit by those who have betrayed the trust placed in them.**

**May we all stand tall, stand firm, grounded in truth, together as one.**

## **4. Traditional Custodians**

Over time some boundaries change - refer to the Aboriginal Heritage Website.

**Some of the Traditional Custodians of the towns and schools situated in the Sandhurst Diocese are as follows:**

### **Djilamatang**

#### **Corryong**

*We acknowledge and pay respect to the Djilamatang people as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we meet.*

## **The Yorta Yorta Nation**

*whose clans include Bangerang, Kaitheban, Wollithiga, Moira, Ulupna, Kwat Kwat, Yalaba Yalaba and Ngurai-illiam-wurrung*

**Shepparton, Rochester Tatura, Tongala, Benalla, Wangaratta, Yarrawonga, Cobram, Chiltern, Nathalia, Numurkah, Rutherglen Kyabram, Mooroopna**

*We acknowledge and pay respect to the Yorta Yorta Nation, as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we meet.*

## **Taungurung**

**Euroa, Nagambie, Heathcote, Rushworth**

*We acknowledge and pay respect to the Taunurung people as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we meet.*

## **Minjambuta**

**Harrierville**

**Beechworth & Myrtleford** – Traditional Owners have not been formally recognised for these areas. A general acknowledgement of Traditional Owners is recommended.

Please refer to link: <https://www.aboriginalvictoria.vic.gov.au/acknowledgement-traditional-owners>

*We acknowledge and pay respect to the Minjambuta people as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we meet.*

## **Dhudhuroa/Waywurru**

**Tallangatta, Wodonga**

*We acknowledge and pay respect to the Dhudhuroa/Waywurru people as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we meet.*

## **Dja Dja Wurrung/Jaara**

**Bendigo, Eaglehawk, Inglewood, Strathfieldsaye, Elmore**

*We acknowledge and pay respect to the Jaara/Dja Dja Wurrung people as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we meet.*

## **Baraparapa**

**Cohuna and Kerang, Pyramid Hill**

*We acknowledge and pay respect to the Baraparapa people as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we meet.*

## **Kulin nation** (Melbourne CEO)

There are five language groups within the Kulin nation:

Wathaurung (Wath-er-rung)

Woiwurrung (Woy-wur-rung) commonly known as Wurundjeri

**Taungurung (Tung-ger-rung)**

**Dja Dja Wurrung (Jar-Jar-Wur-rung)**

Boonwurrung (Boon-wur-rung)

## **5. Office Email Signatures**

All staff emails acknowledge the Country on which a person works. Depending on which Office you work in across the Diocese please include the following in your email signature.

### **Bendigo Office**

*The Catholic Education Office Bendigo would like to acknowledge the Dja/ Dja Wurrung/Jaara people as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which our office is situated.*

### **Wangaratta Office**

*The Catholic Education Office Wangaratta would like to acknowledge the Yorta Yorta Nation, whose clans include Bangerang (Pangerang) Kaitheban, Wollithiga, Moira, Ulupna, Kwat Kwat, Yalaba Yalaba and Ngurai-illiam-wurrung, as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which our office is situated.*

### **Tatura Office**

*The Catholic Education Office Tatura would like to acknowledge the Yorta Yorta Nation which includes the following clans: the Bangerang, Kaitheban, Wollithiga, Moira, Ulupna, Kwat Kwat, Yalaba Yalaba and Nguaria-illiam-wurrung as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which our office is situated.*

## **6. The Role of Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs)**

The Victorian *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* (the Act) recognises Aboriginal people “as the primary guardians, keepers and knowledge holders of Aboriginal cultural heritage”. Registered Aboriginal parties (RAPs) have important roles and functions in managing and protecting Aboriginal cultural heritage in Victoria. RAPs are determined by the Aboriginal Heritage Council (the Council).

The following link show the geographic area of the RAPs of the Dja Dja Wurrung, the Yorta Yorta and the Taungurung: <https://achris.vic.gov.au/weave/wca.html>

## 7. What is Country?

*Country ... is a nourishing terrain. Country is a place that gives and receives life. Not just imagined or represented, it is lived in and lived with... Country is multi-dimensional – it consists of people, animals, plants, Dreaming, underground, earth, soils, minerals and waters, surface water, and air...Country in Aboriginal English is not only a common noun but also a proper noun. People talk about country in the same way that they would talk about a person: they speak to country, sing to country, visit country, worry about country, and long for country. People say that country knows, hears, smells, takes notice, takes care, and is sorry or happy...*

From Strategy for Aboriginal Managed Lands in Victoria, December 2003

*“Country for me is where I come from. Where my roots are and where I belong – our place”.*

Aunty Melva Johnson, 2011

*“When I walk in my country, I walk in the footprints of my ancestors. The land is my Spirit ... my country is my prayer”.*

Vicki Walker, *Knowing Home* DVD Aboriginal Catholic Ministry Victoria

*We have a strong connectedness to country, it is our understanding that we are with ancestors, and it is our place. Country has a spiritual identity; it helps shape our own identity. It helps shape us to feel proud and strong and identify with people we connect with. When on Country it gives us sense of knowing.*

Sandhurst Koorie Educators, 2011

*Country is mother ... country is where I come from and where I go back to ... country for me is the journey, the journey I am on, the journey of the past the present and on going into the future ... that’s what country is for me ...*

Uncle Wally Cooper, 2011