

# Acknowledgement of Country Policy

2022

## Preamble

As the peak body for science and technology, Science & Technology Australia seeks a reconciled and united Australia.

Our deep commitment to partnership and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership guides STA's relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations in STEM.

STA's leadership role in our sector includes deepening knowledge and respecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander relationships with Country and Indigenous scientific knowledge and practice.

We encourage our member organisations to take their own next steps in reconciliation.

By seeking a Welcome to Country at our large formal events, and by sharing responsibility across our community to research and offer a deeply personal Acknowledgement of Country at meetings, STA models shared responsibility for deepening knowledge of Country, culture, history and language.

## Welcome to Country

A Welcome to Country can only be offered by an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owner, Elder or Custodian.

It is the act of giving permission for others to come onto your Country, offering them safe passage, and asking visitors to respect and listen to the Country onto which they are welcomed.

In the context of the most heartbreaking parts of Australia's shared story since colonisation, a Welcome to Country by a revered Elder is a breathtaking act of grace.

At all large formal gatherings and events, whether virtual or in person, STA seeks a Welcome to Country to open the event.

We do so to honour the Country and its Traditional Owners, share respect for Australia's First Peoples and Cultures, and connect participants with the awe-inspiring long story of Australia.

## Acknowledgement of Country

An Acknowledgement of Country pays respect both to the Country on which we gather and the Traditional Owners or local custodians of the region.

An Acknowledgement of Country is a shared responsibility in the STA community. It can be researched and offered by a staff member, Board or committee member or event participant.

At regular meetings, smaller gatherings or informal events, STA opens our events with an Acknowledgement of Country.

Ahead of the meeting, STA invites an attendee to research and personalise an Acknowledgement of Country. Our aim is to share knowledge with our community.

This could include sharing an insight drawn from traditional knowledges in a STEM discipline, or drawn from the history or a story of the Country from which an Acknowledgement is offered.

It could also include sharing a word or words in language - or reading a short excerpt from a book or text about Country, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ownership and knowledge, or another aspect of culture.

We invite all members of the STA community to share these insights to support the continuous learning of staff, members and community - so we teach and learn together.

In some parts of the Country, there may be prohibitions on sharing some knowledge. In this instance, we ask those offering an Acknowledgement to check what information they can share.

### Further resources to help research a personalised Acknowledgement of Country

- [Whose Country am I on?](#) – guidance from AIATSIS on confirming Traditional Owners.
- [How to organise a Welcome to country in the ACT](#) – ACT Government Community services.
- [Welcome to Country](#) – Aunty Joy Murphy and Lisa Kennedy.
- [Deliver an Acknowledgement of Country that really means something](#) – Shelley Reys' TED Talk
- [Welcome to Country](#) – Professor Marcia Langton.
- [First Knowledges series](#) – on culture, Country and knowledge.
- [The First Scientists](#) – Corey Tutt.
- [The Biggest Estate on Earth](#) – Professor Bill Gamage.
- [Dark Emu](#) – Enterprise Professor Bruce Pascoe.
- [A Guide to Loving Country](#) – Enterprise Professor Bruce Pascoe.
- [The Macquarie Atlas of Indigenous Australia](#) – Bill Arthur and Frances Morphy
- [On Country](#) – National Museum of Australia
- [The First Australians](#) – Rachel Perkins and Marcia Langton
- [STA's First Reconciliation Action Plan](#) – launched 2021

### Review of this policy

This policy will be formally reviewed in 2024 by the CEO and any revisions presented to the Executive Committee and/or Board. Reviews may also occur as needed when opportunities arise to enhance or improve the policy.