

ICOMOS GA2023 – Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country Protocol

GA2023 acknowledges the Gadigal of the Eora Nation as the Traditional Owners of the place we now call Sydney.

GA2023 also acknowledges that other First Peoples may speak for Country and that sometimes the question of who speaks for Country is contested.

GA2023 has an inclusive approach to speaking for Country which encourages all participants to follow what they regard as appropriate cultural protocols.

Welcome to Country

A Welcome to Country provides an opportunity for local Aboriginal people to welcome people to their Country. A Welcome to Country can only be performed by an Elder or respected person who a Traditional Owner of the land on which the Welcome takes place, and been given permission to do so. The form and words of a Welcome to Country is determined by the Elder who offers the Welcome.

Acknowledgment of Country

An Acknowledgement of Country, also known as Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners, can be done by anyone and is a way of showing awareness of, and respect for, the Aboriginal Traditional Owners of the land on which a meeting or event is being held. For a non-Aboriginal person, or an Aboriginal person who is not a descendant of that Country, acknowledging the local Aboriginal people as the Traditional Owners is a mark of respect. It is also respectful to acknowledge Elders past and present.

Welcome to Country Protocols at GA2023

At GA2023 all major events will include a Welcome to Country.

Welcome to Country locations throughout the GA 2023 will follow the existing process and protocols for that particular venue.

The Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council will be invited to provide the Welcome to Country at the at the commencement of the General Assembly at the ICC Sydney and for the Youth Forum on Cockatoo Island / Wareamah.

At the start of every GA2023 event and Scientific Symposium session, the host or chair will make a short Acknowledgement of Country, either using their own words or example words supplied.

Presenters in every GA2023 session will therefore have the option to make a separate Acknowledgement of Country (or not) as they wish.

Examples of an Acknowledgement of Country - suitable for GA2023:

I acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the Land we are meeting on today. I pay my respects to their Elders past and present, and extend that respect to all First Peoples here today.

OR



We acknowledge the Gadigal People of the Eora Nation as the Traditional Custodians of this Land on which the ICOMOS General Assembly and Scientific Symposium are taking place and pay respects to Elders past and present. We extend this acknowledgement and respect to the Traditional Custodians of other Country which will be visited during GA2023 and to all Indigenous people who are attending.

During GA2023, the Chair of meetings and Scientific Symposium sessions will make an Acknowledgement of Country. It will not be expected that other speakers and presenters will also acknowledge Country, but they make elect to do so. Appropriate words (such as the examples above) will be available in every meeting room and session, but GA2023 participants are encouraged to use the form of words that they consider appropriate.

Welcome to Country for Indigenous Delegates

A special 'Welcome to Country for Indigenous delegates to GA2023 will be held at the bara Sculpture in the Royal Botanic Gardens, on the afternoon of Sunday 3 September 2023.

Any participant in GA2023 who identifies as an Indigenous person will be welcome to participate. Such participation may extend to offering a Welcome to Country, expressing Acknowledgement of Country or responding to a Welcome or an Acknowledgement.

Other GA2023 delegates will be welcome to observe this event, but should not participate.

The MC for this event will be a Co-Chair of the GA2023 Indigenous Advisory Panel.

This event will be an open mic event at which Indigenous groups and individuals are invited to participate, and visitors can reciprocate and respond.

This will be a welcoming and inclusive event, where diverse participants and perspectives are welcome.