

Acknowledgement of Country Policy

1. Introduction

In 2015, Sue Lopez-Atkinson (Yorta Yorta) wrote the first Acknowledgement of Country for AGECS. This Acknowledgement was endorsed by Aunty Joy Wandin-Murphy, senior Wurundjeri Elder.

AGECS has worked on building a strong relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through a Reconciliation Action Plan, and the Acknowledgement of Country has now been written by Aunty Di Kerr.

“The Association of Graduates in Early Childhood Studies would like to acknowledge both the Bunurong/Boon Wurrung, and Wurundjeri people as the Traditional Custodians of the Lands on which we are located in Melbourne. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. We also acknowledge the Aboriginal language groups across all of Victoria, whose lands we provide funding for specific projects around Early Childhood Education. We acknowledge their history, their people, and their stories. As an Association we will work together for reconciliation, a process that starts with the acknowledgement of true Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures of Australia, and will always value the contribution to our community and culture, the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their families, communities and their stories.”

2. Policy Objectives

This document sets out guidelines for the use of the official AGECS Acknowledgement of Country and is designed to assist with the clarification of respectful practice within The Association of Graduates in Early Childhood Studies (AGECS).

3. The official acknowledgement

The following acknowledgement has been endorsed by Aunty Di Kerr in (2021):

“The Association of Graduates in Early Childhood Studies would like to acknowledge both the Bunurong/Boon Wurrung, and Wurundjeri people as the Traditional Custodians of the Lands on which we are located in Melbourne. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. We also acknowledge the Aboriginal language groups across all of Victoria, whose lands we provide funding for specific projects around Early Childhood Education. We acknowledge their history, their people, and their stories. As an Association we will work together for reconciliation, a process that starts with the acknowledgement of true Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures of Australia, and will always value the contribution to our community and culture, the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their families, communities and their stories.”

4. Policy

4.1 AGECS Website

The official AGECS Acknowledgment of Country is to be included on the home/landing page of the AGECS website.

4.2 Documentation

The official AGECS Acknowledgment of Country is to be included on all AGECS documentation.

Documentation includes:

- Outgoing newsletters such as inForm
- AUDAX
- Policies and procedures
- Meeting agenda and minutes

4.3 Events

An Acknowledgement of Country is to be included at the commencement of all AGECS events.

4.3.1 General Council meetings

The Acknowledgement can be presented in the form of reading the official Acknowledgement of Country or an “Acknowledgement from the Heart” from a Council member present.

4.3.2 AGECS Events

The Acknowledgement can be presented in the form of reading the official Acknowledgement of Country or an “Acknowledgement from the Heart” from a Council member present.

4.3.3 Annual General Meeting (AGM)

The Chair of the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Committee is to invite an Elder to be present at the AGECS AGM to share a Welcome to Country. Such an invitation is to include payment of a sitting fee. If an Elder is unable to attend the AGM, the President shall read the official Acknowledgement of Country at the commencement of the meeting.

For questions about this policy, contact the President.

Version	1	Approved by Council on	23 rd October 2023
Responsible person	The President	Scheduled review date	October 2026