

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN FILM CORPORATION

# First Nations Cultural Protocols



South Australian **Film Corporation**

# Acknowledgement of Country

The South Australian Film Corporation (SAFC) acknowledges that we work on the traditional Country of the Kurna people of the Adelaide Plains, and we pay respect to Elders past and present. We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, spiritual beliefs and relationship to land and waters and acknowledge that they are of continuing importance to the Kurna people living today. We extend this respect to other First Nations Language Groups and other First Nations.



Cover image credits  
(clockwise from top):

*Maralinga Tjarutja* (2020)

*Just Another Day in Indulkana* (2021)

Courtesy of Iwantja Arts  
Photo credit Simon Eeles

*Storm Boy* (2018)  
Photo credit Matt Nettheim

# Kaurna Welcome

*Marni naa pudni Kaurna yarta-ana. Ngadlu yaintya yarta mathanya.*

*Yaintya yarta ngadlu Tarntanya taaki, Yingkalityi-arra pinti miyurnarlu yaintya yarta Adelaide taaki.*

*Yaintya yarta ngadluku ngangkita, yartanungku kauwinungku padlu ngadluni mai, pardu, kuya yungkunthi.*

*Pukipuki-unungku yalaka-ana ngadlu iyantupinarna kangkathi.*

*Niina iyangka yuwama padnima, ngadlukupukiana miyurnarlu niina kangkangki. Ninku yungantalya yakanantalya.*

*Kaurna Miyurna-ityanungku.*

We welcome you to Kaurna land.

We are the first nations and custodians for this place called Adelaide.

We hold a deep spiritual connection to our land and waterways. For millennia we have welcomed visitors from afar.

During your time here on Kaurna land, may the spirit of our ancestors guide and walk beside you.

**Lee-Ann Tjunypa Buckskin  
and Jack Kanya Buckskin**





# Introduction

## What are Cultural Protocols?

Protocols are “a set of rules, regulations, processes, procedures, strategies or guidelines ... ways to work, communicate and collaborate and respect the Indigenous community”<sup>1</sup>.

They are “ethical principles which guide behaviour in a particular situation”<sup>2</sup>, and aim to help close the gap between First Nations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) and non First Nations communities.

Cultural Protocols are in place for the purposes of encouraging culturally appropriate working practices, and pave the way for improving working relationships between First Nations and non-First Nations partners.

Cultural Protocols are also designed to protect First Nations cultural and intellectual property rights<sup>3</sup>, which include the right for First Nations Peoples to:

- Own and control their cultural and intellectual property;

- Ensure that any means of protecting their cultural and intellectual property is based on the principle of self-determination;
- Be recognised as the primary guardians and interpreters of their cultures and so regulate how stories and information are presented;
- Authorise or refuse the use of their cultural and intellectual property according to customary law;
- Maintain the secrecy of their knowledge and other cultural practices;
- Be given full and proper attribution for sharing their heritage;
- Control the recording of cultural customs and expressions, the particular language which may be intrinsic to cultural identity, knowledge, skill and teaching of culture<sup>4</sup>.

In essence, protocols aim to maintain core values important to all First Nations peoples.

# Introduction

Values include spirit and integrity, cultural continuity, equity, reciprocity, respect and responsibility<sup>5</sup>.

Understanding these core values demonstrates a respect for First Nations people, and provides a foundation for ethical conduct on a screen project.

There are many different protocols depending on which First Nations

community and country you are working on, which is why reading protocols is essential.

This document does not provide specific protocols for all screen production requirements, but rather gives an overview of considerations for situations involving First Nations South Australian communities and content, and advice for further reading.

## Essential Downloads



### **[Pathways & Protocols: A Filmmakers Guide to Working with Indigenous People, Culture and Concepts](#)**

Developed by Screen Australia's First Nations Department, *Pathways & Protocols* is essential reading for all filmmakers shooting in Australia.



### **[Protocols for Using First Nations Cultural and Intellectual Property in the Arts](#)**

Produced by the Australia Council for the Arts, these protocols set out the legal, ethical and moral considerations for working with First Nations artists and the use of First Nations material.

# Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country

For tens of thousands of years, First Nations peoples occupied the Australian continent with very different boundaries from today, centred on intimate cultural relationships with the land and sea.

South Australia is home to more than 30 First Nations groups, with distinct beliefs, cultural practices and languages<sup>6</sup>.

Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country protocols are an important way of recognising and paying respects to the Traditional Owners of the land.

## What is the difference between a Welcome to Country and an Acknowledgement of Country?

A **Welcome to Country** is a formal process which recognises both First Nations people from another Country and non First Nations people.

The Welcome can only be undertaken by First Nations

people having the authority and respect within that specific First Nations community. Speeches and other forms of ceremony may be involved.

An **Acknowledgement of Country** is also a formal process but, unlike the Welcome, it can be undertaken by non First Nations people as well as First Nations people from another Country.



# Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country

Its purpose is to publicly recognise First Nations people as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land.

**Smoking ceremonies** are conducted by First Nations people with specialised cultural knowledge. The ceremony aims to cleanse the space in which the ceremony takes place.

Given the significant nature of the ceremony, smoking ceremonies are usually only performed at major events.

In providing cultural services such as Welcome to Country, artistic performances and ceremonies, First Nations people are using their intellectual property.

As such, providers of these

services should be appropriately remunerated.

## Why are they important?

First Nations Australian peoples have experienced a long history of exclusion from Australian history books, the Australian flag, the Australian anthem and for many years, Australian democracy.

This history of dispossession and colonisation lies at the heart of the disparity between First Nations peoples and the wider Australian community today.

Including recognition of First Nations people in events, meetings and national symbols is one part of ending the exclusion that has



*Are You Tougher Than Your Ancestors? (2020)*



# Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country

been so damaging. Incorporating welcoming and acknowledgement protocols into official meetings and events recognises First Nations peoples as the First Australians and Traditional Custodians of land.

## Welcome to Country Protocols

Protocols for welcoming visitors to Country have been a part of First Nations Australian cultures for thousands of years.

Despite the absence of fences or visible borders, First Nations groups had clear boundaries separating their Country from that of other groups.

Seeking permission to enter or use resources from the land and sea has always been in place in First Nations societies.

When permission was granted the hosting group would welcome the visitors, offering safe passage and protection of their spiritual being during the journey.

While visitors were provided with a safe passage, they also had to respect the protocols and rules of

the land owner group while on their Country.

Today, much has changed and these protocols have been adapted to contemporary circumstances. However, the essential elements of welcoming visitors and offering safe passage remain in place.

This Welcome also gives custodians the opportunity to formally welcome people to their land.

### **When does a Welcome to Country occur?**

A Welcome to Country occurs at the beginning of a formal event and can take many forms including singing, dancing, smoking ceremonies or a speech in traditional language or English.

### **Who can perform a Welcome to Country?**

A Welcome to Country is delivered by Traditional Owners, or First Nations people who have been given permission from Traditional Owners, to welcome visitors to their Country.



# Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country

## What is said during a Welcome to Country?

The wording of a Welcome to Country is at the discretion of the person delivering the Welcome to Country. However, it is important that the person or organisation wanting the Welcome to Country negotiates with the persons delivering the Welcome to Country on the nature of the event or occasion to assist in a more personalised delivery of the Welcome to Country.

Whenever a Welcome to Country occurs it should also be accompanied by an Acknowledgement of Country.

## What to consider when organising a Welcome to Country

When organising a Welcome to Country ceremony, it is important to consider the following factors:

- The Elder or community member is provided with information regarding the audience they are welcoming;
- The equipment the Elder or community member is required to use if applicable, such as a microphone or stage;
- Offering transport where necessary;
- Payment for Welcome to Country may be required and should be negotiated prior to the event.



Teenage Boss S2 (2020)

# Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country

## Acknowledgement of Country Protocols

Acknowledgment of Country is a way that non First Nations people, and First Nations people not from the local area, can show respect for First Nations heritage and the ongoing relationship of Traditional Owners with the land.

### **When does an Acknowledgement of Country Occur?**

Similar to a Welcome to Country, an Acknowledgement of Country is generally offered at the beginning of a meeting, speech or event.

### **Who can perform an Acknowledgement of Country?**

It can be given by anyone.

### **What is said during an Acknowledgement of Country?**

There are no set protocols or wording for an Acknowledgement of Country, though often a statement may take the following forms:

General: *I'd like to begin by*

*acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet today. I would also like to pay my respects to Elders past and present.*

Specific: *I'd like to begin by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet today, the (people) of the (nation) and pay my respects to Elders past and present.*

### **What to consider when organising an Acknowledgement of Country**

When organising an Acknowledgement of Country, it is important to consider the following factors:

- That the correct Traditional Owner group has been identified and confirmed – see the relevant section in this document for further information;
- That the Acknowledgement is personalised to suit the occasion in which it is being provided for.

# Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country

## Service Providers

For more information on who can perform a Welcome to Country in your required area of South Australia:

- **South Australian Native Title Service**

[nativetitlesa.org](http://nativetitlesa.org)

Phone: 08 8110 2800

Freecall: 1800 010 360

- **Reconciliation SA**

[reconciliationsa.org.au](http://reconciliationsa.org.au)

Phone: 08 7082 2977

- **[City of Port Adelaide Enfield Kurna Register](#)**

A key contact list of Kurna people who can provide a Welcome to Country service.

## Essential Downloads



**[Adelaide City Council Protocol & Guidelines on Welcome to Country & Acknowledgement of Country](#)**



*The Mountain (2022)*



Welcomes and Acknowledgements of Country promote an ongoing connection to place for First Nations Australians and show respect for Traditional Owners.





# First Nations Communities in SA

South Australia is home to more than 30 First Nations groups, with distinct beliefs, cultural practices and languages<sup>6</sup>.

Protocols and practices differ depending on which First Nations community and Country you are working on.

The following resources should assist you with finding out more about First Nations Countries and communities in South Australia.

## Native Title Tribunal Interactive Map of SA

To check whose country you are on in native title terms, you can use the [Native Title SA interactive map tool](#) maintained by the Native Title Tribunal. The map allows you to search for an address or town, and then click on it to show the determined or claim area around it.

## First Nations SA Community Contacts

The SAFC maintains an [online](#)

[database of contacts for First Nations Community Authorities in South Australia](#), using information from Native Title SA.

The database is connected to the SAFC's online [Locations Gallery](#) of filming locations, with each location listing tagged with the relevant First Nations Community Authority contact information.

Where a location does not list a First Nations Community Authority, it may be the subject of ongoing Native Title determinations. In these cases, you can contact South Australian Native Title Services for further advice (see Page 11).

## AIATSIS Map

On a national level, the [Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies \(AIATSIS\) map of Indigenous Australia](#) is an attempt to represent all the language, tribal or nation groups of First Nations Australia. Created in 1996 as part of the *Encyclopaedia of Aboriginal Australia* project, the map relies on published sources available to 1994.

# SA First Nations Screen Service Providers

*Below is a selection of First Nations led screen sector service providers in South Australia. If you would like your business to be included here, please contact the SAFC Communications team [communications@safilm.com.au](mailto:communications@safilm.com.au)*

- **Cerulean Creative Studios**

South Australia's first First Nations-led game studio, founded in 2023. They offer a range of B2B, outsourcing and consulting services in video game development, AR/VR development and animation.  
[ceruleanstudios.com.au](http://ceruleanstudios.com.au)  
[arthur@ceruleanstudios.com.au](mailto:arthur@ceruleanstudios.com.au)  
Phone: +61 406 877 515

- **Clare Elvia**

A Badimia Yamatji screen practitioner offering freelance services in editing, assistance editing, key art photography and behind-the-scenes photography.  
[instagram.com/clareelvia](https://www.instagram.com/clareelvia)  
[clareelvia@gmail.com](mailto:clareelvia@gmail.com)  
Phone: +61 488 184 878

- **Dinosaur Disco Films**

A small Adelaide-based production company founded in 2021. A 50% First Nations owned business, they offer services in producing video content, short films and feature films.  
[dinosaurdiscofilms@gmail.com](mailto:dinosaurdiscofilms@gmail.com)  
Phone: +61 452 210 988

- **Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (PY) Media**

A First Nations media organisation and broadcaster operating on the APY Lands in Central Australia. PY Media offers radio, television and digital media production and broadcasting services.  
[pymedia.org.au](http://pymedia.org.au)  
[CEO@pymedia.org.au](mailto:CEO@pymedia.org.au)  
Phone: +61 411 798 772

- **Star Stanford**

A Njarrindjeri screen practitioner offering freelance services as production assistant, production coordinator, assistant producer and co-producer.  
[linkedin.com/in/star-sandford](https://www.linkedin.com/in/star-sandford)  
[star.sandford@outlook.com](mailto:star.sandford@outlook.com)  
Phone: +61 433 913 030

# Further Information

This is a live working document, and will be updated by the SAFC as information and processes change.

The SAFC recommends the following extra resources for further information:

- [Screen Australia – Pathways & Protocols: A Filmmakers Guide to Working with Indigenous People, Culture and Concepts](#)
- [Australia Council for the Arts – Protocols for Using First Nations Cultural and Intellectual Property in the Arts](#)
- [Adelaide City Council Guide to Organisations and Services for Aboriginal People](#)
- [Government of South Australia Register of Cultural Awareness Training Providers](#)
- [The South Australian Aboriginal Business Directory](#)





# References

- 1 [Respect, Acknowledge, Listen: Practical Protocols for Working with the Indigenous Community](#), Angelina Hurley (2003)
- 2 [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Protocols](#), Oxfam Australia (2015)
- 3 Article 31, [United Nations Declaration On The Rights Of Indigenous Peoples](#) (2007)
- 4 [Our Culture, Our Future](#), Terri Janke (1998)
- 5 [Ethical Conduct in Research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and Communities](#), NHMRC (2018)
- 6 [National Parks and Wildlife Service SA, Aboriginal Culture and Heritage](#)





[safilm.com.au](http://safilm.com.au)

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