# Welcome to or acknowledgement of country

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This document has an outline of possible elements of welcomes and acknowledgements and then text that can be used in each section. You can create a welcome/acknowledgement by taking elements out of the sections you decide to use. It is important to use language if possible, but if the audience don’t understand it more is not necessarily better.

Where there are differences between Gamilaraay [GR] and Yuwaalaraay [YR] two versions of the text are given.

# Possible sections of a welcome/acknowledgement

The elements and structure given below reflect what is currently often done. This is an evolving ritual with new approaches constantly being adopted. Sections of the material can also be used when visiting another area.

There are often three main sections, and sometimes other material

1. Greeting of the audience
2. Respect/acknowledge statements
   1. Acknowledge the elders
   2. General acknowledgement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
   3. Acknowledge the land and sovereignty.
3. Conclusion/farewell
4. Other material

# 1 - Greeting the audience

## greeting:

The two main greeting words are *Yaama* 'hello', *gulbiyaay* 'welcome'.

These can both be used:

*Yaama maliyaa, Gulbiyaay.* Hello friends, welcome.

## Introduce self:

If doing this the common way is to say your name, then *ngaya* ‘I’.

*X ngaya.*  I am X.

## people:

Many words can be used to address all or some of the people present.

*maliyaa* 'friends', *birraliigal* 'children',

*ngindaay* you[3 or more people]; *ngindaay-uu* ‘all of you’

*yinarraa,* or, with a plural marker *yinarraa-galgaa* 'ladies',

*giwiirraa(-galgaa)* 'gentlemen'.

If there are individuals to be mentioned by name titles can be used:

*Walgan Mary.* Auntie Mary

*Garruu Bill* Uncle Bill

*Yinarraa Hippai.* Mrs Hippai

*Giwiirraa Dennis* Mrs Dennis

## Locations:

If mentioning a location use the locative (place) suffix.

*Gamilaraay-dha* 'to Gamilaraay (country)', *Gunnedah-ga*.

Other words such as *nguwalay* 'here' can be used.

For an acknowledgement you can use a phrase like:

*Gayaa ngaya, dhawun-da nguwalay.*

I am happy/proud to be on this land.

Or name the land.

*Gayaa ngaya, dhawun-da Dharug-ga.* or *Gayaa ngaya, Dharug-ga dhawun-da.*

I am happy/proud to be on Dharug land.

## Examples:

Some actual greetings could be:

*Yaama maliyaa.*

*Wayne ngaya, Gamilaraay ngaya.*

*Gamilaraay nhalay.*

*Gulbiyaay ngindaay-uu nguwalay.*

Hello friends.

I am Wayne, and I am Gamilaraay.

This is Gamilaraay (country).

You are all welcome here.

*Yaama ngindaay-uu.*

*Leanne ngaya, Gamilaraay ngaya.*

*Gayaa ngaya, Dharug-ga dhawun-da.*

Hello to all of you.

I am Leanne, and I am Gamilaraay.

I am glad to be on Dharug land.

# 2 - Respect/acknowledge statements

## Respect/acknowledge

There are no recorded GY translations of these words, but *winanga-y*, (related to *winanga-li* 'hear, listen', and to *bina* 'ear) has multiple translations, including 'know, remember, think, understand and love'. *Winanga-y-la-nha* is used for '(I) acknowledge/respect.

*winanga-y.la-nha*

respect-ing-now

*Ngaya* is 'I', and comes second in sentences or phrases, as do the following pronouns:

*Ngali* is 'we (two people)',

*Ngiyani* is 'we (more than two people)'.

(There are also other more complex forms of the dual (2) and plural (>2) pronouns.)

This section often starts:

*Winanga-y-la-nha ngaya (ngali, ngiyani) …*

I (we) acknowledge ….. but to emphasise what you are acknowledging put that word first

*X ngaya winangaylanha.*

## Acknowledge the elders

*Wayamaa* is the word usually used for elder. *-galgaa* corresponds to English plural ‘s’. It is commonly used on words referring to people, but not a lot on other words. You can use *Wayamaagalgaa* or *Wayamaa* for elders.

*Wayamaa-galgaa ngaya winanga-y-la-nha.*

I acknowledge the elders.

A phrase like: ‘elders, past, present and future’ is often used.

There are no simple Gamilaraay Yuwaalaraay [GY] words for ‘past, present, future’. We can use forms of the verb *yanay* ‘walk, go’.

*Wayamaa-galgaa ngaya winanga-y-la-nha, yana-wayi-y-la-ndaay, yana-y-la-ndaay, yana-mayaa-y-la-ndaay.* GR

*Wayamaa-galgaa ngaya winanga-y-la-nha, yanaa-wayi-y-la-ndaay, yanaa-y-la-ndaay, yanaa-mayaa-y-la-ndaay.* YR

I acknowledge the elders who lived long ago, who are living now and who are to come.

(ATSI languages often translate ‘live’ with verbs such as ‘sit, walk’)

## General acknowledgement of (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) people

There are no words in traditional GY for ‘Aboriginal’ or ‘Torres Strait Islander’. Recently the word *marigiirr* has been used for Indigenous. (see Dictionary supplement)

*Marigiirr ngaya ganungawu winanga-y-la-nha.*

I acknowledge all Indigenous people.

*Dhayn ngaya ganungawu winanga-y-la-nha, nguwalay ngarri-y-la-ndaay.* GR

*Dhayn ngaya ganungawu winanga-y-la-nha, nguwalay wila-y-la-ndaay.* YR

I acknowledge all people here.

*Nginaaynya ngaya ganungawu winanga-y-la-nha.*

I acknowledge you all.

## Acknowledge the land and sovereignty

You can use the same pattern, with *dhawun* GR or *dhaymaarr* YR ‘ground, land’.

*Dhawun/Dhaymaarr ngaya nguwalay winanga-y-la-nha.*

I acknowledge this land.

*Yaliwunga nhalay Gamilaraay.*

*Dhugay nhalay Yuwaalaraay.*

This is always Gamilaraay/Yuwaalaraay.

# 3 -Conclusion/farewell

There may be some comment about the occasion, for example:

at a meal:

*Bamba dhala!*

'Eat up!'

at a sports event:

*Bamba, maaru yulunga!*

'Play well and hard!

at a meeting:

*Maaru winanga-la-ya, garay guwaala-y-la-ya!* GR

*Maayu winanga-la-ya, gaay guwaala-y-la-ya!* YR

'Listen and talk to each other well!'

a general farewell:

*Maaru, gayaa yana-nga.* GR

*Maayu, gayaa yanaa-ya.* YR

'Go well and happily!'

You can add *–wadhaay* (GR) *–badhaay* (YR) to the end of the first word to make it something like: 'I hope you .. '

*Bamba-wadhaay dhala!*

'I hope you have a good meal.'

**Last words**

*Yaluu/baayandhu*. 'bye'

or you can give more complete versions:

*Yaluu/baayandhu ngiyani ngami-la-y* GR

*Yaluu/baayandhu ngiyani ngarra-la-y* YR.

We will see each other again/soon.

Again, you can add *–wadhaay* (GR) *–badhaay* (YR), for example:

*Baayandhu-wadhaay ngiyani ngami-la-*y. GR

*Baayandhu-badhaay ngiyani ngarra-la-*y. YR

I hope we meet/see each other soon.

# Other material

On many occasions there will be specific material, for instance at a meeting, in Parliament, at a conference or at a football game. You can see text from a number of occasions in the next section.

### Who/What?

Some of people and others acknowledged could be:

*maran* ‘ancestors’

*wayamaa* 'elders'

*dhawun (GR) dhaymaarr (YR)*

*Gamilaraay / Yuwaalaraay (country, language, people)*

*nginaaynya (you, more than 2 people).*

*birralii*

Special guests:

*Yinarraa Murray, Giwiirraa Hippai.*

Mrs Murray and Mr Hippai.

### Structure

The sentences can be short and repeated:

*Winanga-y.la-nha ngaya maran.*

I acknowledge the ancestors.

*Winanga-y.la-nha ngaya wayamaa.*

I acknowledge the elders.

etc.

The word order can vary – the most important thing is generally mentioned first:

*Maran ngaya winanga-y.la-nha.*

I acknowledge the ancestors.

*Wayamaa ngaya winanga-y.la-nha.*

I acknowledge the elders.

Or you can have a list:

*Winanga-y.la-nha ngaya maran, wayamaa ….*

I acknowledge the ancestors, the elders, …

## Other

As time goes on people will develop more elements in welcomes/acknowledgements.

this was and always will be Aboriginal land

*Yilaalu, yilaadhu*, *yaliwunga, Gamilaraay; nhalay/nguwalay [dhawun]* (GR).

*Yilaalu, yalagiyu, dhugay Yuwaalaraay; nhalay/nguwalay [dhaymaarr]* (YR).

Long ago, now, always this is Gamilaraay/Yuwaalaraay land.

# Examples

These have sometimes been adapted.

**by the very young , e.g. preschool**

*Yaama.*  Hello.

*Gamilaraay nhalay.* This is Gamilaraay (country, people, language)

*Yaluu.* Goodbye.

**Sarah Sing**

(Gunnedah. 2017-09)

*Yaama Maliyaa.* Hello Friends

*Winanga-y-la-nha ngaya maran.* I acknowledge the ancestors.

*Winanga-y-la-nha ngaya wayamaa.* I acknowledge the elders.

*Maaru garay guwaa-la-ya.* May your discussions go well.

*Yaluu.* Goodbye.

**Anne Dennis**

(2012, Geneva)

*Yaama Maliyaa.* Hello friends.

*Anne Dennis ngaya.* I am Anne Dennis.

*Gamilaraay ngaya.* I am Gamilaraay.

*Australia-dhi ngaya.* I am from Australia.

*Nginaaynya ngaya winanga-y-la-nha.* I acknowledge/am acknowledging you.

*Dhaymaarr ngaya winanga-y-la-nha.* I acknowledge the land.

*Maran ngaya winanga-y-la-nha.* I acknowledge the ancestors.

**2015 NRL Allstars game.**

A request was received to translate the following paragraph for the opening of the 2015 NRL Allstars game.

**Original text:**

"This is part of the healing process. It's a football game but it's about a lot more than just football. Football is a big part of a lot of indigenous people's lives and I don't think people realise how important it is for us to be able to put this game on. So many devastating things have happened, people are finding it hard to get over that and the consequences of what happened are still around. It is something we can't forget but maybe there is a chance we can forgive. I think the only way we can move forward as a country and as human beings is to work together and that is what this game is about."

A Gamilaraay text, below, was developed by John Giacon, with assistance from Luise Hercus and Suellyn Tighe. It involved the development of some new words.

*Yaama maliyaa.*

hello friends

"This is part of the healing process.

*Giirr maaruma-y-la-y-gu nhalay.*

It's a football game but it's about a lot more than just football.

*Yulu-gi-la-y ngiyani buudhil-a, giirr-bala ngaragay-bidi nhalay, gamil-bala buudhil yiyal.*

Football is a big part of a lot of indigenous people's lives

*Giirr bamba buudhil winanga-y-la-nha burrulaa-gu marigiirr-u.*

and I don't think people realise how important

*Giirr-yaa dhayn.galgaa-gu gamil winanga-y-la-nha*

it is for us to be able to put this game on.

*Burrul-bidi-ban.gaan-bala ngiyaningunda yulu-ngindaay nhalay.*

So many devastating things have happened,

*Giirr burrulaa-bidi gagil gi-gi-la-nhi,*

people are finding it hard to get over that and the consequences of what happened are still around.

*yalagiirrma-dhi-bala gamil mari gulbirr warragil yana-y-la-nha, giirr gagil-bidi nhama nguwalay warra-y-la-ndaay.*

It is something we can't forget but maybe there is a chance we can **forgive**.

*Gamila-bala ngiyani muurr gi-gi-la-nha, giirr-badhaay-aa ngiyani gababa-lda-y.*

I think the only way we can move forward as a country and as human beings

*Ngadhan.gaa-bala yalagiirrma yiyal ngiyaniyuu, gunimaa, dhayn-galgaa, maaru yana-y-la-y,*

is to work **together** and that is what this game is about."

*maala ngiyaniyuu waan.gi-gi-la-ndaay. Giirr yalagiirrma-gu ngiyani yulu-gi-la-y.*

### Carol French

Asked for help in translating:

"the traditional owners and custodians, for 40,000 years, of the land we are on today, and recognize our young people, future leaders of tomorrow." and some other text.

*Gunimaa nhalay.*

This is the mother land

*Gunimaa ngay, Gunimaa Gamilaraay-ngu*

my mother land, the Gamilaraay mother land

*Gamilaraay nhalay*

this is Gamilaraay [land and people and …]

*Wayamaa ngiyani Gamilaraay winanga-y-la-nha*

We recognize senior people;

*buuwan ngiyani winanga-y-la-nha*

we recognise the young people;

*giirr ganunga yinarraa, dhilaagaa gi-ngayi-y;*

they will be the senior people tomorrow

"a special welcome to.............."

*Gulbiyaay-ban.gaan*; and then say the person’s name;

*Gulbiyaay-ban.gaan* Uncle Bill;

"welcome home Uncle Ron"

*Gulbiyaay gundhi-dha, Garruu Ron;*

### PLC Sydney 2010

I suggest pick the elements out of the following that you like:

*Yaama.*

Hello.

or

*Yaama ngindaay-uu*

Hello to you all.

or

*Gulbiyaay ngindaay-uu.*

Welcome everyone

or

*Yaama maliyaa*

Hello Friends

or [maybe add to some of the above}

*Yaama yinarraa , giwiirraa*

Hello Ladies and Gentlemen.

Then use some or all of the following:

*Giirr ngaya dhawun nhalay winanga-y-la-nha.*

I acknowledge this country.

*Giirr ngaya maran nguwalay winanga-y-la-nha.*

I acknowledge the ancestors from here.

*Giirr ngaya wayamaa nguwalay winanga-y-la-nha.*

and pay respect to the elders,

*nguwalay gayaa yana-y-la-ya.*

here-around happy be.

Enjoy your day with us

### Walgett Public School?

This may be from 2008 and the original location is uncertain

*Yaama.*

Hello

*Gulbiyaay ngindaay-uu.*

Welcome everyone

*Giirr Gamilaraay nhalay;*

[We would like to acknowledge that] this is Gamilaraay land

*Giirr ngiyani wayamaa winanga-y-la-nha;*

and pay respect to our elders,

*Giirr ngiyani maran, wayamaa winanga-y-la-nha;*

both past and present

[we respect the ancestors, and elders]

*nginaaynya-buu-bula ngiyani winanga-y-la-nha*

and further extend that respect to all you here today

*gayaa gi-gi-la-ya nguwalay*

here-around happy / in good spirits / be / walk around

Enjoy your day with u

## end