

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF FIRST PEOPLES

As an expression of the covenant into which the Uniting Church in Australia has entered with the United Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress, and the amended form of the Preamble to our Constitution, it is appropriate to include an "Acknowledgement of First Peoples" at the commencement of worship services, meetings of Boards, Councils and Committees, and other occasions when the church gathers.

Several different forms of such "acknowledgements" are set out below. They can be used freely. They require that local congregations ascertain as best they can the names of the Nations/Tribal Groups applicable to their areas. This is not always easy and due care needs to be taken.

Note that because of the special historical circumstances applying in Tasmania, the Aboriginal Centre in Launceston does not endorse the naming of any particular tribal group in that State.

These words of acknowledgement are not to be confused with the ceremony known as "Welcome to Country" which should always be conducted by a local indigenous elder, or a person approved by the local elders for this purpose.

From the Rev Dr Anita Monro (Armidale)

Leader: We acknowledge the people, the first inhabitants of this place, part of God's good creation. We honour them for their custodianship of the land, on which we gather today.

People: *You set humanity at the heart of your creation, O God; charging us with stewardship of all you have made. We give thanks for those who have heeded your call.*

From the Rev Nathan Nettleton (South Yarra Community Baptist Church)

For thousands of years the people (of the Nation) have been faithful custodians of this land on which we gather. We honour them and pay respects to their Elders, both past and present.

From the Presentation Sisters (published in "Liturgy News" September 2010)

We acknowledge the traditional caretakers of the land in which we live.
We acknowledge their deep spiritual connections to this land
and we thank them for the care they have shown the earth over thousands of years.