

## Policy – Traditional Owners

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### Policy

Southern Rural Water respects Aboriginal culture and heritage. We recognize them as first people in our region, and their deep connection to country and water.

#### ***Relationships***

We seek to develop deeper relationships with traditional owners across our region.

These relationships may involve activities deemed appropriate in SRW's Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan, such as:

- Memorandums of understanding
- Traditional owner involvement in Southern Rural Water events
- Cultural training for Southern Rural Water staff

#### ***Event planning***

Southern Rural Water will follow or exceed State Government protocols relating to traditional owners when planning for, and at, formal and ceremonial SRW events.

This includes:

- Contacting relevant Traditional owners well in advance of planned ceremonial events and invite their participation;
- Where appropriate and there is no traditional owner participation, acknowledging traditional owners (see "definitions")

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### Definitions

#### **Formal and ceremonial events:**

- includes the opening of major projects and other occasions that have a wider community element.

#### **Acknowledgement of country:**

- If you are clear who the Traditional Owners of an area are:
  - *"Our meeting/conference/workshop is being held on the traditional lands [or country] of the [Traditional Owner group's name] people and I wish to acknowledge them as Traditional Owners. I would also like to pay my respects to their Elders, past and present, and the Elders from other communities who may be here today."*
  - If you are uncertain who the Traditional Owners of an area are:
  - *"I acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land [or country] on which we are meeting. I pay my respects to their Elders,*

*past and present, and the Elders from other communities who may be here today."*

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**Effective date and review date**

This policy takes effect on 8 February 2017 (Board Meeting No. 286), replacing the policy approved at Board Meeting No. 246, held 1 August 2013.

The policy is due for board review in May 2019.

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**Who is affected**

This policy applies to all Southern Rural Water staff.

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**Rationale**

Southern Rural Water is moving beyond compliance with recognition requirements to deepen our understanding of, and relationships with traditional owners across our region.

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**Contact**

For more information on this policy, please contact the Manager People and Culture.

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**Related documents**

Support is available via the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council.

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**Communications**

This policy will be made available on SRW's website.

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