



MINISTER FOR INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Reference: MC18-136575

The Hon Dr Gary Johns
Commissioner
Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission
GPO Box 5108
MELBOURNE VIC 3001

Dear Commissioner

I am writing about your comments in a Senate Estimates hearing on 24 October 2018 about acknowledgments of country.

It is my understanding that in those hearings you expressed your concern that email signature blocks of Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission (ACNC) officers should not include acknowledgements of country out of concern for the perceived impartiality of the ACNC.

With respect, I do not believe that such an inference could be drawn from such references in the signature blocks of ACNC officers. Acknowledgments of country are well-known payments of respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians in recognition of their traditional ownership of the land. In my view, there is little risk of the confusion that I understand you identified in these hearings and I would encourage as many ACNC officials as are interested, to include acknowledgements of country in their signature blocks.

I would be happy to either meet with you or organise a briefing from my Department to provide further information about the role of acknowledgments of country. Please feel free to contact my Office on (02) 6277 7780 at your convenience.

Yours sincerely

NIGEL SCULLION

26/10/2018