

Emily Deach

Subject: Correspondence from Kendall Emery

From: Kendall Emery

Sent: Thursday, February 15, 2018 4:54 PM

To: Emily Deach <e.deach@skagway.org>

Dear Mayor Carlson and Assemblymen Brena, Burnham, Burnham, Cochran, Hanson, & Henry,

I went to graduate school in Melbourne, Australia. At every cultural performance, every university event, every government sponsored or funded event, they make a simple statement at the introduction. It's an acknowledgement of the Wurundjeri tribe who were the indigenous people who lived there before colonialism. Sometimes people from the tribe will perform what they call a "welcome to country" before those events. If I had not heard those statements, I might never have known the name of the people who had lived there for thousands of years.

I think we could very easily do something like this here in Skagway. Ask people to say an easy sentence, something along the lines of "We'd like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land, the Tlingit people, and pay our respect to their elders in our community, past, present, and emerging. Gunalchéesh" It could be said before a performance at Dedman stage, before a public meeting, before July 4th festivities, any public event. Not only would it respectfully acknowledge the history here, tourists would take that moment back home with them and it might call some attention to the history of indigenous people in this country. It feels like a Skagway community kind of practice to adopt.

Australia and Canada both have this practice (in private and public sectors) and you can see some examples of their language and how they do it here:

<https://www.vic.gov.au/aboriginalvictoria/heritage/welcome-to-country-and-acknowledgement-of-traditional-owners.html>

<http://www.seymourhealth.org.au/index.php?page=acknowledgement-of-traditional-custodians>

<https://www.caut.ca/content/guide-acknowledging-first-peoples-traditional-territory>

I'm happy to chat about this at any point with any of you if you have any questions or want to discuss.

Thank you so much for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Kendall Emery