# Tucker Carlson criticises Australia's Welcome to Country ceremonies as grotesque



Controversial US political commentator Tucker Carlson has criticised Australia's Welcome to Country ceremonies, describing them as "the most grotesque" aspect of his visit to the country. Carlson, the former Fox News host known for his right-wing views, aired his remarks in a video discussing Australian politics that has recently resurfaced on social media amid a heated national debate about the practice.

Carlson, who toured Australia last year as a guest of billionaire Clive Palmer and has since endorsed Palmer’s political party, the United Australia Party (also called Trumpet’s of Patriots), expressed bafflement at the purpose of the land acknowledgements. He claimed they brought no tangible benefit to Indigenous communities and suggested they only served those he characterised as seeking to “steal” the country.

“When I was in Australia, the thing that shocked me the most was the land acknowledgment,” Carlson said. “I found it one of the most grotesque things I've ever seen. One of the most profound humiliation rituals I've ever witnessed in my life.”

The commentator elaborated, “I thought to myself, who is this helping? Is it helping the Indigenous community? If so, tell me how. When you say this doesn't belong to me, is there someone in the Indigenous community getting a job or a government grant? No. No one is benefiting except the people who seek to steal your country. And they’re going to steal your country, and they’re telling you so.”

In an unusual analogy, Carlson compared Welcome to Country acknowledgements to a scenario in which individuals are being compelled to admit ownership of their home is not theirs, thereby paving the way for theft. “When you are forced to say something is not yours, that means someone else is about to take it from you,” he said. “If you're sitting at home one night and an armed group of people show up at your house, with guns, and say ‘henceforth, we would like you to say, out loud every single day, this is not our house’ … When they do steal your house, you won't put up a fight because you've been trained to believe it is not your house. That's exactly what a land acknowledgement is.”

Welcome to Country ceremonies are traditional rituals performed by Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander elders to formally welcome visitors onto their lands and offer blessing for events held there. Intended as inclusive acts of respect and recognition of Indigenous connection to country, the ceremonies have become increasingly prominent in public events and official gatherings across Australia.

The practice has, however, become a flashpoint in recent political discourse. Liberal Party leader Peter Dutton placed himself firmly in the debate after a group of protesters, including self-described neo-Nazi Jacob Hersant, disrupted a Welcome to Country address delivered by Bunurong-Gunditjmara elder Uncle Mark Brown at an Anzac Day dawn service in Melbourne. The protesters booed and jeered the ceremonial speech, sparking widespread discussion on the appropriateness and frequency of Welcome to Country acknowledgements.

Mr Dutton described the ceremonies as "overused" and stated his belief that they should be reserved only for “very significant events.” When asked whether Anzac Day qualified as such, Dutton replied, “No. Listening to a lot of veterans in the space, Anzac Day is about our veterans.” His comments were further criticised by Labor campaign spokesman Jason Clare, who argued that right-wing extremists were being allowed to dominate the conversation around these ceremonies. Finance Minister Katy Gallagher accused Dutton of inflaming “culture wars” by weighing in on the topic.

One prominent elder affected by the controversy was Wurundjeri elder Aunty Joy Murphy Wandin, who was due to deliver a Welcome to Country at a Melbourne Storm NRL game on the Friday following the Anzac Day incident. After the earlier booing, organisers initially cancelled her ceremony; although the decision was later reversed, Aunty Joy said she was too upset to participate. She emphasised to the media the ceremony’s long-standing tradition, noting that her own father had served in World War I. “It is a matter of respect,” she said.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese weighed in as well, referring to Welcome to Country ceremonies as a mark of respect and affirming that it was the prerogative of individual organisations to decide whether to include them in events.

In response to the ongoing debate, Alyawarre woman and co-chair of the Uluru Dialogue, Pat Anderson AO, highlighted the misuse of Indigenous cultural practices in political contexts. “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are used as a political football in an outdated and tired match,” Anderson said. She stressed that it was not for politicians to dictate how or when a Welcome to Country should take place. Anderson expressed sadness over the disrespect shown during the Anzac Day weekend, describing the Welcome to Country as “an ancient act of generosity and peace.”

The matter remains a contentious issue in Australian society, touching on questions of cultural recognition, historical respect, and political discourse. The recent incidents and commentary from figures such as Tucker Carlson and Peter Dutton have intensified national conversation about the role and significance of Indigenous ceremonies in modern Australia.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

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7. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14657329/Tucker-Carlson-reveals-one-thing-shocked-time-spent-Australia-grotesque-things-Ive-seen.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data