



## INDIGENOUS LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AT HSA EVENTS

### WHY ACKNOWLEDGE TERRITORY?

According to the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, “For over a century, the central goals of Canada’s Aboriginal policy were to eliminate Aboriginal governments; ignore Aboriginal rights; terminate the Treaties; and, through a process of assimilation, cause Aboriginal peoples to cease to exist as distinct legal, social, cultural, religious, and racial entities in Canada.”

In British Columbia and across the country, the legacy of Canada’s colonial policies remains today. HSA is committed to working towards fostering a new relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada in accordance with the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s report.

In recognizing a long history of systemic efforts to erase Indigenous peoples in Canada, a territorial acknowledgement “is a way that people insert an awareness of Indigenous presence and land rights in everyday life,” writes NativeLand.ca author Allison Jones. It can be a gesture of respect to those nations whose land you occupy. They are often done at the beginning of public events, meetings, ceremonies, and lectures.

While land acknowledgements can be one response to this history, settlers are encouraged to consider other ways they can, as individuals and as groups, support Indigenous rights in order to move reconciliation forward in a meaningful way. A good place to start is to read the 94 Calls to Action released by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the *Universal Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. Links to these documents can be found at [hsabc.org](http://hsabc.org).

### TIPS FOR DOING TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Territorial acknowledgements are sometimes concise, and can be something like:

*“We would like to acknowledge that we are on the traditional territory of the \_\_\_\_\_.”*

- Some people may consider including the name of the treaty, where applicable. Currently, most nations in BC have not signed treaties, and you may consider highlighting that the territory is “unceded,” meaning that the land has not been relinquished.
- If you are unsure of whose traditional territory your event is taking place on, you can use the database tool found at [NativeLand.ca](http://NativeLand.ca).
- If you are unsure how to pronounce the name of the nation, check their website for a phonetic pronunciation on the “About” page, listen to audio/videos featuring that nation, or call the nation after hours and listen to their audio recording.
- While a brief acknowledgement may work for some groups, others may wish to include additional reflections. This could include contemplating questions like: Why are we choosing to acknowledge the territory? How does this acknowledgement relate to the work we are doing at this event, in our organization, or in our work? What is our group’s relationship to the territory?

**Questions? Visit [www.hsabc.org/welcome/territorialacknowledgement](http://www.hsabc.org/welcome/territorialacknowledgement) for more resources.**