

Welcome to country

MR WAKERMAN: Hello everybody, good afternoon. My name is John Wakerman. I'm your MC for this afternoon. It gives me great pleasure to introduce Matilda House, Ngunnawal elder of this region, to welcome us to country.

(Applause)

MS HOUSE: I'd like to thank John for the protocols that he's shown to country whenever we have things happening here in the Rural Health Alliance and much appreciated for that. On behalf of my ancestors I'd like to express how it is great to be here on their behalf, and also my elders. If there are elders here today, welcome. You don't have to be an Aboriginal to be an elder. I can see a lot of elders here. I won't point you out. But once again, it is a great place to be and it is a great opportunity for everyone to get together to talk about how one's lives interact and dovetail into this wonderful work that happens here, not here but all through Australia on the Alliance.

John, it has been great to know that things have been happening, and especially with the drought and all those terrible times that people are having. It not only affects, you know - the people in the city tend to think that the drought is just something that just happens and it goes by, but it doesn't. I promised some people not long ago that Lake Burley - not Lake Burley Griffin, Werriwa, which everyone knows as Lake George, will start to fill up. It is starting to fill up. I hope that through some of the spirits of the land that I walk through, that each and every country right through Australia will benefit the goodness of having, you know, what we believe in is the spirits to connect the country, connect the land.

I believe it because it is my sweat that is here in this country, and the sweat of my ancestors, that I welcome you here on their behalf. Please, if anybody needs to talk to me later on, or wants to get in touch with me about anything at all, I'd only be too happy to talk to you. I'm on time, so that's why I'm a little "Mm, mm, mm," but it doesn't matter, give us a yell and I'll be only too happy to have a yarn.

Welcome to all visitors to this beautiful land of the Ngambri/Ngunnawal and welcome. Thank you very much.