



WELCOME TO AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY PROTOCOL 2018-2021 MANAGEMENT POLICY

ADOPTED BY EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE: 16 JANUARY 2018

BACKGROUND

This policy has been developed in order to assist Council to observe the appropriate protocols in recognising the Traditional Custodians of the Land at official events and ceremonies.

OBJECTIVE

The main objective of this policy is to provide Council and Council Officers with a set of correct protocols to be followed when organising either a Welcome to Country or Acknowledgement of Country for a Council event or activity.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Policy will actively achieve Wollongong 2022 Community Strategic Plan Objective 3.2 - The visibility of our cultural diversity is increased, through conducting either a Welcome to Country or Acknowledgement of Country as is appropriate at events, activities or public meetings that Council conducts.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Wollongong City Council acknowledges and respects the traditional custodians of the land and the unique position of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Council is genuine in its commitment to respect Australian's Indigenous culture and heritage. By being able to share Aboriginal culture within the general community it will facilitate better relationships between Aboriginal people and the general community.

The Welcome to and Acknowledgement of Country Protocols are a practical expression of Council's recognition of the legacy of the Traditional Custodians and inhabitants of these lands and the continuing contribution of the Aboriginal people to the local area.

2 PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to assist Council in observing the appropriate protocols in recognising the Traditional Custodians of the Land at official events and ceremonies.

By incorporating Aboriginal cultural practices/ceremonies into official events, Council:

- Recognises the unique position of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our City's culture and history and pays respect to their culture and heritage;
- Communicates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural practices to the broader community to promote respect and understanding;
- Demonstrates that Aboriginal cultures are living through maintenance and practice of ceremonies and protocols; and
- Demonstrates recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's unique position which can assist in building relationships and partnerships.

The guidelines apply to all officers responsible for organising 'Welcome to Country' and 'Acknowledgement of Country' ceremonies.

3 EVENTS

The type of ceremony performed at an event should be appropriate to the nature and size of the event. When planning an event it is important to consult with Council's Aboriginal Community Development Worker. If a worker is not available officers can contact a number of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations for advice.

The advice could include:

- The appropriate level of Aboriginal recognition;
- The appropriate ceremonies and performances; and
- Community representatives who should be contacted.

Events which could include a Welcome to and Acknowledgement of Country ceremony are:

- Commemorations and major festivals;
- Major launches of Council's policies and programs;
- Conferences held or sponsored by Wollongong City Council;
- Citizenship ceremonies;
- Major sporting events; and
- International delegations organised or sponsored by Wollongong City Council.

4 CEREMONIES AND PRACTICES

Welcome to Country

A Welcome to Country is where the Traditional Custodians of the Land, in most cases a recognised Elder within the local community, welcomes people to their land. The practice of 'Welcome to Country' has been performed since time immemorial by Aboriginal people. The practice is based on the protocol of acknowledgement of another's Country and the permission to walk through Country that was not your own

Officers can contact Council's Aboriginal Community Development Worker to discuss which representative may be available to perform the Welcome to Country and for referral to a local organisation or for a list of possible artists.

A 'Welcome to Country' should always occur in the opening ceremony of the event in question, preferably as the first item. Steps should be taken to ensure that the appropriate representative is invited to perform the 'Welcome' because it is a significant recognition and a formal process.

'Welcome to Country' is conducted by a representative(s) of the local custodians who welcome the delegates and all in attendance. There is no exact wording for 'Welcome to Country'. The welcome may consist of a single speech by the representative of the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community with reference to the local Aboriginal history and culture. The ceremony may also include a performance of some description. Performances may include a Traditional Welcoming Song, a Traditional Dance, a Didgeridoo performance or a combination of any of the above. In most communities, there are performing artists who are regularly available. It is important that local Aboriginal artists are employed for such ceremonies.

Acknowledgement of Country

'Acknowledgement of Country' is a way that non-Aboriginal people can show respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and the ongoing relationship of Traditional Custodians with the Land. The Chair or Speaker begins the meeting by acknowledging that the meeting is taking place in the country of the traditional custodians. On occasions there may be a difference of opinion as to who the traditional land custodians are. To avoid causing offence this can be overcome by 'acknowledging ALL the Traditional Custodians of the Land or you can 'acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land' without naming those people.

The following is considered appropriate wording for an Acknowledgement of Country:

"I would like to pay my respect and acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the Land on which we meet, and pay my respect to Elders past, present and future. I would also like to extend my respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people present here today."

Flag Raising

At events at which flags are shown, the order of display, from an audience perspective from left to right is as per Council's flag protocol.

5 FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Performances and Fees

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives should be contacted or asked personally. All arrangements thereafter should be mutually negotiated. Dances and performances may also be included as part of ceremonies if considered appropriate by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. Contact Council's Aboriginal Community Development Worker for referral to a local organisation for a list of possible artists.

When planning the timetable of official events it is therefore important to schedule in enough time for discussion and negotiation with Aboriginal representatives and communities. Also ensure that guests are given guidance or direction on the timing and procedures on the day ie: do not assume representatives know what to do or where to go once ceremonies are completed.

Community representatives and artistic performers should be appropriately remunerated for their time and commitment. The schedule below sets minimum fees for a range of Aboriginal cultural services. Fees for performers can sometimes be negotiated so it is often worthwhile consulting with performers prior to the event.

Other factors requiring negotiation and considerations may include:

- Arrangement of transport for Elders and sometimes performers.
- Public profile of the event.

Didgeridoo	\$200	Source: Local Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Organisations eg Illawarra Local Aboriginal Lands Council, Illawarra Aboriginal Corporation Cultural Centre/Keeping Place and University of Wollongong.
Welcome to Country	\$200	
Cleansing Ceremony	\$800	
Dancer	\$250	

Source: Local Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Organisations eg Illawarra Local Aboriginal Lands Council, Illawarra Aboriginal Corporation Cultural Centre/Keeping Place and University of Wollongong.

6 APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: LOCAL ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER ORGANISATIONS (at November 2017)

COOMADITCHIE UNITED ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

Telephone: 4274 7477
Email: Coomaditchie@gmail.com
Address: PO Box 160, Warrawong NSW 2502
Contact: Aunty Lorraine Brown/Aunty Narelle Thomas

ILLAWARRA ABORIGINAL CORPORATION AND CULTURAL CENTRE AND KEEPING PLACE

Telephone: 4228 1585
Facsimile: 4227 4853
Email: Lillian.Luland@iac.org.au
Address: PO Box 5457, Wollongong NSW 2521
Location: 22 Kenny Street, Wollongong
Contact: Lillian Luland

ILLAWARRA ABORIGINAL MEDICAL SERVICE

Telephone: 4229 9495 or 4262 8777
Facsimile: 4226 3566 or 4262 8788
Email: mkinchela@illawarraams.com.au
Address: PO Box 1161, Wollongong NSW 2500
Locations: 150 Church St, Wollongong and 2/130 Princes Highway, Dapto
Contact: Julie Booker (CEO)

ILLAWARRA KOORI MEN'S SUPPORT GROUP

Telephone: 0433 177 084
Email: greg@koorimengroup.ngo.org.au
Address: PO Box 1136 Albion Park Rail NSW 2527
Contact: Uncle Gerald Brown/Greg Potts

ILLAWARRA LOCAL ABORIGINAL LAND COUNCIL

Telephone: 4226 3338
Facsimile: 4262 2981
Email: ceo@ilalc.org.au
Address: 3 Ellen St, Wollongong NSW 2500
Contact: Paul Knight

KOREWAL (LA PEROUSE) ELOUERA (ILLAWARRA) JERRUNGARUGH (SHOALHAVEN)

Telephone: 4271 3069
Address: 86 Hertford Street, Berkeley NSW 2506
Contact: Uncle Rueben Brown

MYIMBARR ABORIGINAL CHILD, YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES

Telephone: 4226 3358
Email: Lila.Stewart@iac.org.au
Address: 3/1 Rawson Street, Wollongong NSW 2500
Contact: Lila Stewart

NOOGALEEK CHILDRENS CENTRE

Telephone: 4271 8468
Facsimile: 4272 4906
Email: roslynne.webb@iac.orhg.au
Address: PO Box 88, Berkeley NSW 2506
Location: Cnr Denniss Street & Winnima Way, Berkeley
Contact: Roslynne Webb (Coordinator)

SANDON POINT ABORIGINAL TENT EMBASSY (SPATE)

Telephone: 0432 145 560
Address: 45 Rosemont Street, West Wollongong NSW 2500
Email: jkennedy@uow.edu.au
Contact: Jade Kennedy

WADI WADI, COOMADITCHI ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

Address: 43 Corunna Crescent, Flinders NSW 2529
Contact: Heather and Keith Ball

WARRIGAL EMPLOYMENT

Telephone: 4276 1878
Email: james.mulholland@iac.org.au
Address: PO Box 9, Windang NSW 2502
Contact: James Mulholland

WODI WODI ELDERS COUNCIL

Address: 9 O'Donnell Drive, Figtree NSW 2525
Contact: Sheryl Davis Fulcher

WOLLONGONG NORTHERN DISTRICTS ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY

Telephone: 0403 205 034
Address: Unit 2, 67-77 Caldwell Avenue, Tarrawanna NSW 2518
Contact: Uncle Richard Archibald

WOOLYUNGAH INDIGENOUS CENTRE, UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

Telephone: 4221 3776
Facsimile: 4221 4244
Email: wic-enquiries@uow.edu.au
Address: Woolyungah Indigenous Centre, Bldg 30, Northfields Avenue University of Wollongong,
Wollongong NSW 2522
Location: Building 30, University of Wollongong
Contact: Manager

APPENDIX B: BRIEF HISTORY

The original Aboriginal inhabitants of the Wollongong area are the Dharawal (also spelt Tarawal or Thuruwal) people. The Dharawal people lived on the coastal areas of Sydney between Broken Bay/Pittwater, Berowra Waters, south west to Parramatta and Liverpool and extending from there (and along the south-east coastline), into the Illawarra and Shoalhaven districts. The traditional language of this tribe was also known as Dharawal and this was spoken from Sydney in the north to as far south as Bega.

Another tribe, the Wodi Wodi, are a sub-group of the Dharawal. The Wodi Wodi people occupied the southern part of the Dharawal area with several camp sites around Lake Illawarra including Berkeley and Hooka Creek. Aboriginal people moved freely throughout the region and shared resources with their near neighbours without fear of trespassing.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population of the Illawarra region is made up of many diverse cultural and political groups and organisations. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people also identify themselves according to their cultural and national identities.

The Illawarra region has many different nation groups - Traditional Custodians.

- Korewal Elouera Jerrungarugh Tribal Elders (KEJ)
- Wadi Wadi Coomaditchie Aboriginal Corporation
- Wodi Wodi Elders Corporation
- Wodi Wodi Traditional Custodian Corporation

Other nation groups residing within the Illawarra region include, but are not limited to, the Yuin, Wiradjuri, Kamilaroi, Bundjalung, Dunghutti and Gumbayggir Nations.

Cultural identities are extremely important for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. They represent different heritages, languages, cultural practices, spiritual beliefs and geographic areas.

Whilst the Illawarra is made up of three local government areas, Wollongong, Shellharbour and Kiama, it is important to acknowledge and respect that for Aboriginal people these boundaries do not reflect the cultural boundaries of the local Aboriginal community.

APPENDIX C: OTHER PROTOCOLS TO OBSERVE

Traditional Custodians is the term used to describe the original Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people who inhabited an area. Traditional Custodians today are descendants of these original inhabitants and have ongoing spiritual and cultural ties to the Land and waterways where their ancestors lived.

Elders are custodians of traditional knowledge and customs and are charged with the responsibility of providing guidance to the community on cultural matters. It is the Elders who hold the history, know the culture and pass on the laws that govern the community.

The term "Elder" is used to describe people who have knowledge, wisdom and the respect of the local community. An Elder is not necessarily an older person, but must have the trust and respect of their community and is recognised as a cultural knowledge keeper.

Always use respectful and consistent language. Do not use the abbreviation 'ATSI' nor the words 'Indigenous' or 'Aborigine' as these terms are outdated and can cause offense. The terms Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander should always be spelt with a capital A, capital T, capital S and capital I.

The appropriate terminology to use to refer to individuals or groups of people who identify as descendants of the original inhabitants of Australia are Aboriginal person (individual), Torres Strait Island (Individual), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people (collective), Aboriginal people (collective), or Torres Strait Islander people (collective). Using this language recognises and acknowledges that Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders have separate linguistic and cultural identities.

Further protocols that should be observed include:

- Not mentioning the name of a deceased Aboriginal person, or showing photographic images of a deceased person unless agreed to by the relevant family.
- Sensitivity to knowledge that is specific to gender, commonly known as "Women's Business" or "Men's Business".
- Appropriate acknowledgement of guest artists that are either from or supported by the local community.
- It is considered offensive to question the 'amount' of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander blood an Indigenous person may possess. The labels "half caste", "quarter caste" and "full blood" are now considered racist terms and should not be used. It is advisable to ask people how they would like to be described. This may include where they come from or which community or clan they identify with.

APPENDIX D: Significant Dates

There are a number of significant dates in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander calendar, some of these dates are mentioned below. Depending on the occasion, these dates are marked by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in a variety of ways, including ceremonies, celebrations, events and activities.

Date	Event
26 January	Australia Day/Survival Day
13 February	Anniversary of the National Apology to Australia's Indigenous Peoples
19 March	National Close The Gap Day
21 March	Harmony Day (Elimination of Racial Discrimination Day)
26 May	National Sorry Day (Recommendation of Stolen Generation Report)
26 May to 3 June	National Reconciliation Week
27 May	Amendments to the Constitution Regarding Aboriginal People (1967 Referendum)
3 June	Mabo Day
1 July	Coming of the Light – Torres Strait Island Ceremony
1st full week of July (Sunday to Sunday) (Dates available on the NAIDOC website)	National Aboriginal & Islander Day of Celebration (NAIDOC) Week
4 August	National Aboriginal and Islander Children's Day
9 August	International Day of the World's Indigenous People
13 September	Anniversary of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People
October Long Weekend	NSW Annual Aboriginal Rugby League Knockout
10 December	Human Rights Day

SUMMARY SHEET

Responsible Division	Community, Cultural and Economic Development
Date adopted by Executive Management Committee	16 January 2018
Date of previous adoptions	17 December 2013
Date of next review	November 2020
Responsible Manager	Manager Community, Cultural and Economic Development
Authorised by	Director Community Services