



CITY OF VINCENT

PROTOCOLS FOR “ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY” AND “WELCOME TO COUNTRY” TO RECOGNISE ABORIGINAL CULTURE AND HISTORY

RECOGNITION OF NOONGAR BOODJAR CULTURE AND HISTORY THROUGH WELCOME TO COUNTRY AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

POLICY NO. 4.1.30

(Adopted at the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on **)**

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PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

- The process of ‘Welcome to Country’ and ‘Acknowledgement of Country’ recognises the unique position of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australian culture and history as Aboriginal people are the original custodians/Traditional Owners of the land. It is important this unique position is recognised and incorporated as part of official protocol and events to enable the wider community to share in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and heritage, facilitating better relationships between Indigenous Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians.
- This Policy reaffirms that the Whadjuk people from the Noongar nation are and always will be the Traditional Owners of the land upon which the City of Vincent is located. Noongar people have lived in harmony with the natural environment for tens of thousands of years and have a strong spiritual connection to country (Noongar Boodjar). The City acknowledges the significance of the Noongar land and water within Vincent and is committed to gaining kaartdijin (knowledge) and understanding of Noongar Boodjar to ensure we support Aboriginal people, culture and tradition along our journey towards greater reconciliation.
- The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that the correct protocols are used by the City of Vincent for the two ceremonies ‘Welcome to Country’ and ‘Acknowledgement of Country’.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. SCOPE

These guidelines This Policy applies to all City of Vincent Officers responsible for organising events/functions/ceremonies/meetings where to ensure ‘Acknowledgement of Country’ or ‘Welcome to Country’ ceremonies should be are included in official proceedings.

2. THE ‘ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY’

(i) Definition of Acknowledgement of Country

An ‘Acknowledgement of Country’ is an acknowledgement of traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as custodians/Traditional Owners of the land in order to pay respect to them. It is a means by which all people can show respect for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and heritage and the ongoing relationship the Traditional custodians Owners

have with the land. The 'Acknowledgement of Country' can be performed by any person, Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal.

(ii) Appropriate Place

~~When planning an official event, City of Vincent Officers should ensure that an 'Acknowledgment of Country' is delivered where possible. In particular, aAn 'Acknowledgement of Country' should be given by a speaker at the beginning must always occur at the beginning~~ of the event.

(iii) Events

~~Events for an~~ 'Acknowledgement of Country' will be included (but ~~are is~~ not limited to) the following events:

- ~~• Significant eEvents~~ where members of the public, representatives of governments and/or the media are present;
- Council Briefing Sessions and Council Meetings;
- ~~• Forums, Briefing Sessions and Major Workshops where the public are present; or~~
- Conferences and seminars;;
- Festivals and events where the City of Vincent has provided sponsorship or grant funding; and
- Other functions, events, ceremonies or meetings as deemed appropriate.

(iv) Phraseology

Particular wording used for an 'Acknowledgement of Country' may differ, and includes (but is not limited to) any of the following suggested wording:

- I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land, the Whadjuk people of the Noongar nation and pay respects to Elders past, present and emerging;
- I would like to acknowledge the Whadjuk people from the Nyoongar nation who are the tTraditional eOwners/eustodians of this land we are meeting/gathering on today;
- I acknowledge the traditional lands of the Whadjuk Noongar people. We pay our respect to their Elders, past, present and emerging and we recognise their strength and resilience.
- I would like to acknowledge the tTraditional eustodians Owners of this land, the Nyoongar people, on whose land we are meeting, and pay my respects to the Elders both past, present and future emerging for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of Indigenous Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australia; or
- ~~• I would like to acknowledge that this meeting is being held on the traditional lands of the Nyoongar people; or~~
- ~~• I respectfully acknowledge the past and present tTraditional eOwners of this land upon which we are meeting, the Nyoongar people; or~~
- ~~• I would like to acknowledge the indigenous Aboriginal peoples of Perth and particularly honour and thank the tTraditional eustodians Owners of the land upon which we meet, the Nyoongar people. Thank you for providing access to this part of your country; or~~

- ~~• The City of Vincent affirms that Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the indigenous peoples Traditional Owners of Australia. Before we proceed with today’s meeting, I would like to acknowledge the tTraditional custodians Owners of the land upon which we meet; or~~
- I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land, the Nyoongar people, and pay my respects to Elders, past and present.

3. THE ‘WELCOME TO THE COUNTRY’

(i) Definition of Welcome to Country

A ‘Welcome to the Country’ is where ~~the traditional~~ Aboriginal ~~custodians or~~ Torres Strait Islander peoples welcome people to their land by providing historical and cultural information to ~~those the people~~ in attendance. Steps should be taken to ensure that the appropriate representative is invited to perform the ‘Welcome’, ~~because as~~ it is a significant recognition and a formal process. The ‘Welcome to Country’ is a right of the ~~local t~~Traditional ~~e~~Owners and not a privilege.

(ii) Appropriate Place

A ‘Welcome to Country’ ~~should~~ must always occur at the opening of the event ~~in question~~, preferably as the first item in the order of proceedings.

- ~~(ii) Initiation of negotiation to perform a ‘Welcome to Country’ ceremony is to occur only after receiving the prior approval of the Chief Executive Officer.~~

~~(iii)~~(iii) Events

~~Events for a~~ ‘Welcome to Country’ will be included (but ~~are is~~ not limited to) the following events:

- Significant events involving ~~the~~ State or Federal Government representatives;
- Significant civic functions and launches;
- Opening of new ~~significant~~ buildings and parks;
- ~~• Significant launches; and~~
- Major festivals and events where the City of Vincent has provided significant sponsorship or grant funding; and
- Other events, functions, significant ceremonies and meetings as deemed appropriate.

- (iv) The ‘Welcome to the Country’ is conducted by a recognised representative/s of the local Aboriginal community (such as an Elder of the Nyoongar people) who welcomes the delegates and all in attendance. If there is uncertainty as to whether an ‘acknowledgement’ or ‘a welcome’ is appropriate, advice should be sought from the ~~Chief Executive Officer~~ Community Partnership Team.

- (v) A ‘Welcome to the Country’ may consist of a single speech by the representative of the local Aboriginal community, or it may also include a performance of some description. Performances may include a:
- Traditional Welcoming Song;
 - Traditional Dance;
 - Didgeridoo performance;
 - “sSmoking” eCeremony; or
 - eCombination of any of the above. ~~(In most communities, there are performing artists who are regularly available for such occasions).~~
- (vi) It is necessary for the speaker who follows immediately after the ‘Welcome to Country’ ceremony to provide a response. Part of the response should acknowledge the person who delivered the ‘Welcome to Country’. The following is a recommended response: *“I respectfully acknowledge the past and present tTraditional eOwners of this land on which we are meeting, the Nyoongar people. It is a privilege to be standing on Nyoongar country”.*

~~4. — NEGOTIATING ORGANISING A ‘WELCOME TO COUNTRY’~~

- ~~(i) — When planning an official event, organisers should must ensure that a ‘Welcome to Country’ is delivered, where appropriate to do so. Where it is not possible to have a ‘Welcome to Country’, an ‘Acknowledgement of Country’ should must be delivered instead.~~
- ~~(ii) — When organising a ‘Welcome to Country’ for an event, organisers need to provide the tTraditional eOwners with information on the theme and purpose of the event. Elder/s representing the tTraditional eOwners may choose to include in the ‘Welcome’ a traditional focus to the theme or purpose of the event. Organisers should also respectfully request that any ‘Welcome’ made in an Aboriginal language be translated into English so that the audience can understand the welcoming message.~~
- ~~(iii) — The organiser should ensure that appropriate steps are taken to ensure that the presenter is well looked after.~~
- ~~(iv)(iii) The City representative organiser should make provision for those performing the ‘Welcome’ and artistic performances to be paid. These fees need to be negotiated prior to the event.~~
- ~~(v) — Other considerations may include the arrangement of transport for the Elder/s and ensuring that refreshments are provided.~~

54. CULTURAL PROTOCOLS TO BE OBSERVED

There are certain indigenous Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander protocols that must be observed:

- (i) The practice of not mentioning the name of a deceased Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person, or displaying photographic images of a deceased person unless agreed and approved by the relevant family;

- (ii) Sensitivity to knowledge that is specific to gender (commonly referred to as ‘Women’s Business’ or ‘Men’s Business’; [and](#)
- (iii) Appropriate acknowledgement of guest artists that are either from or supported by the local community-
- ~~(iv) In most cases, members of the Aboriginal community will advise staff of intrusive behaviour and/or if they are not permitted to discuss the protocol or ceremony with staff because of age, gender, status etc. If in doubt, advice should be sought from the Chief Executive Officer.~~

6. DISPLAY OF FLAGS AT EVENTS WITH ‘WELCOME TO COUNTRY’

- (i) The organiser ~~should~~ **must** ensure that the presenter has the opportunity to display the [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander](#) ~~following~~ flags where he or she delivers a ‘Welcome to Country’ speech:
 - ~~• an Aboriginal flag;~~
 - ~~• a Torres Strait Islander flag;~~
 - ~~• an Australian flag;~~
 - ~~• a Western Australian flag.~~
- (ii) Where the above flags are displayed at an event [the Australian National Flag Protocols and the City’s Flying and Displaying of Flags and Banners Policy No: 4.1.9 apply.](#) The flags shall be placed left to right from the perspective of the audience: the Australian flag, the Western Australian flag, the Aboriginal flag and the Torres Strait Islander flag.

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