

WELCOME TO COUNTRY PROTOCOLS POLICY

Policy Owner: Community Development
Contact Person: Coordinator Community Links
Date of Approval: 27 July 2010, CD02-07/10

POLICY OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this policy is to provide direction to the City of Wanneroo for Welcome to Country Protocols.

POLICY STATEMENT

Observing Welcome to Country protocols demonstrates respect for Aboriginal traditional cultural practices and recognises the Aboriginal people as Traditional Owners in the cultural history of Wanneroo. A Welcome to Country or an Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners should be observed in all major City of Wanneroo events including concerts, the Australia Day event, conferences, Citizenship Ceremonies, Opening of Local Exhibitions and Annual Art Awards.

SCOPE

This policy involves:

- The Mayor and Elected Members hosting civic events and holding Council Meetings on behalf of the City of Wanneroo
- Senior Executive staff who are planning and hosting events on behalf of the City of Wanneroo
- Administrative staff who are planning and organising events for the City of Wanneroo

BACKGROUND

The areas encompassed by the City of Wanneroo have a significant Aboriginal cultural history and an active community. Aboriginal past and present history has been included in the Museum within the Wanneroo Library & Cultural Centre. It is important to acknowledge the traditional Nyoongar owners of the land on which new facilities are built, and on which the City's events and programmes are conducted.

CONSULTATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS

- Aboriginal Community Elders/Leaders/local knowledgeable people
- City of Wanneroo Reconciliation Action Plan 2010-2012 Advisory Group
- Northern Suburbs Reconciliation Group
- Aboriginal staff of the City of Wanneroo

IMPLICATIONS (Financial, Human Resources)

There are some financial implications for negotiated contractual payments to identified Elders who are engaged to do Welcome to Country addresses and these will vary depending on the Elder and the length of time taken to prepare. Some Elders will provide detailed cultural knowledge and some will tell a short story.

Prior to engaging an Elder for the presentation of a Welcome to Country, it is important that the City knows what it wants:

- The type of event.
- Will Ministers or dignitaries be present?
- Is an eloquent speaker required?
- Is this event suitable for the telling of a short story?
- Does the event require a male or female Elder?

Fees for delivery of the address plus on-costs such as travel are legitimate costs. For a larger community event the City may require a Welcome to Country, followed by a dance performance and these separate items may incur further cost.

Financial allocations for Welcome to Country Protocols to be observed will be included in the City's budget on an annual basis.

IMPLEMENTATION

In order of preference, the person selected to give the address can:

- A local Nyoongar who is acknowledged as a respected elder/senior person can give a "Welcome to Country" address.
- A Nyoongar person who is non-local ie from another region can give a "Nyoongar Welcome" on behalf of the Nyoongar Nation
- A non-Aboriginal person can give an "Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners", being the Nyoongar People.

Depending on the level of importance, the City may decide that it is appropriate to incorporate the giving of a gift. This practice would only be encouraged if the City was entertaining a dignitary of particularly high standing, where the City would provide the gift, which would usually be in the form of Aboriginal art or an artefact.

An Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners should be worded:

/we respectfully acknowledge the past, present and future traditional owners of this land on which we are meeting, the Nyoongar people. It is a privilege to be standing on Nyoongar country.

In circumstances where there is some doubt about traditional ownership, the following wording should be used:

I/we would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of this land and pay my/our respects to the Nyoongar Elders past, present and future for they hold the history, the cultural practice and traditions, of their people.

Supporting documentation for this Policy is the Reconciliation Action Plan 2010-2012 and the Communication and Events Business Unit guidelines including the Function Plan Template.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Director Community Development is responsible for publication, implementation, enforcement and compliance as well as interpretations in the event of the need for clarification or when there is a dispute.

WHO NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT THIS POLICY?

Mayor and Councillors
Executive Management Team (CEO and Directors)
Managers
All staff
The proposed Reconciliation Action Plan Working group (RAP).

EVALUATION AND REVIEW PROVISIONS

Key Performance Indicators

- Internal individual awareness of Welcome to Country Protocols as assessed by Director Community Development
- An increase in the inclusion of Welcome to Country protocols in major and minor City events.
- Engagement of Aboriginal groups in consultation on the development of the RAP Policy and the establishment of the Advisory Group.
- Regular review of policy and KPIs as required for Council policy

DEFINITIONS

DEFINITIONS: Any definitions listed in the following table apply to this document only.	
Traditional Owners	Aboriginal representatives of the traditional language group that inhabited the area prior to European settlement and are recognised as traditional owners by local Aboriginal communities.
Nyoongar	Nyoongar is a generic and accepted term which is used to broadly identify Aboriginal people who come from the Perth metropolitan area and includes south of Moora through to Esperance. It is estimated that there are approximately 30,000 Noongar people living in the south west making the this group the largest Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia. Sometimes spelt Noongah or Noongar.
Reconciliation	Reconciliation involves building mutually respectful relationships between Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians that encourages us to work together to solve problems and generate success that is in everyone's best interests.
Reconciliation Action Plan	A tool to help an organisation build positive relationships between indigenous and non-indigenous people: it includes a blend of Relationships, Respect and Opportunities and gives a format for exploring how reconciliation can advance the organisation's business and organisational objectives.

REFERENCES

Nil

RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Director Community Development

Version	Next review	Record Number
1, 27/07/10, CD02-07/10	August 2012	10/13159