

Indigenous Protocols

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1. Objectives

Scenic Rim Regional Council recognises that ceremonies and protocols are an important part of all cultures. The observance of Indigenous protocols demonstrates that we value Indigenous culture and respect the traditional history of the Indigenous communities.

This document outlines how Scenic Rim Regional Council will observe Indigenous protocols when conducting events and ceremonies and ensures the development and maintenance of positive relationships with local Indigenous communities.

In Australia, there are two traditional protocols that are in widespread use:

- an **Acknowledgement of Country**; and
- a **Welcome to Country**.

This document also provides information on the flying of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags

2. Scope

This procedure has been developed for the reference of staff as a resource when planning or hosting events in the Scenic Rim region.

3. Responsibility

The Principal Specialist Cultural Services is responsible for ensuring this Corporate Procedure is understood and adhered to.

4. Procedure

4.1. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

It is appropriate for an Acknowledgement of Country to be part of civic occasions and major official events where members of the public and representatives of other governments are present. An Acknowledgement of Country may be appropriate at other occasions involving local Indigenous communities.

An Indigenous Acknowledgement should precede any acknowledgement of VIPs and special guests.

An Acknowledgement can be used by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous speakers to pay due respect to the traditional Indigenous inhabitants.

Scenic Rim Regional Council has endorsed the following options for use as its Indigenous Acknowledgement:

Option 1

"I begin by acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet today and pay our respects to the Elders both past, present and emerging."

or

Option 2

"I begin by acknowledging the traditional custodians of the many lands within the Scenic Rim - the Mununjali, Ugarapul, Wangerriburra and Migunberri, and all Indigenous People in those regions. I pay respects to their elders, past, present and emerging and acknowledge the important role they play in shaping the future of the Scenic Rim."

As a guide, reference to Indigenous community would be:

- *Mununjali for Beaudesert and surrounding area;*
- *Ugarapul for Boonah / Fassifern area;*
- *Wangerriburra for Canungra, Beechmont and Tamborine Mountain area; and*
- *Migunberri for Rathdowney*

If you are unsure, seek advice or use Option 1.

4.2. WELCOME TO COUNTRY

A Welcome to Country, also known as the Traditional Welcome, allows the Traditional Custodians of the region to give their blessing for the event and welcomes people to the land of their ancestors.

It must be done by a representative of the Traditional Custodians of the location at which the event is taking place.

A Welcome to Country is appropriate for major official events where members of the public and representatives of other governments are present.

In this context, 'Country' means place of origin, literally, culturally or spiritually. It refers to a clan or tribal area rather than a nation state such as Australia. 'Country' refers to more than just geographical areas: it encapsulates all the values, places, resources, stories and cultural obligations associated with that geographical area.

4.3. REQUESTING A TRADITIONAL CUSTODIAN WELCOME TO COUNTRY

A Welcome to Country involves a traditional custodian or their representative welcoming people to their land. Welcome to Country may involve cultural performances, dances and music. Council should expect to pay a speaker or performance fee. The size and importance of the event will determine when a Welcome to Country is required.

The process to engage a Traditional Custodian to deliver a welcome to Country should be:

- Written introduction and invitation with all event details; and
- Follow up with telephone call and or meeting.

4.4. ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER FLAG PROTOCOLS



The Australian Aboriginal Flag was first raised on 12 July 1971 at Victoria Square in Adelaide. It was also used at the Aboriginal Tent Embassy in Canberra in 1972. The top half of the flag is black to symbolise Indigenous people. The red in the lower half stands for the earth and the colour of ochre, which has ceremonial significance. The circle of yellow in the centre of the flag represents the sun.

The Australian Aboriginal Flag is displayed at Aboriginal centres and is well recognised as the flag of Aboriginal peoples of Australia.



The Torres Strait Islander Flag was adopted in May 1992 during the Torres Strait Islands Cultural Festival.

The green panels at the top and bottom of the flag represent the land and the central blue panel represents the sea. The black lines dividing the panels represent the Torres Strait Islander people. The centre of the flag shows a white dhari (dancer's headdress) and is a symbol for all Torres Strait Islanders. Underneath the dhari is a white five-pointed star. The star is an important symbol for navigating the sea. The points of the star represent the island groups in the Torres Strait and white symbolises peace.

The Australian Aboriginal Flag and the Torres Strait Islander Flag were proclaimed on 14 July 1995.

Scenic Rim Regional Council supports both flags being flown:

- during NAIDOC Week to celebrate and promote greater understanding of Indigenous peoples culture; and
- during National Reconciliation Week in recognition of 27 May as the anniversary of the 1967 Referendum which removed from the Constitution clauses that discriminated against Indigenous Australians
- during Sorry Business to acknowledge Elders and significant members of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities;.

5. Definitions

Acknowledgment of Country: an acknowledgement by the host of an event of the traditional custodians of the land on which the event is being held.

NAIDOC Week: (National Aboriginal and Islanders Day Observance Committee) occurs annually in July and celebrates the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

National Reconciliation Week: a celebration of Indigenous history and culture to foster reconciliation.

Protocol: an official procedure that explains the correct conduct to be followed in a formal situation.

Sorry Business: means a term referring to the mourning process in Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Traditional Custodian: Indigenous people or nations who have ongoing traditional and cultural connections to their Country and carry the responsibility of caring for their Country.

6. Related Documents

Flags Act 1953 section 5

Reconciliation Australia www.reconciliation.org.au

Australian Government's Indigenous website Indigenous.gov.au | Connecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with Australian Government policies and programmes.

Australian Flags Booklet at pmc.gov.au/publications

Community Consultation Outcomes Arts and Cultural Policy review 2008 Scenic Rim Regional Council

Yugambeh Museum Language & Heritage Research Centre

Cultural Protocols for Indigenous Reporting in the Media www.abc.net.au/message/proper

Australia's National Cultural Policy 2023 Revive: a place for every story, a story for every place

7. Version Information

Version No	Adoption Date	Key Changes	Approved by
1	19/07/2010	New	CEO
2	18/08/2014	Review and update	CEO
3	28/05/2024	Approved by CEO on Item at ET Meeting 15/05/2024	CEO