

Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country Policy

POL-CMR 07



Objective

- 1) To acknowledge the cultural importance of Welcome to Country for Aboriginal people and its importance to Mandurah's heritage and identity.
- 2) To enable the wider community to share in Aboriginal culture thereby leading to better community relationships and understanding.
- 3) To provide direction and support to officers of the City of Mandurah for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgment of Country protocols.

Statement

Definitions

Welcome to Country is a ceremony performed by Aboriginal people to welcome visitors to their traditional land. It can take on many forms, depending on the particular culture of the traditional owners, and can include singing, dancing, symbolic ritual or a speech in traditional language or English.

Acknowledgement of Country is a way for non-Aboriginal people to show awareness of and respect for the traditional Aboriginal owners of the land on which a meeting or event is being held, by recognising the continuing connection of Aboriginal people to their Country. It can be informal or formal and involves visitors acknowledging the Aboriginal people as the original/traditional owners of the land as well as the long and continuing relationship between Aboriginal people and their Country.

The City of Mandurah (the 'City'):

- Acknowledges that the Bindjareb people are the original inhabitants and traditional owners of the land in and around Mandurah;
- Acknowledges the importance of including the local Aboriginal community in decisions relating to Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country;
- Acknowledges the importance of paying respect to the traditional custodians of the land, their Elders past and present and the continuing cultural and spiritual practices of local Aboriginal people;
- Acknowledges the value of local Elders and Traditional Owners and their intellectual Cultural property;
- Will provide officers with an understanding of the importance of Welcome to and Acknowledgment of Country.

The City encourages all officers to include a Welcome to Country for all major City and Civic events, or an Acknowledgement of Country at all relevant City and civic meetings and events.

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Welcome to Country - major City and civic events include:

- Major conferences (Regional or State-wide, hosted by the City)
- Major events - Large scale City-led events – indicators might include:
 - Invitations to several dignitaries, Members of Parliament, Politicians, Department Heads (e.g. Major launches, exhibitions, award ceremonies);
 - Significant media marketing around the event (e.g. Crabfest, Stretch festival);
- Citizenship ceremonies - although not a major event, it is considered significant due to its role in welcoming people from diverse cultures.

Officers, where necessary, may wish to consult with local Aboriginal Elders, Traditional Owners or groups as part of the event as to what is appropriate for the occasion.

Acknowledgement of Country - relevant City and civic meetings and events include:

- Council meetings;
- Exhibition openings;
- Annual art awards;
- Significant policy, report or project launches;
- Whole of organisation functions;
- Formal gatherings, functions or ceremonies.

Related Documents

City of Mandurah Reconciliation Action Plan

Procedure PRO-CMR 03 Welcome to Country Protocol

Procedure PRO-CMR 04 Acknowledgement of Country Protocol

Responsible Directorate:	Place and Community
Responsible Department:	Community
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