

City of Albany Policy & Procedure: Welcome to Country, Acknowledgement of People and Country and Aboriginal Cultural Performances

Objective

1. The objective of this Policy and Procedure is to establish protocols for City staff about appropriate and consistent recognition and acknowledgement of Menang Noongar people(s) as the traditional custodians of the land on which the City of Albany is situated.

Policy Statement

2. The City of Albany recognises the Menang Noongar people's custodianship of Noongar country, and is committed to observing appropriate protocols for acknowledging this custodianship at Mayoral and City events to which members of the public and external stakeholder groups attend.
3. The City of Albany is committed to fostering cultural practices and facilitating relationships in the broader community that promote respect and understanding.
4. This Policy defines "Welcomes to Country", "Acknowledgement of People and Country", and "Cultural Performances", and gives guidance as to their appropriate use.

Scope

5. A Welcome to Country can only be performed by an Elder(s) who are recognised as traditional owners of Menang Noongar country, as this gives traditional owners the opportunity to formally welcome people to their land. Events where it is appropriate for a Welcome to Country to be performed include:
 - a. Official Mayoral events by invitation;
 - b. Citizenship ceremonies;
 - c. Where visiting dignitaries are being hosted by City staff or Elected Member(s). These can include Members of Parliament, state and federal government ministers, Heads of State and their representatives, and/or visiting persons of high renown or esteem;
 - d. Openings of significant new public buildings or facilities;
 - e. NAIDOC and Reconciliation Week events hosted by the City or Council;
 - f. Openings or official launches of large public events;
 - g. City of Albany civic and significant awards presentations; and
 - h. Conferences organised or hosted by the City, where people from outside the municipality are in attendance.
6. An Acknowledgement of People and Country can be performed by anyone, and is a respectful public acknowledgement of the traditional custodians of the land. It is most likely an Acknowledgement will be performed by the host or Master of Ceremonies of the event or gathering, unless a specific person has been requested to perform this.

7. Events where an Acknowledgment should be considered include:
 - a. Preceding Council or Committee meetings;
 - b. Large meetings where external stakeholders are present;
 - c. Official openings or launches of intimate public events, either by invitation or not and;
 - d. Special events as determined by staff managing the event.
8. Cultural Performances include dance, song, artistic expression and music, and may be engaged as part of a Welcome to Country or Acknowledgement of People and Country. Cultural performances will most commonly accompany Welcomes to Country, but can also be considered for Acknowledgments of People and Country.

Legislative and Strategic Context

9. This Policy directly relates to the following element from the City of Albany Community Strategic Plan - Albany 2023.
 - a. **Key Theme:** Sense of Community.
 - b. **Strategy:** To create interesting places, spaces and events that reflect our community's identity, diversity and heritage.

Definitions

10. A **Welcome to Country** is a formal welcome onto Menang Noongar land given by an Elder or traditional owner of that land. The Welcome to Country should be the first item on the order of proceedings for the event and may comprise a single speech with or without an accompanying cultural performance.
11. **Acknowledgement of People and Country** is a statement of recognition of the traditional owners of the land. An Acknowledgement can be given by any person.
12. **Cultural performances** include (but not be limited to) dance, song or musical performance, and/or other means of artistic expression.

PROCEDURE

13. **Welcome to Country.**

Where it is identified that a Welcome to Country should be performed as outlined in Scope, the following procedure should occur:

- a. The City Staff Member (project leader, manager) should record that a Welcome to Country is required using the Civic Reception request form and forward this to the Personal Assistant to the Mayor no less than four weeks prior to the event.
- b. The Personal Assistant to the Mayor will inform the Mayor and the Noongar Engagement Coordinator of the Event details and requirement for a Welcome to Country.
- c. The Noongar Engagement Coordinator will organise arrangements for the Welcome to Country inclusive of sourcing an appropriate Elder and traditional owner, liaising with the event coordinator regarding run sheets and logistics, and the management of honorarium payments.

14. Acknowledgement of People and Country.

- a. Where it is identified that an Acknowledgement of People and Country should be performed as outlined in Scope, the following procedure should occur:
- b. The City Staff Member (project leader, manager) should prepare suitable agendas and/or speech notes and insert the requirement for an Acknowledgement of People and Country.
- c. The preferred Acknowledgement of People and Country is as follows:
“I respectfully acknowledge the past and present traditional owners of this land on which we are meeting, the Menang people. It is a privilege to be standing on Noongar country.”

15. Cultural Performances.

- a. Cultural performances are an optional addition to a Welcome to Country or Acknowledgement of People and Country.
- b. The determination of whether a Cultural Performance is necessary or possible shall be made by the relevant Executive Director, in conjunction with the Noongar Engagement Coordinator. Contingent factors shall be accounted for including but not limited to: Logistical constraints of the event or function – including physical and time constraints; project budgets; and appropriateness.
- c. Where it is identified that a Cultural Performance is necessary or possible the following procedure should occur:
- d. The City Staff Member (project leader, manager) should record that in addition to a Welcome to Country requirement noted using the Civic Reception Request Form an opportunity to include a Cultural Performance with the program is necessary or possible. This should be forwarded to the Personal Assistant to the Mayor no less than four weeks prior to the event.
- e. On confirmation from the Personal Assistant to the Mayor that the Civic Function has been approved the City Staff Member (project leader, manager) should discuss options for a Cultural Performance with the Noongar Engagement Coordinator.
- f. The Noongar Engagement Coordinator will organise arrangements for the Cultural Performance inclusive of sourcing an appropriate program and liaising with the event coordinator regarding run sheets and logistics, and the management of honorarium payments.

16. Responsibility

- a. This Procedure applies to staff of all City of Albany departments, business units and outlying operations who are involved in initiating or running public functions or events in the City of Albany.
- b. The Noongar Engagement Coordinator will establish and maintain a register of local Elders and traditional owners who are permitted to perform Welcomes to Country, and will be responsible for connecting Elders and traditional owners with event organisers on request.
- c. Where external bodies hosting events or activities in Albany have requested the City invite a specific person to perform a Welcome to Country for their event, the City's role is to facilitate this.

- d. Where the Noongar Engagement Coordinator is unable to execute their functions in relation to this Policy and Procedure the Executive Manager Community Services will make the final determination of these functions, in consultation with the Mayor, CEO and relevant City staff member (Project leader, manager).

Associated Documents

17. This Policy and Procedure is associated with the following:
- Guideline – Civic Receptions, Ceremonies and use of Council and Civic Rooms and;
 - Mayor Event Template.

Review Position and Date

18. This policy and procedure is to be reviewed by the document owner every two years.

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Manager Community Development		Executive Manager Community Services	
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