

2.29 Welcome to Country, Acknowledgement of People and Country and Aboriginal Cultural Performances Policy

Policy Owner	Executive Director Community Services
Responsible Officer	Manager Community Relations
Date of Approval	22/05/2017
Amended/Revised	07/11/2024

Objective

The objective of this policy and procedure is to establish protocols for City of Albany (the 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 is situated.

Scope

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:

- Official Mayoral events by invitation;
- Citizenship ceremonies;
- Where visiting dignitaries are being hosted by City staff or elected members 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;
- Openings of significant new public buildings or facilities;
- NAIDOC and Reconciliation Week events hosted by the City or Council;
- Openings or official launches of large public events;
- City civic and significant awards presentations; and
- Conferences organised or hosted by the City, where people from outside the municipality are in attendance.

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.

Events where an Acknowledgment should be considered include:

- Preceding Council or Committee meetings;
- Large meetings where external stakeholders are present;
- Official openings or launches of intimate public events, either by invitation or not; and
- Special events as determined by staff managing the event.

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.

Policy Statement

The City 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.

The City is committed to fostering cultural practices and facilitating relationships in the broader community that promote respect and understanding.

This Policy defines "**Welcomes to Country**", "**Acknowledgement of People and Country**", and "**Cultural Performances**", and gives guidance as to their appropriate use.

Legislative and Strategic Context

This policy and procedure directly relates to the following elements of the City of Albany Strategic Community Plan 2032:

- **Pillar:** People
- **Strategy:** Grow recognition and respect for local Indigenous cultures.

Review Position and Date

This policy and procedure every three years.

Associated Documents

Other documents and resources that have a bearing on this policy and that may be useful reference material for users of this policy, follow:

- [Civic Receptions, Ceremonies, and Use of Civic Rooms Policy & Guidelines \(2.31\)](#)
- <https://www.indigenous.gov.au/acknowledgement-country>
- <https://www.reconciliation.org.au/>

Definitions

Key terms and acronyms used in the policy, and their definitions:

- 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.
- 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.
- Cultural performances include (but not be limited to) dance, song or musical performance, and/or other means of artistic expression.
- The term Staff applies to volunteers who perform functions on behalf of the City.

2.29 Welcome to Country, Acknowledgement of People and Country and Aboriginal Cultural Performances Procedure

Welcome to Country

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

- 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.
- The Personal Assistant to the Mayor will inform the Mayor and the Community Development Coordinator of the Event details and requirements for a Welcome to Country.
- The Community Development Coordinator will liaise with the Personal Assistant to the Mayor to organise arrangements for the Welcome to Country inclusive of sourcing an appropriate Elder and Traditional custodian, liaising with the event coordinator regarding run sheets and logistics, and the management of honorarium payments.

Acknowledgement of People and Country

Where it is identified that an Acknowledgement of People and Country should be performed as outlined in Scope, the following procedure should occur:

- 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.
- The preferred Acknowledgement of People and Country is as follows:

“I respectfully acknowledge the past and present Traditional custodians of this land on which we are meeting, the Menang people. It is a privilege to be standing on Menang Noongar country.”

Cultural Performances.

Cultural performances are an optional addition to a Welcome to Country or Acknowledgement of People and Country.

The determination of whether a Cultural Performance is necessary or possible shall be made by the relevant Executive Director, in conjunction with the [Manager Community Relations](#). 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.

Where it is identified that a Cultural Performance is necessary or possible the following procedure should occur:

- 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.
- 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 [Community Development Coordinator](#).
- The [Community Development 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.

Responsibility

This Procedure applies to all City staff who are involved in initiating or running public functions or events in the City of Albany.

The [Community Development Coordinator](#) will establish and maintain a register of local Elders and Traditional custodians who are permitted to perform Welcomes to Country and will be responsible for connecting Elders and traditional owners with event organisers on request.

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.

Where the [Community Development Coordinator](#) is unable to execute their functions concerning this Policy and Procedure the [Manager Community Relations](#) will make the final determination of these functions, in consultation with the Mayor, CEO and relevant City staff member (Project leader, manager).

Ultimately, responsibility for ensuring adherence to policy position and application of the procedure rest with the staff members designated line manager.