

**11.4 ADVERTISING OF AMENDED POLICY - RECOGNITION OF NOONGAR BOODJAR CULTURE AND HISTORY THROUGH WELCOME TO COUNTRY AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

- Attachments:**
1. **Recognition of Noongar Boodjar Culture and History through Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country - Marked Up Version**
  2. **Recognition of Noongar Boodjar Culture and History through Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country - Clean Version**

**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council **APPROVES** the proposed amendments to the Recognition of Noongar Boodjar Culture and History through Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country Policy, at Attachment 1, for the purpose of community consultation.

**PURPOSE OF REPORT:**

For Council to approve, for the purpose of community consultation, the proposed amendments to the Recognition of Noongar Boodjar Culture and History through Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country as detailed at **Attachment 1**.

**BACKGROUND:**

*'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are advised this report contains the name of a deceased person.'*

The [Recognition of Noongar Boodjar, Culture and History through Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country Policy](#) (Policy) was endorsed by Council on 18 September 2018 following community consultation. This replaced the Protocols for 'Acknowledgement of Country' and 'Welcome to Country' to Recognise Aboriginal Culture and History that was adopted in 2010 with input and guidance from Noongar Elder and founding member of the City of Perth's Elders Advisory Group, Aunty Doolann-Leisha Eatts.

The requirement of provisions outlined in clause 1.3 of the [Policy Development and Review Policy](#) were presented to Council Members through the monthly Policy Paper in January 2023 with further updates and information provided in March 2023.

**DETAILS:**

The purpose of a 'Welcome to Country' and an 'Acknowledgement of Country' is to recognise the unique position of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australian culture and history as the Traditional Owners of the land.

A 'Welcome to Country' is delivered by a Traditional Owner, or an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person who has been given permission from a Traditional Owner to welcome people. The Traditional Owner welcomes people to their land by providing historical and cultural information. A 'Welcome to Country' is delivered at the commencement of a formal event.

An 'Acknowledgement of Country' is an opportunity to show respect to the Traditional Owners of the land upon which the City is located and the continuing connection we have as a City to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. An 'Acknowledgement of Country' can be performed by any person and is given at the beginning of a meeting, event, or workshop.

Incorporating a Welcome or an Acknowledgement into meetings, events, workshops and gatherings shows our respect by upholding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's cultural protocols. The proposed amendments to the Policy are as follows:

- The inclusion of an Acknowledgement of Country at the beginning of the Policy.
- The removal of the word 'emerging' from the phraseology for an Acknowledgment of Country as requested by both the Boordiyas (Bosses) and the RAP working group.

- The addition of 'individuals, town teams, local groups, businesses, and charitable organisations' who receive funding from the City to the list of those who are required to conduct a 'Welcome' or an 'Acknowledgement' in the purpose and scope.
- Addition of 'Noongar language, traditional stories and traditional Noongar instruments' to the section about what may be included in a Welcome to Country.
- Replacement of the word 'process' with 'ceremony' when describing a Welcome to Country.
- Amending the definition of a Welcome to state that the Noongar Elder will designate a representative to conduct the Welcome if they themselves are not available.
- The inclusion of 'We would also like to acknowledge all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders' in an example phraseology for an Acknowledgment of Country.

The City's Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group (RAPWG) have reviewed the Policy and provided guidance with respect to the phraseology used for 'Acknowledgement to Country' during meetings held in 2022. The removal of the word 'emerging' from any phraseology has been highlighted as a required change. The more recent practice of acknowledging 'emerging leaders' or 'Elders past, present, and emerging' is generally not an accepted practice in the Aboriginal community and should not be used.

Consultation has also occurred with the Aboriginal Elders who form the City's Boordiyas (Bosses) Reference Group at meetings held on 21 July, 28 September, 30 November 2022, and 15 February 2023. The Elders are recognised as the heads of the Aboriginal community. They provide feedback, guidance, and advice to assist in ensuring that Noongar culture is embedded in our community's everyday life.

### **CONSULTATION/ADVERTISING:**

In accordance with the City's [Community and Stakeholder Engagement Policy](#), community consultation of all new and significantly amended policies must be provided for a period exceeding 21 days in the following ways:

- notice published on the City's website;
- notice posted to the City's social media;
- notice published in the local newspapers; and
- notice exhibited on the notice board at the City's Administration and Library and Local History Centre;

Public notice of this proposed new policy will be provided from 23 May 2023.

### **LEGAL/POLICY:**

Section 2.7(2)(b) of the *Local Government Act 1995* provides Council with the power to determine policies.

The City's [Policy Development and Review Policy](#) sets out the process for the development and review of the City's policy documents.

### **RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

Low: It is low risk for Council to undertake community consultation of the proposed amended policy.

### **STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS:**

This is in keeping with the City's *Strategic Community Plan 2018-2028*:

#### Connected Community

*Our many cultures are celebrated.*

*We recognise, engage and partner with the Whadjuk Noongar people and culture.*

*We are an inclusive, accessible and equitable City for all.*

#### Innovative and Accountable

*We are open and accountable to an engaged community.*

**SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS:**

This is in keeping with the following key sustainability outcomes of the *City's Sustainable Environment Strategy 2019-2024*.

This does not contribute to any environmental sustainability outcomes. This action/activity is environmentally neutral.

**PUBLIC HEALTH IMPLICATIONS:**

This is in keeping with the following priority health outcomes of the City's *Public Health Plan 2020-2025*:

*Increased mental health and wellbeing*

**FINANCIAL/BUDGET IMPLICATIONS:**

The cost of advertising the Policy will be met through the City's existing operational budget.

<b>Legislation / local law requirements</b>	<a href="#">Flying and Displaying of Flags and Banners</a> <a href="#">The Flags Act 1953</a>
<b>Relevant delegations</b>	<a href="#">Nil</a>
<b>Related policies, procedures and supporting documentation</b>	<a href="#">‘Reflect’ Reconciliation Action Plan - 2017-2018</a> <a href="#">‘Innovate’ Reconciliation Action Plan - 2019-2021</a> <a href="#">‘Innovate’ Reconciliation Action Plan – 2022-2024</a> <a href="#">City of Vincent Strategic Community Plan – 2018-2028</a>

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The City of Vincent would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land, the Whadjuk people of the Noongar nation and pay our respects to Elders past and present. We would also like to acknowledge all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australia.

We recognise the contribution the Whadjuk people have made and continue to make to our culture and in our community. We will continue to seek the input of the Traditional Owners.

The land on which we live, meet, and thrive as a community always was and always will be Noongar land.

## INTRODUCTION

The process of ‘Welcome to Country’ and ‘Acknowledgement of Country’ recognises the unique position of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australian culture and history as the Traditional Owners of the land. It is important this unique position is recognised and incorporated as part of official protocols and events to enable the wider community to share in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and heritage, facilitating better relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that the correct protocols are used by [individuals, town teams, local groups, businesses or charitable organisations who receive funding from the City, along with any](#) City of Vincent Officer ~~for~~ [when conducting or organising a](#) ‘Welcome to Country’ [and or](#) ‘Acknowledgement of Country’.

## OBJECTIVE

This Policy reaffirms that the Whadjuk people from the Noongar nation are and always will be the Traditional Owners of the land upon which the City of Vincent is located. Noongar people have lived in harmony with the natural environment for tens of thousands of years and have a strong spiritual connection to country (Noongar Boodjar).

The City acknowledges the significance of the Noongar land and water within Vincent and is committed to gaining kaartdijin (knowledge) and understanding of Noongar Boodjar to ensure we support Aboriginal people, culture, and tradition along our journey towards greater reconciliation.

## SCOPE

This Policy applies to all [individuals, town teams, local groups, businesses, or charitable organisations who receive funding from the City, along with any](#) City of Vincent Officers responsible for organising events, functions, ceremonies, or meetings.

## POLICY PROVISIONS

### POLICY

#### 1. Welcome to Country

##### 1.1 Definition of Welcome to Country

A 'Welcome to Country' is where Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples welcome people to their land by providing historical and cultural information to those in attendance. Steps should be taken to ensure that the appropriate representative is invited to perform the 'Welcome' as it is a significant recognition and a formal ~~process~~ ceremony. The 'Welcome to Country' is a right of the Traditional Owners and not a privilege.

##### 1.2 Appropriate Place

A 'Welcome to Country' must always occur at the opening of the event, preferably as the first item in the order of proceedings.

##### (iii) Events

'Welcome to Country' will be included (but is not limited to) the following events:

- Significant events involving State or Federal Government representatives;
- Significant civic functions and launches;
- Opening of new buildings and parks;
- Major festivals and events where the City of Vincent has provided significant sponsorship or grant funding; and
- Other events, functions, ceremonies, and meetings as deemed appropriate.

(iv) The 'Welcome to Country' is conducted by a ~~recognised representative/s of the local Aboriginal community (an Elder of the Noongar people)~~ Noongar Elder or a person designated as a representative by a Noongar Elder who welcomes the delegates and all in attendance. If there is uncertainty as to whether an 'acknowledgement' or 'a welcome' is appropriate, advice should be sought from the *Community Partnerships Development Team*.

(v) A 'Welcome to Country' may consist of a single speech by the representative of the local Aboriginal community, or it may also include ~~a performance of some description.~~ Performances may include a:

- Traditional Welcoming Song;
- Traditional Dance;
- Noongar Language and Traditional Stories
- Traditional Noongar instruments
- Didgeridoo performance;
- "Smoking" Ceremony; ~~or~~
- Combination of any of the above.

(vi) It is necessary for the speaker who follows immediately after the 'Welcome to Country' ceremony to provide a response. Part of the response should acknowledge the person who delivered the 'Welcome to Country'. The following is a recommended response: "I respectfully

*acknowledge the past and present Traditional Owners of this land on which we are meeting, the Noongar people. It is a privilege to be standing on Noongar country”.*

## 2. The ‘Acknowledgement of Country’

### (i) Definition of Acknowledgement of Country

An ‘*Acknowledgement of Country*’ is an opportunity to acknowledge ~~ment of~~ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Traditional Owners of the land ~~in order to pay respect to them~~. It is a means by which all people can show respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and heritage and the ongoing relationship the Traditional Owners have with the land. The ‘Acknowledgement of Country’ can be performed by any person, Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal.

### (ii) Appropriate Place

An ‘*Acknowledgement of Country*’ must always occur at the beginning of the event.

### (iii) Events

‘*Acknowledgement of Country*’ will be included (but is not limited to) the following events:

- Events where members of the public, representatives of governments and/or the media are present;
- Council Briefing Sessions and Council Meetings;
- Conferences and seminars;
- Festivals and events where the City of Vincent has provided sponsorship or grant funding; and
- Other functions, events, ceremonies, or meetings as deemed appropriate.

### (iv) Phraseology

Particular wording used for an ‘*Acknowledgement of Country*’ may differ, and includes (but is not limited to) any of the following suggested wording:

- *I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land, the Whadjuk people of the Noongar nation and pay respects to Elders past, ~~and~~ present ~~and emerging~~;*
- *I would like to acknowledge the Whadjuk people from the Noongar nation who are the Traditional Owners of this land we are meeting/gathering on today;*
- *I acknowledge the traditional lands of the Whadjuk Noongar people. We pay our respect to their Elders, past, ~~and~~ present ~~and emerging~~ and we recognise their strength and resilience.*
- *I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of this land, the Noongar people, on whose land we are meeting, and pay my respects to the Elders past, ~~and~~ present ~~and emerging~~. ~~We would also like to acknowledge all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australia;~~*
- *I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land, the Noongar people, and pay my respects to Elders, past and present.*

## 3. Cultural Protocols to be Observed

There are certain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander protocols that must be observed:

- ### (i)
- The practice of not mentioning the name of a deceased Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person, or displaying photographic images of a deceased person unless agreed and approved by the relevant family;

- (ii) Sensitivity to knowledge that is specific to gender (commonly referred to as ‘Women’s Business’ or ‘Men’s Business’); and
- (iii) Appropriate acknowledgement of guest artists that are either from or supported by the local community

#### 4. Display of Flags at Events with Welcome to Country

- (i) The organiser *must* ensure that the presenter has the opportunity to display the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags where he or she delivers a ‘Welcome to Country’ speech.
- (ii) Where the above flags are displayed at an event the Australian National Flag Protocols and the City’s Flying and Displaying of Flags and Banners Policy apply. The flags shall be placed left to right from the perspective of the audience: the Australian flag, the Western Australian flag, the Aboriginal flag, and the Torres Strait Islander flag.

OFFICE USE ONLY	
Responsible Officer	Coordinator Community Development
Initial Council Adoption	2010
Previous Title	Recognition of Noongar Boodjar Culture and History Through Welcome to Country and Acknowledgment of Country
Reviewed / Amended	03/04/2023
Next Review Date	04/2028

<b>Legislation / local law requirements</b>	Flying and Displaying of Flags and Banners The Flags Act 1953
<b>Relevant delegations</b>	Nil
<b>Related policies, procedures and supporting documentation</b>	'Reflect' Reconciliation Action Plan - 2017-2018 'Innovate' Reconciliation Action Plan - 2019-2021 'Innovate' Reconciliation Action Plan - 2022-2024 City of Vincent Strategic Community Plan - 2018-2028

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