

Legislation / local law requirements	Flying and Displaying of Flags and Banners The Flags Act 1953
Relevant delegations	Nil
Related policies, procedures and supporting documentation	'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

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 when conducting or organising a *'Welcome to Country'* 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 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 Noongar Elder or a person designated as a representative by an 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 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:

- Traditional Welcoming Song
- Traditional Dance
- Noongar Language and Traditional Stories
- Traditional Noongar instruments
- Didgeridoo performance
- "Smoking" Ceremony
- 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 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Traditional Owners of the land. 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;*
- *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 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. 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	1 November 2010
Previous Title	Recognition of Noongar Boodjar Culture and History Through Welcome to Country and Acknowledgment of Country
Reviewed / Amended	25/07/2023
Next Review Date	07/2027