

Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

Policy Type: Operational Policy Policy Owner: Community Development Officer (Aboriginal Engagement)	Policy No.: OP-029 Last Review Date: 2/12/2016
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Policy Objectives

The objective of the City of Melville's Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country Operational Policy is to:

- clarify protocols around Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country,
- progress the City's *Reconciliation Action Plan*, endorsed by Council in March 2013, in particular, item 2.10 *Develop a clear policy for the inclusion of 'Acknowledgement of Country' and 'Welcome to Country' at City of Melville events*,
- ensure that City of Melville run events and activities follow correct protocols, with respect to Aboriginal people, and the local Whadjuk (Perth) community.

Policy Scope

This Policy applies to City of Melville events, and includes all staff, counsellors and contractors.

Policy Statement

Observing Welcome to Country protocols or including an Acknowledgement statement demonstrates respect for Aboriginal traditional cultural practices and recognises the Aboriginal people as Traditional Owners in the cultural history of the City of Melville. It promotes greater appreciation for Aboriginal culture, and progresses the reconciliation process.

A Welcome to Country ceremony gives traditional owners the opportunity to formally welcome people to their land. This ceremony should be undertaken by Elders acknowledged as such by their family and community. An Acknowledgement of Country, or Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners, is a way that all people, Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal, can show respect for Noongar heritage and the ongoing relationship of traditional owners with the land.

A Welcome to Country or an Acknowledgement statement should be observed in all major City of Melville events. The type of event will dictate whether an Acknowledgement Statement or Welcome to Country is more appropriate. The City of Melville:

- Requires the inclusion of a Welcome to Country at Australia Day events, Point Walter Concert, public NAIDOC Week events;
- Requires a Welcome to Country or an Acknowledgement of Country by someone from the Noongar community at Citizenship Ceremonies, the Annual Art Awards opening, Sculpture Walk opening, Kidchella Festival, annual Volunteer Awards;
- Requires an Acknowledgement statement by the event host at Limestone Concerts, Town Hall meetings, Council meetings.
- Encourages a Welcome to Country or Acknowledgement of Country at other large events and festivals, concerts, and conferences, and encourages an Acknowledgement of Country at staff events.

For information on local elders able to perform Welcome to Country, view supporting document *Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country Elders*, for information on procedure see

Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country Procedure, or contact the Community Development Officer – Aboriginal Engagement.

Consultation with Stakeholders

- City of Melville Reconciliation Action Plan Continuous Improvement Team
- South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council

For more information contact the City of Melville Community Development Officer- Aboriginal Engagement, or go to the South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council's website <http://www.noongarculture.org.au/>

Other References that may be applicable to this Policy

Legislative Requirements:

Delegated Authority:

Plan / Policy / Framework: People, places, Participation 2012-2022: a Strategic Community Plan for the City of Melville

Procedure: Welcome to Country, Acknowledgement of Country Procedure

Work Instructions / Process Maps:

Forms / Supporting Documents (internal): Reconciliation Action Plan

Neighbourhood Plans

Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country Elders

Supporting Documents (external): *Living Culture – Living Land and its People – Welcome to Country – Noongar*

Protocols South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council

Origin/Authority

Executive Management Team Meeting

21 November 2014

Reviews

Community Development Officer - Aboriginal Engagement

2 December 2014

Community Development Officer - Aboriginal Engagement

2 December 2016

Community Development Officer – Aboriginal Engagement

13 December 2019