

WELCOME AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

POLICY OBJECTIVE

This Council policy provides guidance concerning the use of a Welcome to Country by traditional custodians and an Acknowledgement of Country and when these are to be conducted at certain Wentworth Shire events, ceremonies, meetings, functions or on Council's written communications.

1. POLICY STATEMENT

The intent of this policy is to establish suitable protocol guidelines for Wentworth Shire Council to apply in a situation where it is appropriate for a Welcome to Country or an Acknowledgement of Country.

2. POLICY COVERAGE

This policy is applicable to any event where it would be appropriate for a Welcome to Country or an Acknowledgement of Country which precede and activity or event. It is also applicable to Council's formal communications and website.

3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Welcome to Country

A Welcome to Country is where the traditional Aboriginal custodian or Elder welcomes people to their land.

A Welcome to Country always occurs at the opening of an event and is usually the first item on the program. The local Aboriginal custodians or traditional owners conduct the ceremony. This may be done through a speech, song, ceremony, or a combination of these things.

Not all Aboriginal people can perform a Welcome to Country, as it must be given by an appropriate person, such as a recognised Elder within the local community. The traditional custodians should be consulted on this matter.

Acknowledgement of Country

Acknowledgement of Country is a way that the Council can demonstrate respect for Aboriginal protocol and can be performed by any individual, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or other Australians, participating in an occasion of any kind. The Council takes the Acknowledgement of Country to be a demonstration of respect dedicated to the traditional custodians of the land where the event or gathering is being conducted.

The Acknowledgement of Country comprises a short statement at the beginning of the opening speech. It is to be included prior to other acknowledgements and formalities.

4. STRATEGIC PLAN LINK

Objective: 4.0 Wentworth is a caring, supportive and inclusive community that is informed and engaged in its future

Strategy: 4.1 Provide strong and effective representation, leadership, planning, decision-making and service delivery

5. POLICY CONTENT

It is the policy of this Council to use a Welcome to Country and/or the Acknowledgement of Country as follows:

5.1 Welcome to Country

5.1.1 It is the responsibility of the people organising the event to ensure, if required, that the traditional custodians are involved in the Welcome to Country.

5.1.2 When organising an event requiring a Welcome to Country, organisers are to provide the traditional custodians with information on the theme and purpose of the event.

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- 5.1.3** Appropriate lead time should be given to the traditional custodians when organising a Welcome to Country.
- 5.1.4** In general, a Welcome to Country will be performed where there are invited members of the public and/or dignitaries in attendance.
- 5.1.5** Examples of events where it would be desirable for a Welcome to Country to be performed by an Aboriginal Elder from the local community on which the event is taking place include:
- Official Welcome to Wentworth Shire
 - Community engagement events involving visiting dignitaries
 - Opening of new buildings or facilities
- 5.1.6** It may not always be possible to organise a Welcome to Country at such events and functions; in such situations, an Acknowledgement of Country is the minimum requirement.
- 5.2 Acknowledgement of Country**
- 5.2.1** It is the responsibility of the chair of the meeting or host or master of ceremonies of the event to ensure that the Acknowledgement of Country takes place in an appropriate manner
- 5.2.2** It is appropriate for the host of the ceremony to make the Acknowledgement, unless another person has been asked to perform the acknowledgement.
- 5.2.3** The following text can be used in Acknowledgement of Country for an event or meeting:
“I would like to pay my respect and acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we are meeting and pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging.”
- 5.2.4** The following text can be used on Council communications as an Acknowledgement of Country:
“We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we live and work, and pay our respects to their elders past, present, and emerging”
- 5.2.5** It is recommended that at a minimum the following events and written communications should include an Acknowledgement of Country:
- Awards Nights
 - Council functions not involving visiting dignitaries
 - NAIDOC week events
 - Council email communications
 - Formal Council correspondence
 - Council’s website

6. RELATED DOCUMENTS & LEGISLATION

N/A

7. ATTACHMENTS

Nil.

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8. DOCUMENT APPROVAL

This document is the latest version of the official policy of the Wentworth Shire Council, as adopted by Council on 16 February 2022. All previous versions of this policy are null and void.

This policy may be amended or revoked by Council at any time.

A PDF copy of the signed document can be accessed from Council's record management system and Reliansys.



Signed:

3 March 2022

General Manager Wentworth Shire Council

Date

