



City of Salisbury Reconciliation Action Plan 'Welcome to Country' and 'Acknowledgement to Country' Protocols and Guidelines 2014

These Protocols and Guidelines:

- provide information about the reasons why recognition of Country is important and the process of implementing the protocols within the City of Salisbury; and
- enable a consistent process across City of Salisbury Council.

Why Recognition of Country is important

For Kurna people, the recognition of Country is a sign of respect that acknowledges the traditional sacred, cultural and spiritual significance of Country, the lore of the Kurna people. Through the recognition of Country, awareness about Kurna culture is shared.

'Welcome to Country' has always existed as a protocol for Aboriginal people. It is considered that being in someone else's Country means following formal processes and sharing knowledge between cultures. First Nations people visiting Australia may not feel welcome to speak, work and act if they are not formally welcomed to Country.

For non-Aboriginal people, it is a starting point to educate current and future generations about Aboriginal people and cultures. It is a position from which a sense of pride and respect in Aboriginal cultures can grow.

Incorporating Welcome and Acknowledgement protocols into official meetings and events recognises Aboriginal people as the First Australians and custodians of Kurna land. It promotes an awareness of the past and ongoing connection to place of Aboriginal Australians.

Difference between a 'Welcome to Country' and 'Acknowledgement to Country'

An 'Acknowledgement of Country' is also a formal process but, unlike the 'Welcome', it can be undertaken by non-Aboriginal people as well as Aboriginal people from another Country. Its purpose is to publicly recognise Kurna people as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the Adelaide Plains. Informally, it is strongly encouraged for non-Aboriginal people to provide Acknowledgment to Country in Kurna language.

A 'Welcome to Country' is a formal process which recognises both Aboriginal people from another Country and non-Aboriginal people. The Welcome can only be undertaken by Kurna people having the authority and respect within the Kurna community, usually Elders within the local area. Speeches and other forms of ceremony may also be involved.

Acknowledgement of Country

An Acknowledgement of Country is a way of showing awareness of and respect for the traditional Aboriginal owners of the land on which a meeting or event is being held, and of recognising the continuing connection of Aboriginal peoples to their Country.

Acknowledgement protocols at meetings can help promote greater appreciation of Aboriginal culture, show respect for Aboriginal people living in Council areas and can lead to better community relationships to assist the reconciliation process.

An Acknowledgment of Country can be informal or formal and involves acknowledging the Aboriginal owners of the land.

At a meeting, speech or formal occasion the speaker can begin their proceedings by offering an Acknowledgement of Country. Unlike a Welcome to Country, it can be presented by a non-Aboriginal person or Aboriginal person from another country. Informally, it is strongly encouraged for non-Aboriginal people to provide Acknowledgment to Country in Kurna language.

When to organise an Acknowledgement of Country

At a meeting, speech or formal occasion the speaker can begin proceedings by offering an Acknowledgement of Country.

The City of Salisbury Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group recommends the following Acknowledgement of Country wording:

The City of Salisbury acknowledges that we are meeting on the traditional Country of the Kurna people of the Adelaide Plains and pays respect to Elders past and present. We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship with the land. We acknowledge that they are of continuing importance to the Kurna people living today.

The Kurna language translation of this statement is:

City of Salisburyrlu tampinthe, ngadlu Kurna yartangka inparrinthe. Kurna miyurna yaitya mathanya Wama Tarntanyaku, Purkarnanti puki-unangku yalaka kuma. Parnaku yailtya, parnaku tapa purruna, parnaku yarta ngadlu tampinthe. Yalaka Kurna miyurna itu yailtya, tapa purruna, yarta kuma puru martinthe, puru warri-apinthe, puru tangka martulayinthe

Acknowledgement of Country in written forms

There are times when a written Acknowledgement of Country may be appropriate. Eg:

- on all official Council meeting agendas for Sub Committees, Committees and Council;
- Council publications;
- Council documents; and
- Council website.

Welcome to Country

When to organise a Welcome to Country

A Welcome to Country involves traditional Aboriginal people, usually Elders within the local area, welcoming people to their land. It usually happens at the opening of significant events involving dignitaries.

The appropriate format for the Welcome to Country will need to be discussed with the Kurna presenter. The Welcome could involve speeches or other forms of ceremony eg: singing, dance, smoking ceremony when significant Council events are held with senior dignitaries or overseas visitors.

Welcome to Country process

Welcome to Country must always be done at the beginning of an event.

Information about the person/group presenting the Welcome is to be shared with the audience: this information is to be organised with the Kurna presenter prior to the event. This information is spoken by the facilitator or MC when introducing the Kurna person/group and generally included on the flyer or event's agenda.

As a mark of respect, any Kurna person/group invited to deliver a Welcome to Country is to be invited to the entire event not just to the Welcoming Ceremony.

Before commencing your event, please arrange for the facilitator or MC to meet and greet the Kurna person/group delivering the Welcome to Country. They can then confirm the sequence of events that will be followed and any additional information that the Kurna person/group want shared in the introduction.

Engaging a Kurna person/group for Welcome to Country

Access the Register of Kurna people and groups who have been approved by the City of Salisbury Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group. The Register includes contact details and other information about the person/group.

Contact the selected person or group to ascertain their availability. Arrangements will need to be confirmed in writing (letter or email) to formally request their involvement and inform them of all relevant details: date, timing, location, group size, where participants are from, who they are/their status, and the purpose of the event.

Honorarium arrangements need to be agreed to before finalising booking of the presenter.

Please provide as much notice as possible about your request to ensure the availability of the Kurna person/group you want involved. It is recommended that contact is made with the Kurna person/group closer to the event to discuss final details and as a reminder for the event.

You may wish to arrange that a second person be contacted and asked to 'stand by' in case the original person is not in a position to attend due to unforeseen circumstances.

Should it not be possible to attain the services of a Kurna person/group to deliver the Welcome, an Acknowledgement can be done instead.

Recognising Aboriginal Elders present at Council events

Kaurna Elders attending Council events should be included in the sections of speeches where dignitaries present are recognised.

References:

Adelaide City Council Protocol and Guidelines on 'Welcome to Country' and 'Acknowledgment of Country'.

Local Government Association: Protocol Tips

Reconciliation Australia Welcome to and Acknowledgement of Country 24 March 2010 Q & A factsheet.