



ELM19 RECOGNITION OF ABORIGINAL CULTURE AND HISTORY

Aim	<p>To provide clear guidelines to the Elected Members and Shire Staff in order to recognise the unique position of Aboriginal people in Australian culture and history.</p> <p>Aboriginal people are the original custodians/traditional owners of the land. It is important this unique position is recognised to enable the wider community to share in Aboriginal culture and heritage, facilitating better relationships between Indigenous people and other Australians.</p>
Application	All Elected Members and Staff
Statutory Environment	<i>Local Government Act 1995 - S 3.1(i)</i>
Principles	<p>Strategic Community Plan 2017 – 2027 (Desktop Review 2019)</p> <p>Goal 03 Unique Heritage and Environment Objective 3 Celebration of history and heritage</p>
Approval Date	OMC 17 December 2019 (MINUTE: 722/2019)

AIM

These guidelines apply to all Elected Members and Shire Officers responsible for organising events/ functions/ceremonies/meetings where ‘Acknowledgement of Country’ or ‘Welcome to Country’ ceremonies should be included in official proceedings. Also to outline other recognition actions in which the Shire may engage.

THE ‘ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY’

(i) Definition of Acknowledgement of Country

An ‘Acknowledgement of Country’ is an acknowledgement of traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander custodians/traditional owners of land in order to pay respect to them. It is a means by which all people can show respect for the Aboriginal culture and heritage and the ongoing relationship the traditional custodians have with the land.



The 'Acknowledgement of Country' can be performed by any person, Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal.

(ii) Appropriate Place

When planning an official event, Elected Members or Officers should ensure that an Acknowledgement of Country' is delivered where possible.

In particular, an 'Acknowledgement of Country' should be given by a speaker at the beginning of the event.

(iii) Events

Events for 'Acknowledgement of Country' include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Significant events where members of the public, representatives of governments and/or the media are present;
- Council Meetings; and
- Forums, Conferences, Briefing Sessions and Major Workshops where the public are present.

(iv) Phraseology

Events - For events, it is proposed the following will be read out -

On behalf of the Shire of Ashburton, we respectfully acknowledge the local Indigenous people, the traditional custodians of this land on which we are gathering today and pay our respects to them and all their elders both past and present.

Council Meetings - The following will be read out at each Shire of Ashburton Council Meeting and this may rotate amongst each Councillor on a voluntary basis –

As representatives of the Shire of Ashburton Council, we respectfully acknowledge the local Indigenous people, the traditional custodians of this land where we are meeting upon today and pay our respects to them and all their elders both past, present and emerging.



2. THE 'WELCOME TO THE COUNTRY'

- (i) A 'Welcome to the Country' is where the traditional Aboriginal custodians welcome people to their land by providing historical and cultural information to the people in attendance. Steps should be taken to ensure that the appropriate representative is invited to perform the 'Welcome', because it is a significant recognition and a formal process. A 'Welcome to Country' should always occur at the opening of the event in question, preferably as the first item in the order of proceedings.
- (ii) Events for a 'Welcome to Country' include (but are not limited to) the following:
 - Significant events involving the State/Federal Government;
 - Significant civic functions / ceremonies and significant launches / openings of new buildings.
- (iii) The 'Welcome to the Country' is conducted by a recognised representative/s of the relevant local Aboriginal community.
- (iv) A 'Welcome to the 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. For example, a:
 - Traditional Welcoming Song;
 - Traditional Dance;
 - Didgeridoo performance;
 - "smoking" ceremony; or
 - Combination of any of the above.
- (v) 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 suggested response:

I would like to as a Shire of Ashburton representative, highlight that we too pay our respects to the local Indigenous people, the traditional custodians of this land where we are gathering here today. On behalf of the traditional custodians, past and present, we welcome you all to today's event.

4. OTHER RECOGNITION ACTIONS

There are other actions the Shire can undertake to further enhance the recognition of Aboriginal Culture and Council wishes to use the following means to do that:

- (i) Include the statement "The Shire of Ashburton respectfully acknowledges the traditional custodians of this land" in key documents, namely its Community Strategic Plan, its Corporate Business Plan; and in its Council Agenda and Minutes as well as its official webpage.



5. **CULTURAL PROTOCOLS TO BE OBSERVED**

There are certain indigenous protocols that must be observed (noting that in most cases, members of the Aboriginal community will advise of appropriate/inappropriate behaviour and/or if they are not permitted to discuss the protocol or ceremony with staff because of age, gender, status etc.

- (i) The practice of not mentioning the name of a deceased Aboriginal 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

Appropriate acknowledgement of guest artists that are either from or supported by the local community.