

# Welcome to and Acknowledgement of Country Policy

CEO



11 May 2022

*This policy was adopted by Council to set governing principles in place that align with the Strategic Community Plan 2040: Focus Area People: Outcome PE.1: Diverse cultural values are respected and adopted.*

## Objectives

1. Acknowledge the Wadandi and Pibulmen peoples as traditional owners of the land upon which the Shire of Augusta Margaret River is situated and demonstrate respect for the original custodians.
2. Support the wider community to recognise, respect and share in Wadandi Aboriginal culture and heritage thereby leading to better community relations and understanding.
3. Ensure a Welcome to Country by traditional owners is undertaken at events and programs as deemed required.
4. Provide direction and guidance to Councillors and officers of the Shire of Augusta Margaret River in delivering an Acknowledgement of Country.
5. Ensure an Acknowledgement of Country is included at appropriate events/meetings/workshops, on the Shire website and in significant corporate policies and publications.

## Application

This policy applies to all staff and Shire Councillors responsible for organising events, public functions, ceremonies and meeting within the shire where 'Acknowledgement of Country' or 'Welcome to Country' ceremonies should be included in official proceedings.

## Definitions

*Nil*

## Policy

### 1. Welcome to Country

The Welcome to Country ceremony is an acknowledgment and recognition of the rights of Aboriginal people. The act of getting a representative who has traditional local links to a particular place, area or region, is an acknowledgement of respect for traditional owners. It is

WELCOME TO AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY POLICY

respect for rights, respect for people and a respect for country. The waterway, land and cultural significant sites are still very important to Aboriginal people. It is an acknowledgement of the past and provide a safe passage for visitors and a mark of respect (South West Aboriginal Land & Sea Council, 2016).

A Welcome to Country occurs at the beginning of a formal event and can take many forms including dancing, singing, smoking ceremonies or a speech in traditional language or English (Reconciliation Australia, 2017).

## **2. Acknowledgment of Country**

An Acknowledgment of Country is a way that non-Aboriginal people can show respect for Aboriginal heritage and the ongoing relationship of traditional owners with the land (South West Aboriginal Land & Sea Council 2016).

## **3. Commitment**

The Shire of Augusta Margaret River:

- a) Acknowledges the Wadandi and Pibulmen people as the original inhabitants and traditional owners of the land in and around the Shire of Augusta Margaret River;
- b) Acknowledges the importance of including the local Aboriginal community in decisions relating to Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country;
- c) Acknowledges the importance of paying respect to the traditional custodians of the land, their Elders past and present and the continuing cultural and spiritual practices of local Aboriginal people;
- d) Acknowledges the value of local Elders and traditional owners and their intellectual cultural property; and
- e) Will provide Councillors and officers with an understanding of the importance of Welcome to and Acknowledgement of Country.

## **4. Implementation**

**Welcome to Country** - major Shire and civic events that may include:

- a) Major conference
  - (Regional or state-wide, hosted by the Shire of Augusta Margaret River)
  
- b) Major large scale Shire-led events may include:
  - Invitation to several dignitaries, Members of Parliament, Politicians, Department Heads (e.g. President launches, exhibitions, award ceremonies)
  - Significant media market around the event
  - Citizenship ceremonies – although not a major event, it is considered significant due to its role in welcoming people from diverse cultures

c) Opening of a new building

d) Welcoming New Councillors – may include either an official Welcome or Acknowledgement of Country to newly elected Council at biannual elections.

Officers, where necessary, may wish to consult with local Aboriginal Elders, traditional owners or groups as part of the event as to what is appropriate for the occasion.

When it is not possible to arrange a Welcome to Country at such events, an Acknowledgement of Country is the minimum requirement.

**Acknowledgement of Country** – relevant Shire, civic meetings, events and publications include:

- a) Council meetings
- b) Exhibition openings
- c) Annual art awards
- d) Shire website and in significant corporate policies and publications
- e) Significant policy, report or project launches
- f) Whole of organisation functions
- g) Formal gatherings, functions or ceremonies

## 5. Financial Implications

In providing cultural services such as a Welcome to Country, Aboriginal people are using their intellectual property and should be appropriately remunerated. Fees will be negotiated with the Elder who is engaged to provide a Welcome to Country. Financial allocations for Welcome to Country Protocols to be observed will be included in the Shire's budget on an annual basis.

## Relevant legislation

*Nil*

## Related documents

Resources:

Kaartdijin Noongar - <https://www.noongarculture.org.au/>

Southwest Land and Sea Council - <http://www.noongar.org.au/>

Reconciliation Australia - <https://www.reconciliation.org.au/>

Creative Spirits - <https://www.creativespirits.info/#axzz4jNVOPNuS>

School of Indigenous Studies UWA - <http://www.boodjar.sis.uwa.edu.au/clickable-regions-map>

### Document and version control table

WELCOME TO AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY POLICY

<b>Responsible Directorate</b>	Office of the CEO		
<b>Contact officer</b>	Chief Executive Officer		
<b>Adopted / approved by:</b>	Council		
<b>Date of adoption / approval:</b>	11.05.2022	<b>Decision Ref:</b> OM2022/74	
<b>Date of next review</b>	2026		
<b>Document No.</b>	N240677	<b>File No.</b>	<b>GOV/38</b>
<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Decision Ref.</b>	<b>Brief description</b>
1.0	24/1/2018	OM2018/15	Initial Issue
2.0	22.05.2022	OM2022/74	Full Review

WELCOME TO AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY POLICY