



# ABORIGINAL PROTOCOLS

## POLICY

P4.0185.1

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# ABORIGINAL PROTOCOLS

**DIVISION:** Sport, Community & Recreation

**BRANCH:** Community Development

**CATEGORY:** 2

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## PART 1 – INTRODUCTION

### 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Camden Local Government Area (LGA) sits in traditional Dharawal lands and is a historically significant area in relation to local Aboriginal culture and heritage.
- 1.2 Acknowledgment of Aboriginal community and associated protocols demonstrates Council's commitment to Aboriginal people.
- 1.3 Working with the Aboriginal community requires sensitivity to history and culture.

### 2. OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 To guide Council interactions with the local Aboriginal community by outlining some acceptable protocols.
- 2.2 To recommend and explain simple protocols that can be used to acknowledge the local Aboriginal community.
- 2.3 To promote inclusive best practice that will assist understanding of and responsiveness to the local Aboriginal community.
- 2.4 To promote a greater understanding and acceptance of general cultural awareness.

### 3. SCOPE

- 3.1 These Protocols apply to all Council staff, consultants, contractors, volunteers and delegates.

### 4. DEFINITIONS

- 4.1 **Council** means Camden Council.
- 4.2 **Protocols** means "appropriate ways of behaving, communicating and showing respect for diversity of history and culture" (Working with Aboriginal communities, NSW Board of Studies).
- 4.3 **Aboriginal Communities** means the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population of the Camden LGA.

- 4.4 **Intellectual property** means intangible, personal knowledge, understandings and assets of a cultural or creative nature.
- 4.5 **Traditional Custodian** means an Aboriginal person born on local lands.

## PART 2 - POLICY STATEMENT

### 5. PROTOCOLS

- 5.1 Cultural protocols are customs, values, and codes of behaviour that are important to the identity of a cultural group. Protocols are an important part of all cultures and provide guidance on how to treat and work with people in a respectful and useful way.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, are the original inhabitants of Australia. Observing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols at meetings, events, conferences and forums demonstrates respect and appreciation for the cultural traditions, history, diversity and contribution made by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community as the first peoples of this nation.

- 5.2 Following are some simple protocols that can provide an opportunity to pay respect, build relationships and share in Aboriginal culture. The main protocols that can be easily adopted are the Welcome to Country or Acknowledgement of Country, the appropriate utilisation and representation of the Aboriginal Flag and traditional smoking ceremonies.

### 6. WELCOME TO COUNTRY OR ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY

- 6.1 A Welcome to Country or an Acknowledgment of Country should be included at Council and civic events and meetings as a sign of inclusion and respect. The purpose is to welcome people to visit and meet on Dharawal lands and recognise Aboriginal people as traditional custodians of the land. Council officers are encouraged to include an Acknowledgment of Country at the beginning of meetings, trainings and consultations.
- 6.2 **A Welcome to Country** can only be provided by a Traditional Custodian of the local land or other Aboriginal person granted permission by a Traditional Custodian. A non-Aboriginal person, or an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person from a different community, cannot do a Welcome to Country. They should do an Acknowledgement of Country/traditional custodians.
- 6.3 A Welcome to Country should be performed at all significant or major Council and community events, including but not limited to Australia Day and festivals, as well as openings, launches or where it is appropriate to welcome people into the local community.
- 6.4 **An Acknowledgement of Country** can be delivered by any Aboriginal person present. This is the option if there is not a Traditional Custodian present. An Acknowledgement of Country can also be delivered where there is no Aboriginal person present (or by permission of those present).

- 6.5 Either a Welcome or an Acknowledgment can take various forms and may be formal or informal. An acceptable example is:

*“I would like to acknowledge that this meeting is being held on the traditional lands of the Dharawal people and pay my respect to Elders both past and present.”*

Council currently uses the following statement at Council meetings:

*“I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land on which we meet and pay our respect to elders both past and present.”*

## **7. THE ABORIGINAL FLAG**

- 7.1 The Aboriginal flag should be flown in the appropriate manner. Council permanently displays the Aboriginal flag. This flag should also be flown at half-mast at appropriate times to recognise periods of significance to the Aboriginal community.

## **8. SMOKING CEREMONIES**

- 8.1 Smoking Ceremonies are to be conducted by Aboriginal people with specialised cultural knowledge. These ceremonies aim to cleanse the space in which the ceremony takes place, for example a new building. Smoking ceremonies are usually only performed at major events. It is recommended that appropriate advice be sought before considering undertaking a smoking ceremony.

## **9. FEES FOR SERVICE**

- 9.1 Fees for service or appropriate acknowledgement should be granted when Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people conduct cultural services that utilise intellectual property. A respectful conversation should be initiated to establish fees for service or acknowledgement upon engagement.

## **10. EVENTS**

- 10.1 Council can further acknowledge the local Aboriginal community by observing and celebrating culturally significant dates and events such as NAIDOC (National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee) where protocols can be incorporated.

## **11. DOCUMENTS**

- 11.1 High level Council documents can include an Acknowledgement. An acceptable example is:

*“Council acknowledges the Dharawal people as the traditional custodians of this land and pays our respect to their Elders both past and present.”*

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**RELEVANT LEGISLATIVE INSTRUMENTS:**

*Anti-Discrimination Act 1977*  
*Flags Act 1953*

**RELATED POLICIES, PLANS AND PROCEDURES:**

Camden CSP, Key Direction 5  
Community Wellbeing Policy  
Civic and Ceremonial Functions and Representation Policy

**RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR:**

Sport, Community & Recreation

**APPROVAL:**

Council

**HISTORY:**

<b>Version</b>	<b>Approved by</b>	<b>Changes made</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>EDMS Number</b>
1	Council	New policy	09/07/2019	19/203593