



Dubbo Aboriginal Community Working Party

Chair: Darren Toomey - P: 02 6801 4423

Secretariat: *Natalie Bramble Management*

E: admin@nbmanagement.com.au

P: 02 6884 4654

PO Box 1697, 65 Bultje Street

DUBBO NSW 2830

Dubbo Aboriginal Community Working Party Cultural Protocols and Practices Policy

Dubbo City Council recognises the unique position of Aboriginal people in our culture and history.

Dubbo City Council on behalf of the people of the Dubbo, is committed to the process of genuine recognition of the truth of the Australia's history, and addressing the disadvantage that Aboriginal people continue to face today.

Aboriginal people are the original owners of the land and it is important that this special position of Aboriginal people is recognised and incorporated into official protocol to enable the wider community to share in Aboriginal culture and facilitate better relationships between Aboriginal people and the general community.

Official events and ceremonies engage the attention of participants, observers and the broader community. These events also symbolize the values of our community and the way we envision ourselves.

By incorporating Aboriginal cultural practices/ceremonies into official events we are able to;

- Recognise and pay respect to Aboriginal peoples, cultures and heritage.
- Communicate aboriginal cultural practices to the broader community to promote respect and understanding
- Demonstrate that Aboriginal cultures are living through maintenance and practice of ceremonies and protocols
- Demonstrate recognition of Aboriginal people unique position which can assist in building relationships and partnerships

The purpose of this policy is to assist NSW Public Sector agencies to observe the appropriate protocols of the recognition of Aboriginal people at official events or at events where the Dubbo City Council is a major sponsor.

Observation of Aboriginal Protocols

The type of ceremony undertaken at an official event should be appropriate to the nature of size of each event in accordance with the procedures set out below and negotiations with local Aboriginal Elders and organisations.

It is important to note that ceremonies and practices differ from place to place. The planning timetable of official events should allow time for negotiations with Aboriginal communities, as well, discussion and decision making within those communities.

Minimum Requirements

When planning an official event, agencies should consult with a member of the organisation to plan and organise ceremonies. These organisations include the Local Aboriginal Land Council, Department of Aboriginal Affairs, traditional owners and other regional Aboriginal representative or advisory structures, Native Title Services NSW, NSW Aboriginal Land Council and or the Department of Aboriginal Affairs. These organisations can provide specific information on;

- Appropriate ceremonies and performances
- Aboriginal Elders and communities who should be contacted
- Contacts for Aboriginal cultural practice provider

As a minimum requirement, an Acknowledgement of Country ceremony should be undertaken. A protocol for the ceremony is provided below. At events at which flags are shown, the order of display, from an audience perspective from left to right, the Australian flag, the NSW flag, the Aboriginal flag and the Torres Strait Islander flag.

Major Official Events

All major official events, where members of the public, representatives of other Governments and/or the media are present, should include a Welcome to Country ceremony.

Events in this category include;

- Commemorations and major festivals
- Major launches of Government policies and programs
- Conferences held or sponsored by the Dubbo City Council
- International events held in Australia of which the Dubbo City Council
- Citizenship ceremonies; and
- Major international sporting events

Agencies and communities are encouraged to be innovative in recognizing Aboriginal heritage. Other ceremonies or practices may also be undertaken as considered appropriate by Aboriginal people, including dances and performances. However, as indicated above, a Welcome to Country should be incorporated into all major events.

At events which are not official events, but where the Dubbo City Council are a major sponsor, negotiations should be undertaken with the event organizer to incorporate a Welcome to country into the event, where Aboriginal people believe it appropriate.

Calendar

Each agency should develop its own calendar/database of significant events in which Aboriginal ceremonies will be undertaken.

Appropriate Ceremonies

Welcome to Country

The *Welcome to Country* ceremony should, where possible, be undertaken by Elders locally recognised Aboriginal community spokesperson or locally recognised cultural service provider.

There is no exact wording when *Welcoming to Country*. As such, the content of the ceremony should be negotiated between the agency and the provider with reference to the nature of the event and community practices. Generally, providers offer participants local Aboriginal history and cultural information and will go on to welcome the delegates to the country.

Acknowledgement of Country

An Acknowledgement of Country is a way that non- Aboriginal people can show respect for Aboriginal and Torre Strait Islander heritage and the ongoing relationship of tradition owners with the Land.

A Chair or Speaker begins the meeting by acknowledging that the meeting is taking place in the country of the traditional owners. On occasion, there may be disputes about who the traditional owners are. Those who acknowledge the country, can “acknowledge all the traditional owners of the land’ or can “acknowledge the traditional owners of this land’ without naming those people. Acknowledging Country in this way will not cause offence where there is some potential or actual dispute around ownership.

Typical Acknowledgement of Country statements can include;

- I would like to acknowledge that this meeting is being held on the traditional lands of the (appropriate group) people.
- I would like to acknowledge that this meeting is being held on Aboriginal land and recognise the strength, resilience and capacity of Aboriginal people in this land.

Smoking Ceremony

Smoking Ceremonies are conducted by Aboriginal people with specialised cultural knowledge. The ceremony aims to cleanse the space in which the ceremony takes place. Given the significant nature of the ceremony, smoking ceremonies are usually only performed a major events.

Other Ceremonies

As indicated previously, other ceremonies may be undertaken along with those outlined above. Agencies are encouraged to consult with local Aboriginal communities on the best form of recognition for each event the ceremony reflects the Dubbo City Council commitment to Reconciliation.

Fee for Service

In providing cultural services such as Welcome to Country, artistic performances and ceremonies Aboriginal people are using their intellectual property. As such providers of these services should be appropriately remunerated.

Appropriate remuneration and /or assistance should be negotiated between the cultural service provider and the agency, considering:

- Travel to and from the event
- Public profile of the event

The Department of Aboriginal Affairs maintains a fee for service schedule. The schedule sets minimum fees for a range of Aboriginal cultural services. It is important to note that the schedule is only a guide and stated minimum fees are current as per the relevant certified agreement.

Dubbo Aboriginal Community Working Party Cultural Practices and Performances Fee Schedule

Cultural Practice	Certified Agreement	Minimum Fee
Welcome to Country	Nil	\$100
Smoking Ceremony	Performers Certified Agreement 2003-2005	\$530
Didgereedoo Performance	Musicians Certified Agreement 2003-2005	\$360
Dancer Category 1 (inexperienced)	Performers Certified Agreement 2003-2005	\$430
Dancer Category 2 (experienced)	Performers Certified Agreement 2003-2005	\$450
Guest Lecturer (based on 2 hrs preparation and 1 hr delivery)	University of Sydney (Academic and Teaching Staff) Enterprise Agreement 1999 - 2002	\$100

Welcome to Country Representatives of the Dubbo Community

Uncle Russell Ryan

Aunty Bub Towney

Uncle John Hill

Aunty Mary Toomey