



# ABORIGINAL PROTOCOLS

## POLICY

P4.0185.3

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# ABORIGINAL PROTOCOLS POLICY

**DIVISION:** Sport, Community & Activation

**BRANCH:** Community Outcomes

**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 waterways and is a historically significant area in relation to local Aboriginal culture and heritage.
- 1.2 Recognition is given to surrounding Gundungurra and Dharug people that may also have connections to areas within Camden LGA.
- 1.3 Acknowledgment of Aboriginal community and associated protocols demonstrate Council's commitment to Aboriginal peoples.
- 1.4 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** is used to refer to Aboriginal individuals or Groups who can prove a traditional or historical connection, attachment, and/or relationship to an area of land and waterways that include the Camden LGA.

## **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 (ATSI) 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 and Torres Strait Island (ATSI) 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 waterways and to recognise Aboriginal peoples 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. A non-Aboriginal person, or an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person from a different community, cannot do a Welcome to Country. They should do an Acknowledgement of Country/Traditional Custodians. A Welcome to Country should be performed at all significant or major Council and community events, and festivals, as well as openings, launches or where it is appropriate to welcome people into the local community. All efforts should be made to ensure that an Acknowledgement of Country is performed by a Traditional Custodian. If this cannot be done, then a non-Aboriginal person may give the introductory Acknowledgment of Country.

6.3 In addition, brief Acknowledgements of Country *may be* made by all ‘presenters/performers/speakers’ at events if they so choose to demonstrate a sign of respect. If the presenters/performers/speakers reference and acknowledge a learning from the Aboriginal giver of the Welcome, it will demonstrate a much deeper sign of respect.

6.4 Either a Welcome or an Acknowledgment can take various forms and may be formal or informal. An acceptable example for Camden Council is:

*“I would like to acknowledge this meeting is being held on the Traditional Lands and Waterways of the Dharawal people. I would also like to recognise surrounding Dharug and Gundungurra peoples and pay my respect to Elders past, present, and emerging.”*

6.5 An acceptable Acknowledgement of Country hosted by Camden Council from the Camden LGA in hybrid or online settings can be:

*“I acknowledge I am hosting/recording this meeting/webinar from the Traditional Lands and Waterways of the Dharawal peoples. I also acknowledge the traditional custodians of the various lands on which you all work today and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples participating in this meeting/webinar. I pay my respect to Elders past, present, and emerging.”*

6.6 An acceptable Acknowledgement of Country for Council staff hosting the hybrid or online meetings from their homes or other lands can be:

*“I acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the various lands on which we work today and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples participating in this meeting/webinar. I pay my respect to Elders past, present, and those emerging.”*

The [AIATSIS Map of Indigenous Australia](#) provides further information on Traditional Owners.

6.7 It is recommended that the Acknowledgements of Country is included:

- At all Council Meetings
- At all Council’s Community facing events.
- At Directorate staff meetings and staff training sessions.
- At Council’s Reference/Advisory group meetings.
- At Council Committee meetings.

## **7. THE ABORIGINAL FLAG**

7.1 The Aboriginal and the Torres Strait Islands 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 peoples 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.
- 8.2 Consideration should be given to ensure that smoking ceremonies are led by Dharawal Traditional Custodians and are limited to events that are significant to Aboriginal peoples.

## **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 acknowledge that the Camden LGA is situated on the sacred Traditional Lands and Waterways of the Dharawal peoples. We also recognise surrounding Dharug and Gundungurra peoples that may have connections to these lands. We pay our respects to Elders from the past, present, and emerging, and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples on these lands*

\* \* \*

**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
2	Council	Amendments to the policy have been made to make the policy more inclusive of surrounding Dharug, and Gundungurra peoples and specific acknowledgement is given to the Dharawal Peoples as traditional custodian of the land and waterways within the Camden LGA. The policy has also provided samples of Acknowledgement of Country for use by Council staff and occasions when the Acknowledgement of Country should be done.	09/05/2023	19/203593
3	Governance	Editorial amendment.	29/06/2023	19/203593