

ADELAIDE CITY COUNCIL PROTOCOL AND GUIDELINES ON
**‘WELCOME TO COUNTRY’
AND ‘ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
OF COUNTRY’**



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are advised that this publication may contain images, names or content of deceased persons.

Reconciliation Artwork by Paul Herzich, commissioned by Adelaide City Council



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Adelaide City Council acknowledges that we are meeting on the traditional Country of the Kaurna people of the Adelaide Plains and pays respect to Elders past and present.

We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship with the land.
We acknowledge that they are of continuing importance to the Kaurna people living today.'



ADELAIDE CITY COUNCIL PROTOCOL AND GUIDELINES ON 'WELCOME TO COUNTRY' AND 'ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY'

1 WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A 'WELCOME TO COUNTRY' AND AN 'ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY'?

A **'Welcome to Country'** is a formal process which recognises both Aboriginal people from another Country and non Aboriginal people.

The Welcome can only be undertaken by Kaurna people having the authority and respect within the Kaurna people to represent Kaurna. Speeches and other forms of ceremony may be involved.

An alternative terminology for 'Welcome' is 'Greeting'. Either terminology is accepted and may be used at the discretion of the Kaurna person/group performing the Welcome.

An **'Acknowledgement of Country'** is also a formal process but, unlike the 'Welcome', it can be undertaken by non Aboriginal people as well as Aboriginal people from another Country. Its purpose is to publicly recognise Kaurna people as the Traditional Owner and Custodians of the Adelaide Plains.

Whenever a 'Welcome to Country' occurs it should be accompanied by an 'Acknowledgement of Country' – **see Section 4.**

2 WHY IS RECOGNITION OF COUNTRY SO IMPORTANT?

There are many reasons why recognition of Country (through either the 'Welcome to Country' or the 'Acknowledgement of Country') is important for Kaurna people, Aboriginal people from another Country, and non Aboriginal people.

For Kaurna people, the recognition of Country is a sign of respect that acknowledges the sacred, cultural and spiritual significance of Country, the lore and the Kaurna people. Through the recognition of Country, awareness about Kaurna culture is shared.

'Welcome to Country' has always existed as a protocol for Aboriginal people. It is considered that being in someone else's Country means following formal processes and sharing knowledge between cultures. Aboriginal people visiting from another Country may not feel welcome to speak, work and act if they are not formally welcomed to Country.

For non Aboriginal people, it is a starting point to educate current and future generations about Aboriginal people and cultures. It is a position from which a sense of pride in Aboriginal cultures can grow. To ensure recognition is a richer experience, a 'Welcome to Country' must extend beyond words and have substance and meaning for all involved.

Adelaide City Council's Protocol on 'Welcome to Country' and 'Acknowledgement of Country' enables a consistent process that is embedded within policies and procedures.



3 HOW TO DO AN 'ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY'

Delivering an 'Acknowledgement of Country' is a personal as well as an organisational statement, therefore it is important to speak in a personal and genuine manner to convey the respect and meaning behind your statements. You are also encouraged to mentally prepare for an Acknowledgement of Country before you present it.

Alternatively it is acceptable to use your own words. You could draw on these essential points to speak your acknowledgement:

Essential points to include:

- We are meeting on the country of Kaurna people
- We recognise Kaurna as the Traditional Owner and Custodians of the Adelaide Plains
- We recognise the significance for Kaurna people of their:
 - cultural and spiritual relationship with the land, sea, waterways and sky
 - cultural heritage and beliefs
- The Acknowledgement is of continuing importance to Kaurna people living today.

Further points that may be included:

- We have built a beautiful city, but recognise that the process of settlement resulted in the dispossession and dislocation of Kaurna people.
- We seek opportunities to work with Kaurna people on how we continue to recognise them in our words, actions and place making.

For more information visit the Adelaide City Council website (under Community in the Reconciliation section) or click on the hyperlinks:

- Adelaide City Council Reconciliation Vision Statement
- Adelaide City Council National Sorry Day Acknowledgement

4 HOW TO DO AN 'ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY' ACCOMPANIED BY A 'WELCOME TO COUNTRY'

Once you have determined (through the relevant protocols) that an 'Acknowledgement of Country' should be accompanied by a 'Welcome to Country', you will need to engage a Kaurna person or group and ask them to be involved.

ENGAGING A KAURNA PERSON OR GROUP

First you will need to access the 'Welcome Register' of Kaurna people and groups who have been approved by Kaurna Nation Cultural Heritage Association representatives to deliver a 'Welcome to Country'. The 'Welcome Register' includes contact details; title eg Aunt/Uncle, preference for either 'Welcome' or 'Greeting' and other information about the person/group and what services they can provide. It is requested that a reminder is given to the Kaurna person or group prior to the event. For more information visit the Adelaide City Council website (under Your Community in the Welcome to Country section).

You will then need to write or email the selected person or group to ascertain their availability. Your arrangements will need to be confirmed in writing (letter or email) to formally request their involvement and inform them of all relevant details: date, timing, location, group size, where participants are from, who they are/their status, and the purpose of the event. Please provide as much notice as possible about your request, date and time to ensure the success of your event, the availability of Kaurna people you want involved, and to demonstrate your respect.

You may wish to arrange that a second person be contacted and asked to 'stand by' in case the original person is not in a position to attend due to unforeseen circumstances. Should it not be possible to attain the services of a Kaurna person to deliver the Welcome, an Acknowledgement can be done instead.



PREPARATION

Welcomes must always be done at the beginning of an event. To add further respect to the ceremony, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags may also be displayed.

To help give more meaning to the Welcome and display greater respect for the person or group delivering the Welcome, information about the person/group presenting the Welcome is to be shared with the audience: this information is available in the 'Welcome Register'. This information is to be spoken by the facilitator or Master/Mistress of Ceremony (MC) when introducing the Kaurna person and be included on a flyer or on the event's agenda. As a mark of respect, any Kaurna person invited to deliver a Welcome and Ceremony is to be invited to the entire event not just to the Welcoming Ceremony.

SEQUENCE TO FOLLOW FOR AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF, AND WELCOME TO, COUNTRY

Before commencing your event, please arrange for the facilitator or MC to meet and greet the Kaurna person or group delivering the 'Welcome to Country'. They can then confirm the sequence that will be followed and any other information that the Kaurna person or group wants shared in the introduction.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Using the essential and further points listed in Section 3 of these guidelines, the facilitator or MC gives a statement that acknowledges the Kaurna people and their connection to the country in the Adelaide City Council area. If the individual delivering the 'Acknowledgement to Country' does not feel confident about coming up with their own words, the Adelaide City Council endorsed statement may be quoted.

It is important to end the 'Acknowledgement to Country' by informing the audience that a Kaurna person/group has been invited to the event to welcome them all to Kaurna Country.

INTRODUCTION OF KAURNA PERSON OR GROUP DELIVERING THE WELCOME

The facilitator or MC then introduces the Kaurna person or group delivering the Welcome. This may include a brief history of the person or group and any other information discussed with the Kaurna person or group prior to starting the event. For example, this information might cover their role, relevance to the event, and position in Kaurna society, e.g. Senior Kaurna, Elder, culture bearer and/or cultural educator.

DELIVERY OF THE WELCOME AND RESPONSE

Depending on the Kaurna person or group undertaking the Welcome, there are slightly different approaches to delivering the Welcome and responding. Here are the three main versions.

Version 1: Welcome and response (spoken): The Kaurna person gives their Welcome to the event in English or in Kaurna language and English. The individual may also wish to give a brief speech to the audience, but this should not be expected.

At the end of the Welcome, the facilitator or MC should thank the Kaurna person for welcoming the group to Kaurna country.

For example:

7:23pm MC:

"Uncle Lewis O'Brien is a Kaurna Elder, from Point Pearce on the York Peninsula. Uncle Lewis O'Brien has been involved in numerous committees that in various ways deal with reconciliation and cultural issues. He was named Aboriginal Elder of the Year in 1977, was winner of the South Australian Local Hero award in 2003, and is Honorary Fellow of the University of South Australia"

"I now invite Uncle Lewis, Kaurna Elder to do a Welcome to Country"

7:35pm MC:

"I thank Uncle Lewis for welcoming the attendees to Kaurna country".



Version 2: Welcome and response – spoken plus

Ceremony by the same person or group: On occasions where a Ceremony is part of the Welcome, and is undertaken by the *same* person or group, the Facilitator or MC introduction can *add* this statement to their introduction.

To further our education on the Kaurna people, a Kaurna ceremony will be part of the Welcome today.

At the end of the spoken Welcome and ceremony, the facilitator or MC should thank the Kaurna person or group for welcoming the attendees of your event to Kaurna country.

For example:

7:23pm MC:

“To further our education on the Kaurna people as the Traditional Owner and Custodians of the Adelaide Plains, a Kaurna ceremony will be part of the Welcome today”.

“Karl is a Kaurna man born in Adelaide. He is the founder of the Paitya Dance Group in Adelaide. Karl entwines Kaurna knowledge and culture with present experience, including work with Kaurna language, stories and song”.

“I now invite Karl Telfer, to do a Greeting to Country followed by a short performance”

7:35pm MC:

“I thank Karl Telfer for greeting the attendees to Kaurna country”.

Version 3: Welcome and response – spoken plus

ceremony by a different person or group: On occasions where a Ceremony is part of the Welcome, and is undertaken by a different person or group, the facilitator or MC should introduce the second person or group after the spoken Welcome using a statement such as:

To further our education on the Kaurna people (name of persons/group) will now present a Kaurna Welcoming ceremony.

At the end of the ceremony, the facilitator or MC should thank the Kaurna person or group for welcoming the attendees to Kaurna country.

For example:

6.00pm MC:

Aunty Josie Agius, is a Kaurna Elder. She grew up in Point Pearce on the Yorke Peninsula. She is dedicated to keeping Aboriginal culture and language alive and this is seen through her tireless work with her community. She was one of South Australia’s first Aboriginal health and also education worker in schools. She currently devotes a lot of her time to the Port Youth Theatre, Kurruru.

“I now invite Aunty Josie Agius, Kaurna Elder to do a Welcome to Country”

6.05pm MC:

“I thank Aunty Josie for welcoming the attendees to Kaurna country”.

“To further our education on the Kaurna people as the Traditional Owner and Custodians of the Adelaide Plains, an Aboriginal cultural performance will be part of the Welcome today”.

“Traditional performance by Kurruru’s young men and boys aged from 10 to 14 years, Kurruru’s Boys Traditional Dance Group present dances of the Kaurna people - the traditional owner of the Adelaide Plains. Informed by teachings from Kaurna dancers, Kurruru’s Boys Traditional Dance group represents the next generation of knowledge bearers and cultural custodians.”

“I now invite the Kurruru’s Binnanendi Boys troupe to perform.”

6.07pm MC:

“Thank you Kurruru’s Binnanendi Boys Troupe for welcoming the attendees to Kaurna country.”



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY IN WRITTEN FORMS

There are times when a written acknowledgement fits the purpose of a meeting, gathering, place-making process i.e. installation of a plaque, or needs to be present on written documents, for example, in staff email signature block or on internal meeting agendas. The statement to use for this purpose is:

Council's endorsed statement is:

Adelaide City Council acknowledges that we are meeting on the traditional Country of the Kurna people of the Adelaide Plain and pays respect to Elders past and present.

We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship with the land. We acknowledge that they are of continuing importance to the Kurna people living today.



ADELAIDE CITY COUNCIL PROTOCOL ON 'WELCOME TO COUNTRY' AND 'ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY'

This protocol is to be read in conjunction with the 'Guidelines on Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country'. It provides detailed information about the reasons why recognition of Country is important and the process of implementing the protocol within the City of Adelaide. The document also explains the other forms of acknowledgement that Adelaide City Council has been and can engage in, including Acknowledgement of Country in written forms.

An alternative terminology for 'Welcome' is 'Greeting'. Either terminology is accepted and may be used at the discretion of the Kaurna person/group performing the Welcome.

Using the Decision Tree

The tree is designed to provide direction on whether the event that you are involved in will require a verbal Acknowledgement of Country or both an Acknowledgement and a Welcome to Country.

Acknowledgement of Country is delivered by a non Aboriginal person or an Aboriginal person from another Country (i.e. not Kaurna), whereas, Welcome to Country is only delivered by a Kaurna person and may involve both speeches and different forms of ceremony.

There are four key questions that will help guide your decision. Your answer to each question will lead you to one side of the tree or the other at each point.

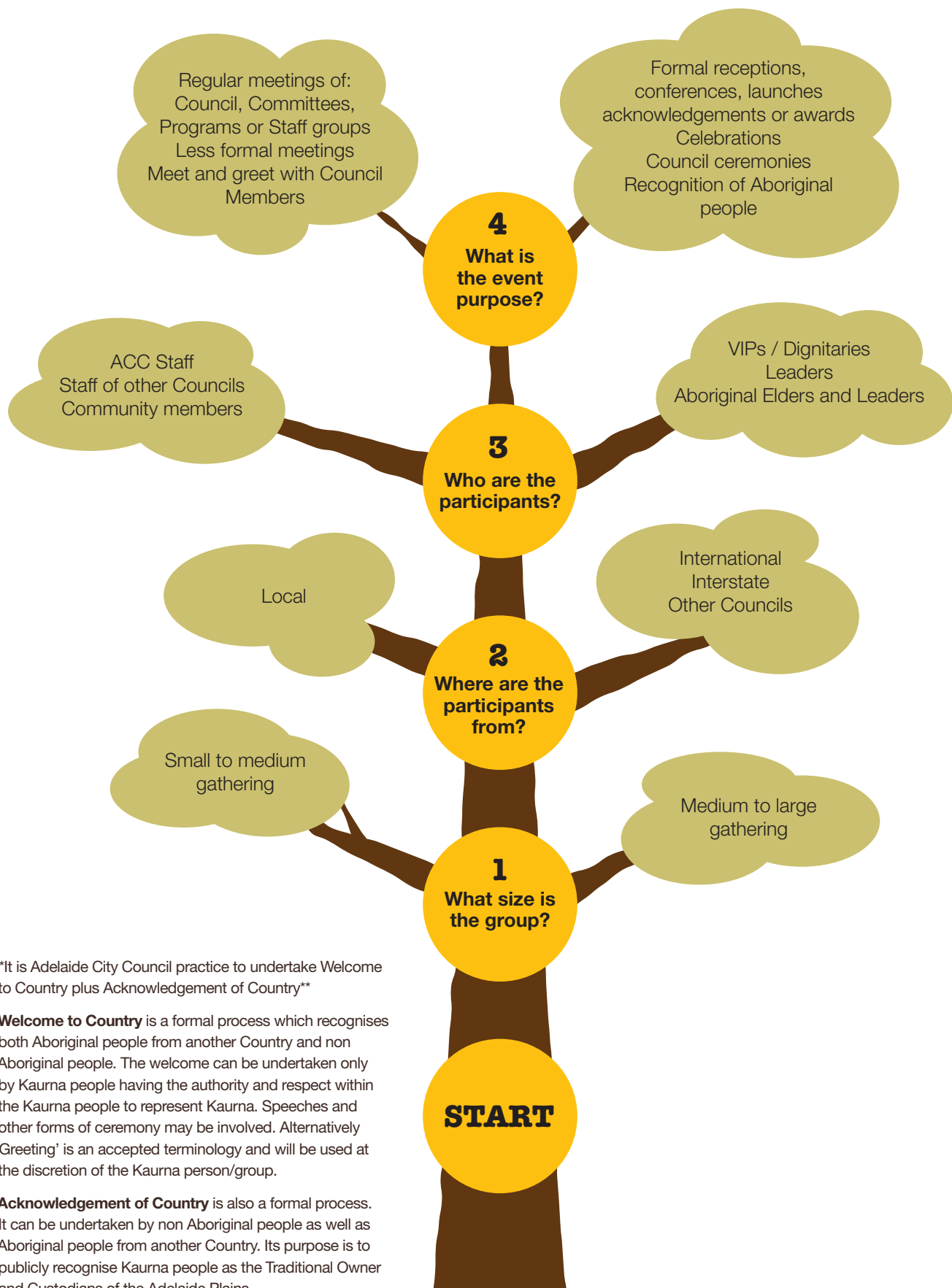
Follow these four steps:

1. Start at the bottom of the tree and answer Question 1 about group size – your answer will take you to one of the sides, e.g. if 10 people are involved, an Acknowledgement may only be needed but if 50 people are involved then an Acknowledgement and Welcome is likely to be more appropriate.
2. Continue up the tree to Question 2, which focuses on where participants are from – your answer may keep you on the same side, or may take you to the other side.
3. Move upward to Question 3 and consider who the participants are, i.e. their level of seniority, authority, leadership and influence – again, your answer may keep you on the same side as Question 2, or may take you to the other side.
4. Finally, move on to Question 4 about the event purpose – this question is at the top of the tree as it is possibly the most important criteria; e.g. your event may only be for a small group from Adelaide but its purpose may be significant to Kaurna people and therefore may need to include a Welcome.

Once you have determined if you need to undertake an 'Acknowledgement and Welcome to Country' or 'Acknowledgement of Country', refer to the Guidelines.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT PLUS WELCOME TO COUNTRY



****It is Adelaide City Council practice to undertake Welcome to Country plus Acknowledgement of Country****

Welcome to Country is a formal process which recognises both Aboriginal people from another Country and non Aboriginal people. The welcome can be undertaken only by Kurna people having the authority and respect within the Kurna people to represent Kurna. Speeches and other forms of ceremony may be involved. Alternatively 'Greeting' is an accepted terminology and will be used at the discretion of the Kurna person/group.

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Adelaide City Council
Customer Service Centre

Ground Floor, Colonel Light Centre
25 Pirie Street, Adelaide SA 5000

Telephone 08 8203 7203

adelaidecitycouncil.com/community/reconciliation