



PROTOCOL FOR ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND WELCOME TO COUNTRY

1. Purpose

The process of 'Welcome to Country' and 'Acknowledgement of Country' recognises the unique position of *Aboriginal people in Australian culture and history. Aboriginal people are the original Custodians of the Land. It is important this unique position is recognised and incorporated as part of official protocol and events to enable the wider community to share in Aboriginal culture and heritage, facilitating better relationships between Aboriginal people and other Australians.

The purpose of these guidelines is to ensure that the correct protocols are used for across all parts of our business, including events, programs and within the football club

2. Scope

These Guidelines apply to all staff responsible for organising 'Acknowledgement' and 'Welcome to Country' ceremonies for the Swan Districts Football Club.

3. The 'Acknowledgement of Country'

- 3.1 An 'Acknowledgement of Country' is a means by which all people can show respect for Aboriginal culture and heritage and the ongoing relationship the Traditional Custodians have with their Land.
- 3.2 An 'Acknowledgement of Country' would be used at functions such as presentation nights, Presidents Luncheons, in-house training, workshops, seminars and meetings. On such occasions, a Chair or Event Speaker may begin by Acknowledging that the meeting is taking place in the Country of the Traditional Custodians. For example:

'I would like to acknowledge the Noongar people who are the Traditional Custodians of the Land in which this event/Club or our football is played. I would also like to pay respect to the Elders both past and present of the Noongar (or Local region you are in) Nation and extend that respect to other Aboriginal Australians who are present today/this evening'.

- 3.3 At major functions such as Swan Medal, McSherry Medal, Finals matches, National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week events and other functions where official guests and dignitaries are in attendance, it is important that an Elder be asked to conduct the 'Welcome'. In addition, other 'welcoming activities' such as music and dance may be used under the direction of the Aboriginal Elder.



4. The 'Welcome to Country'

- 4.1 A 'Welcome to Country' is where the Traditional Aboriginal Custodians welcome people to their Land. Steps should be taken to ensure that the appropriate representative is invited to perform the 'Welcome', because it is a significant recognition and a formal process. A 'Welcome to Country' should always occur in the opening ceremony of the event in question, preferably as the first item.
- 4.2 The 'Welcome to Country' is conducted by a representative/s of the local Aboriginal Custodians who welcome the delegates and all in attendance. Protocols in relation to the performing of a 'Welcome to Country' Ceremony are well established and must be adhered to. If there is uncertainty as to whether an 'acknowledgement' or 'a welcome' is appropriate, advice may be sought from Chairperson of Swans Aboriginal Advisory Committee initially and or local Aboriginal organisations and or government agencies for further clarification.
- 4.3 A 'Welcome to Country' may consist of a single speech by the representative of the local Aboriginal community, or it may also include a performance. Performances may include a Traditional Welcoming Song, a Traditional Dance, a didgeridoo performance or a combination of any of the above. In most communities, there are performing artists who are regularly available for such occasions.

5. Negotiating a Welcome to Country'

- 5.1 Negotiations to perform a 'Welcome to Country' ceremony is to occur through the local Aboriginal organisation's contacts or similar.
- 5.2 It is important that the Aboriginal representative/s be contacted by telephone (to be asked personally) and then through a formal letter of invitation, or email if possible. All arrangements thereafter for the 'Welcome to Country' should be mutually negotiated. It is very important that the Aboriginal representative/s has been involved in, and is comfortable with, the arrangements. This may include the format of the ceremony, who should be invited, who should perform the 'Welcome to Country' and how that person will be recognised for their time and commitment.
- 5.3 You may also in many cases pay a fee for the service, to negotiate prior to the event and usually will require a cash payment on the day and or a deposit prior. This fee could be up to \$500.00 per event, payment is made by cash, an invoice, honorarium, or gift card.
- 5.4 Other considerations may include the arrangement of transport for the Elder/s and ensuring that refreshments and seating are provided.



6. Cultural Protocols to be Observed

- 6.1 There are certain Aboriginal protocols that must be observed:
- 6.1.1 The practice of not mentioning the name of a deceased Aboriginal person, or displaying photographic images of a deceased person unless agreed to by the relevant family;
 - 6.1.2 Sensitivity to knowledge that is specific to gender, age status, clan kinship (could commonly referred to as 'Women's Business' or 'Men's Business');
- 6.2 Members of the Aboriginal community will advise staff of intrusive behaviour and/or if they are not permitted to discuss the protocol or ceremony with staff because of age, gender, status or because staff do not belong to their Clan or Tribal Group. If staff are in doubt, assistance should be sought in the first instance from Chairperson of Swans Aboriginal Advisory Committee and or may be directed from there to a local Aboriginal organisation or government agencies for clarification on local laws/traditions.

7. Glossary of Terms

Aboriginal – The first Australians and refers to any language group in Western Australia.

**Swan Districts Football Club would like to advise that Aboriginal in this document is inclusive of Torres Strait Islander people too.*

Aboriginal organisations - an incorporated Aboriginal organisation, initiated, based in and governed by, the local Aboriginal community to deliver holistic and culturally appropriate services to the Aboriginal community that controls it.

Aboriginal community – Local Aboriginal people that live in your town, suburbs, region. Depending on your location there may be more than one Language group or community in your town.

Aboriginal Elder - is someone who has gained recognition as a custodian of knowledge and lore, and who has permission to disclose knowledge and beliefs.

Men's Business' – Aboriginal Men and Aboriginal Women had different roles in ceremonies and these roles varied from language group to language group. Some ceremonies were for men only. In many areas Aboriginal men were given the role as guardians of a special spiritual site where a ceremony was performed. This role meant that the site would need to be cared for accordingly so that that particular spirit would continue to live.

Language Group - Over 300 Aboriginal Australian language groups and dialects covered the continent at the time of European settlement in 1788 (around 66 in Western Australia). Today only around 120 of those languages are still spoken and many are at risk of being lost as Elders pass away.

These different language groups are more than just a means to communicate - they are an essential characteristic, unique to people, communities and their sense of identity.



Noongar - means 'a person of the south-west of Western Australia,' or the name for the 'original inhabitants of the south-west of Western Australia' and are one of the largest Aboriginal cultural blocks in Australia.

Whadjuk – is one of the 14 dialectal groups on Noongar people. Whadjuk is the name of the Traditional Owners of the Perth region.

Women's Business' – Aboriginal Men and Aboriginal Women had different roles in ceremonies and these roles varied from language group to language group. Some ceremonies were for women only. Women were the guardians of a special knowledge and therefore hold great religious and spiritual power within the language group.

8. Related Documents

Cultural Security Policy.

9. Revision History

Version No.	Date Approval	Contact
1	31.10.19	Jeff Dennis