



Indigenous Protocols

ACT Government Policy

The ACT Government recognises the Ngunnawal people as the traditional custodians of the ACT and surrounding region.

The ACT Government's adoption of the use of the term 'Ngunnawal' to identify the traditional custodians of the ACT was based on advice from a special meeting of Ngunnawal community members in May 2002.

Welcome to Country Protocols

Acknowledgement

The Government's policy is that all public speeches by representatives of the ACT Government include an acknowledgement of the traditional custodians. Further, depending on the availability of an Aboriginal community elder, and the significance of the event, a formal *Welcome to Country* may be offered.

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 may include:

- commemorations and major festivals;
- major launches of Government policies and programs;
- conferences held or sponsored by the ACT Government;
- international events held in Australia of which the ACT Government is an organiser or sponsor;
- citizenship ceremonies; and,
- major and international sporting events.

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; and
- demonstrate recognition of Aboriginal people's unique position which can assist in building relationships and partnerships.

When planning an official event, agencies should consult with the **United Ngunnawal Elders Council** as the advisory body to the ACT Government on Aboriginal heritage, and 'connection to country' matters. Contact details can be obtained from the Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs on 620-70555.

If you cannot arrange for a Ngunnawal elder to attend your event, or if your event is considered too small to warrant a formal *Welcome to Country* you can make the following acknowledgment:

'I/We wish to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land we are meeting on, the Ngunnawal people. I/We wish to acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and this region. I/We would also like to acknowledge and welcome other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who may be attending today's event.'

Fee for Service in providing Cultural Services

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 hosting the event, considering:

- travel to and from the event; and
- public profile of the event.

As a general indicator, \$300 for a *Welcome to Country* is appropriate.

ACT Government Programs

As the ACT Government policy position acknowledges the Ngunnawal family groups as the traditional custodians of the land that the Australian Capital Territory is located, it is appropriate that this position is clearly reflected in all ACT Government programs, services, legislation and activities.

Boards and Committees

All ACT Boards and Committees should seek to include Indigenous membership if appropriate. Where there is particular need to provide advice to the ACT Government in relation to culture, heritage and 'connection to land' matters, representation from the Ngunnawal Aboriginal community will need to be included on the respective board or committee. The representative will need to publicly acknowledge Ngunnawal traditional custodianship of the ACT and must be accepted by the Ngunnawal community.

The **United Ngunnawal Elders Council** can be of assistance and can recommend suitable candidates for these appointments when requested. Contact details can be obtained from the Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs on 620-70555.

Where the board or committee needs general indigenous representation in the ACT; a representative from the wider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community should be sought. The **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body** may be consulted to assist with wider Indigenous community representation. Contact details can be obtained from the Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs on 620-70555.