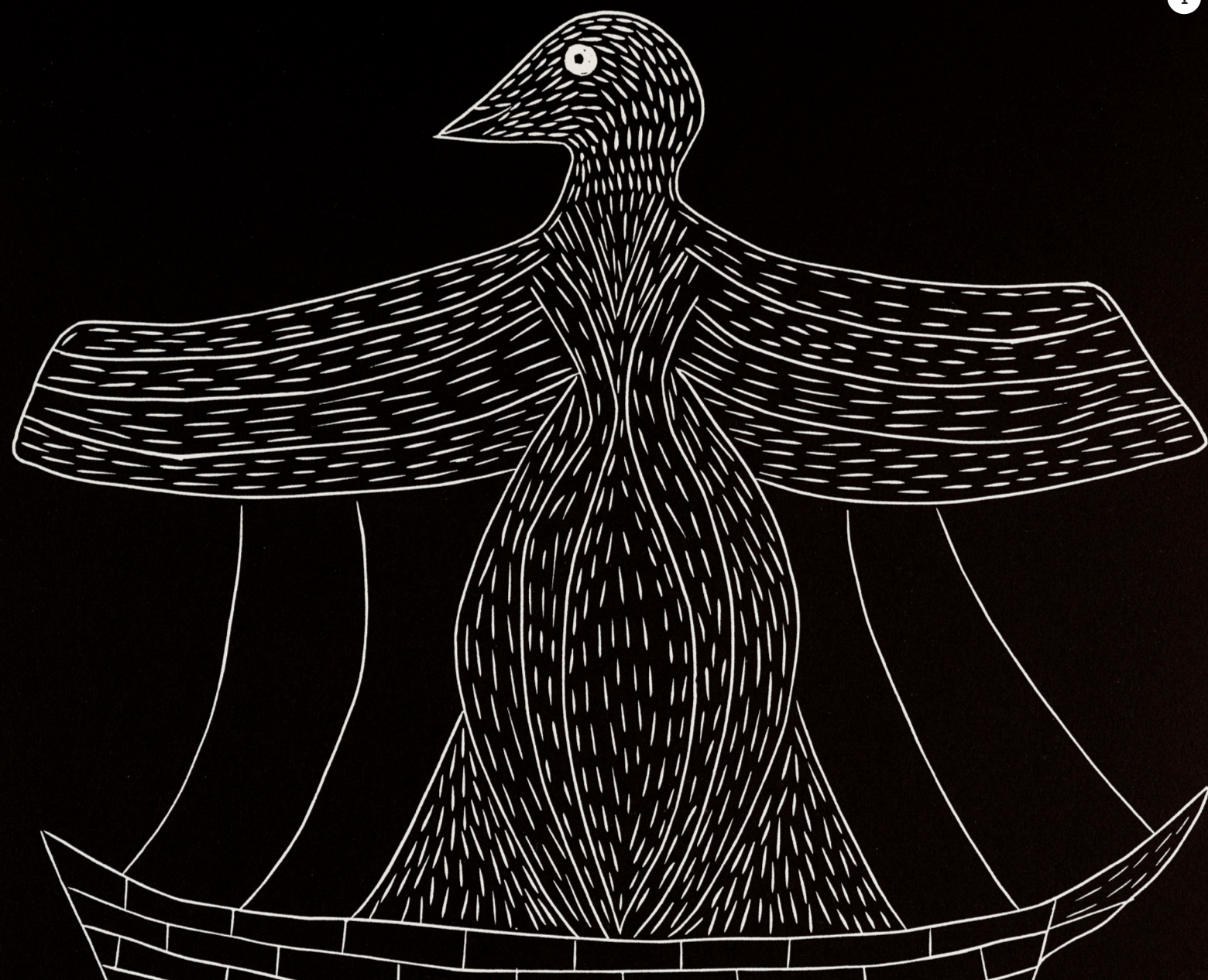




Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Traditional Ownership

GUIDELINES AND PROTOCOLS FOR EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS





The City of Perth acknowledges that the Whadjuk Nyoongar people are the Traditional Owners of the land and waters on which Perth City sits today.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance and direction to the City’s external stakeholders in planning and facilitating a Welcome to Country or Acknowledgement of Country.

DEFINITIONS

Welcome to Country

A ceremony performed by an Aboriginal Elder, Traditional Landowner, or nominated community leader of the local area to officially welcome visitors to the land on which a meeting or event is being held. A Welcome to Country acts as a blessing for the occasion and is conducted as a mark of respect. A Welcome to Country can take on many forms, depending on the culture of the Traditional Owners, and can include song, dance, symbolic ritual or a speech in traditional language and/or English.

Acknowledgement of Country

A way for people to show awareness of and respect for the Traditional Owners of the land on which a meeting or event is being held, by recognising the continuing connection of Aboriginal people to their Country. An Acknowledgement of Country can be informal or formal and involves visitors acknowledging the Aboriginal peoples as the original/Traditional Owners of the land as well as the long and continuing relationship between Aboriginal peoples and their Country.

BACKGROUND

‘Country’ is the term used by Aboriginal peoples to identify, locate and connect themselves and each other to a language group and place; the land (or sea) that they identify with, belong to and have cultural obligations to. It also has the broader connotation of difference; that each ‘country’ has its own identity – geographical location, ecological footprint, spiritual connection, kinship, cultural ceremonies and customs associated with it.

Traditionally, people crossing from one ‘country’ to another will participate in an exchange of rituals and protocols to ensure safe crossing and or successful business; to honour the spirits and ancestral beings of the place and to appropriately address the Elders and senior men and women; those that have influence and high regard in the community.

A contemporary Welcome to Country still has this purpose. It is an acknowledgement of the Aboriginal people's inherent connection with the land and recognition of the Traditional Owners. It is quite literally a 'Welcome' to the land to grant safety, success and clear communication.

The Aboriginal peoples of the south-west of Western Australia are collectively known as the Nyoongar peoples. The people traditionally from the Perth city area are known as the Whadjuk Nyoongar people.

WHY ARRANGE A WELCOME TO COUNTRY OR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY?

Celebration of the City's diverse cultural identity is one of the strategic objectives of the City of Perth's Strategic Community Plan and Corporate Business Plan, and directly aligns with the City's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Including a Welcome to Country increases understanding of Aboriginal peoples and culture, builds a stronger connection to the land and is a part of reconciliation. Valuing and respecting appropriate Aboriginal ceremony can help increase mutual understanding and respect for cultural practices between Aboriginal Australians and the wider community. It also demonstrates that Aboriginal cultures are living through maintenance and practice of ceremonies and protocols.

The City is on a journey towards reconciliation and has committed to Reconciliation Australia's Reconciliation Action Plan Framework. As part of this journey, the City is implementing a wide range of actions to build respect, relationships and opportunity with the Aboriginal community.

The City has adopted its own internal Policy and Procedure for Welcome and Acknowledgement protocols and encourages stakeholders amongst the community to carry out similar protocols wherever possible.

GENERAL PROTOCOL AND SUGGESTED WORDING

Response to Welcome to Country

It is suggested that the speaker, who follows immediately after the Welcome, provide an Acknowledgement of Country in response.

"I respectfully acknowledge the past and present Traditional Owners of this land, on which we are meeting, the Whadjuk (Whad-juk) Nyoongar people. It is a privilege to be standing on Whadjuk Nyoongar country".

Acknowledgement of Country

There may be events where it is not possible, for the Traditional Owners to provide a Welcome. In these circumstances, it is appropriate for an individual responsible for facilitating the event to provide an Acknowledgement of Country.

The following is suggested wording for an Acknowledgement of Country:

"I respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which this event is taking place, (or - on which we meet) the Whadjuk (Whad-juk) Nyoongar people of Western Australia, and pay my respects to Elders past and present. It is a privilege to be standing on Whadjuk Nyoongar country"



PAYMENTS AND GRATUITIES

Providing cultural services such as Welcome to Country involves Aboriginal people's intellectual property and as such, Aboriginal people may ask for a payment or gratuity to perform the Welcome.

Payments are the responsibility of the organisation planning and arranging facilitation of the Welcome.

WHO TO CONTACT FOR A WELCOME TO COUNTRY

Initial contact with appropriate Traditional Owners of Whadjuk Nyoongar land may not be a simple process. Observing Aboriginal protocol includes allowing time for traditional decision-making and discussion among Traditional Owners. This can take some time, and should be factored into event and the Welcome planning process.

Should you wish to engage an appropriate Traditional Owner to conduct a Welcome to Country at your event, please contact the:

South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council (SWALSC)

☎ (08) 9358 7400

✉ reception1@noongar.org.au

FURTHER INFORMATION

The best source from additional information regarding Aboriginal cultural practices is SWALSC.

☎ (08) 9358 7400

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FEATURED ARTWORKS

1

First Contact (detail), **Laurel Nannup**

Laurel Nannup is a Nyoongar artist known for her woodcut prints and etchings. *First Contact* depicts the arrival of European settlers to Perth – as the European boats arrived the local Nyoongar people believed these ships were their past ancestors returning from the sea. *First Contact* was later commissioned as a large cast aluminium sculpture in Elizabeth Quay, Perth.

2

Land Release 3, **Christopher Pease**

Christopher Pease is a Minang/Nyoongar man from South Western Australia, whose visual language is at once deeply embedded within the western history of figurative oil painting and traditional Indigenous storytelling. *Land Release 3* references an 1801 drawing of Geographe Bay by Charles Alexandre Lesueur which records the journeys of Captain Nicholas Baudin.

3

Koorden, **Rod Garlett**

Six dramatic male Indigenous figures rendered in cast bronze stride towards the east across the grass of Wellington Gardens in Kings Square. The designs originally stem from painted ceremonial markings found in historical photographs and have been reinterpreted by Rod Garlett in extensive consultation with elders in the local Aboriginal community.