



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Protocols and Guidelines

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1 Acknowledgment

Woollahra Municipal Council Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Protocols and Guidelines were adopted by Council on 25 November 2019. We also wish to acknowledge the work of Dr Paul Irish for section 5, the Aboriginal History of Woollahra and the support and advice provided by Chris Ingrey from the La Perouse Local Aboriginal Land Council and Gary Ella and Sharron Smith from Randwick City Council who made valued contributions to this protocols document.

In developing the Protocols there were a number of sources that provided valuable information and good examples of protocols that other organisations, both government and non-government, have adopted. Some of these protocols were in use at a state and local government level and some have been in existence for a number of years.

The following documents provided insight and a guiding framework into ways organisations conduct business with their respective Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

- City of Sydney (2012), City of Sydney Aboriginal Cultural Protocols
- Oxfam Australia (2007), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Protocols
- City of Sydney, Barani (2013) An Introduction to the Aboriginal History of the City of Sydney, sydneybarani.com.au

2 Policy Statement

Woollahra Municipal Council recognises the unique status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the First Australians. We acknowledge the unique history that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have with their diverse culture and customs, as well as the special relationship they have with their traditional lands and waters.

Council values it's culturally diverse community and is committed to working in partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. We seek to ensure that this partnership is based on respect, trust, equality and transparency. This partnership should always be seen as a process where both parties are learning together from each other. Aboriginal culture is now globally recognised as one of the oldest living cultures and Aboriginal people continue to show enormous resilience and generous spirit toward other peoples with whom they now share their land.

It is important to remember that for many years Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities have been affected by the policies and practices of past governments. Woollahra Council acknowledges the losses, grief and hardship experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Woollahra Council is sorry for the hurt and distress caused by past policies which forcibly removed Aboriginal children from their families and homes, and which are still having a negative impact on the social, economic, health and well-being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Their spiritual relationship with the land is also recognised. Council recognises the position taken by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people concerning past policies and it is for that reason Council is committed to establishing these protocols and guidelines and ensuring strong lines of consultation and communication are maintained with the relevant organisations.

There are many sites across our Local Government Area with historical and cultural significance for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Council recognises that by acknowledging our shared past, we are laying the groundwork for a future based on mutual respect and shared responsibility for the land.

The purpose of this document is to provide Councillors, council officers, staff, volunteers and community members with a clearer understanding of some important protocols and guidelines for working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It is not a complete list of protocols and staff should continue to consult with La Perouse Local Aboriginal Land Council for advice on cultural guidelines.

An important part of showing respect for different cultures is acknowledging and accepting that we all have different types of behaviours and ways of interacting. Council recognises the importance of showing sensitivity and respect for cultural protocols when working and consulting with these communities.

3 What is Reconciliation?

Reconciliation focuses on the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians. This means:

- knowing the true history of Australia
- acknowledging the wrongs of the past
- understanding and embracing the difference of language and culture
- ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have their rights as the first peoples of this nation properly recognized
- the nation working together as a team for a better future for all Australians
- creating meaningful opportunities for respect through understanding and learning

For more information visit the Reconciliation Australia website:

<https://www.reconciliation.org.au>

4 What are Cultural Protocols?

Cultural protocols refer to the customs, lore and codes of behaviour of a particular group. Protocols are an important part of all cultures and exist to ensure that people behave and interact in an appropriate manner.

Showing respect for the cultural protocols of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities demonstrates acceptance of the cultural traditions, history and diversity of these communities. It is also acknowledged that the processes and procedures of non-Indigenous communities are equally valid and deserving of respect.

By incorporating Aboriginal cultural protocols into official events we are able to:

- recognise and pay respect to Aboriginal peoples, cultures and heritage.
- communicate Aboriginal cultural practices to the wider community to promote respect and understanding.
- demonstrate recognition of Aboriginal peoples' unique position in building relationships and partnerships.

Council recognises that not all Aboriginal communities are the same and that protocols may vary between communities.

5 Local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander History

Aboriginal people have been living in Woollahra since long before Sydney Harbour even existed. Twenty thousand years ago the harbour was a deep valley with a freshwater river flowing through it to the east, between the hills of north and south head, and across another ten kilometres or so of coastal plain to the ocean. From around eighteen thousand years ago the sea began to rise as a global ice age ended. For ten thousand years, hundreds of generations of Aboriginal people watched as the sea consumed the coastal plain and started to fill the deep valley of the harbour. They lived in this changing environment and witnessed the birth of the harbour as we know it today.¹ They learned how to read and fish the new waters, and set up camp around its shores, and in the sandy and rocky hills behind it.

The harbour was home to a number of Aboriginal clans. The Sydney clans traced common descent from a male ancestor and shared totems. Each clan numbered around 25 to 60 people and had primary rights to their clan estate, after which they were named. Most of Woollahra was part of Gadi, the estate of the Gadigal people, which stretched east along the southern shore of the harbour from around Darling Harbour, to the estate of the Birrabirragal associated with the entrance to the harbour.²

The harbour clans were bound together by women, who married between clans.³ This meant that the groups of Aboriginal people who lived on a daily basis in the Woollahra area were made up of a mixture of clans. Each person was also bound by complex webs of spiritual and family connection to areas beyond that of their clan through marriage, by the clans of the parents and grandparents, and by their place of birth.⁴ Aboriginal people travelled widely and regularly to meet their cultural obligations. They also had trade networks that covered vast distances to obtain raw materials and other goods which were not found in their own lands. A stone axe found in a rockshelter at Vaucluse for example, originally came from west of the Blue Mountains.⁵

The land and waters around Woollahra held deep cultural significance to the Gadigal and Birrabirragal. Its features were part of their Dreaming. They inscribed animal, human and spiritual figures onto the sandstone around the harbour as places of ceremony and of teaching. Ceremonial obligations and traditional law governed their lives. Transgressions of the law by individuals had strict punishments. At traditional punishment grounds, guilty people would face the spears or clubs of the clan they had offended against, leading to injuries and sometimes deaths. In Woollahra, there was such a punishment ground at Pannerong (Rose Bay).⁶

¹ Irish, Paul (2017). *Hidden In Plain View. The Aboriginal People of Coastal Sydney*, NewSouth Publishing, Sydney, pp.13-15.

² Attenbrow, Val (2010). *Sydney's Aboriginal Past: Investigating the Archaeological and Historical Records*, 2nd ed, University of NSW Press, Sydney, pp.22-30, 57-58.

³ Karskens, Grace (2009). *The Colony. A History of Early Sydney*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, p. 37.

⁴ Dr Shayne Williams, Dharawal Elder, 'Welcome to Gamay', www.sydstories.com.au/#/chapter/1 [accessed 17/6/19]; Irish 2017, pp. 17-19.

⁵ Attenbrow, Val et al., (2012) "Crossing the Great Divide: a ground-edged hatchet-head from Vaucluse, Sydney," *Archaeology in Oceania* 47, no. 1, pp. (2012), pp.47-52

⁶ Attenbrow 2010, p.137.

Today there are more than 70 officially registered Aboriginal 'sites' around Woollahra. They include rock engravings and a range of living places in sandstone rockshelters and in the open, along the shore and the hinterland. The coastal campsites are called middens, and contain the remains of a wide range of fish, shellfish and land animals which show how intimately Aboriginal people could read their environment. They also contain implements of stone, bone and shell, including the shell hooks that women used to fish the harbour from their canoes, and the bone barbs fixed to the tips of the deadly fishing spears wielded by men.⁷ A number of places also contained grooves on sandstone where Aboriginal people sharpened their stone axes. Hafted axes were used to cut bark from trees to make canoes, shields, containers and many other implements, and also to cut toe-holds in tree trunks to climb then in search of possums and wild honey.⁸

These sites survive today on public and in private land and they are just the ones that have been recorded. Many more will survive. They hint at the rich culture that existed before the arrival of Europeans, but all of Woollahra had meaning to Aboriginal people in ways that are now hard to imagine. The arrival of Europeans in 1788 was catastrophic for coastal Sydney people. Their lands were invaded, and in 1789 a devastating smallpox epidemic swept around the harbour and claimed the lives of many Aboriginal people – women and men, young and old. Often these events are taken to signify the end of Aboriginal Sydney, but there were survivors who regrouped and continued to live across Woollahra and around the harbour.

Throughout the nineteenth century, these Aboriginal people lived around the harbour in groups drawn together along existing traditional lines but also pulling in those with more distant connections through parents and grandparents. Europeans began to refer to them by the areas where they most often lived – the Sydney tribe, the Botany tribe and so on. But as before, these groups were inter-related and had connections far beyond these areas. There were Aboriginal fishing settlements at different times through the nineteenth century in every cove of the harbour, including major camps at Rose Bay and Rushcutters Bay. They generally lived in groups of up to around 20 people, in rockshelters or traditional bark shelters, but also in huts and houses. More than a century after Europeans arrived in Sydney, Aboriginal people were still conducting ceremonies on the shores of the harbour and fishing with traditional pronged spears. But they also adapted to their new circumstances and interacted with their European neighbours, trading fish and other goods.⁹

This way of life unravelled at the end of the nineteenth century. The government, having had no official policies regarding Aboriginal people in Sydney for most of the century, formed the Aborigines Protection Board in 1883 and increasingly policed and restricted the movements of Aboriginal people. They offered assistance to coastal Sydney people only at the Aboriginal fishing village of La Perouse, and as a result, most Aboriginal people in the harbour camps came to live there by the end of the century, though they still their connection to the Woollahra area in a range of ways.¹⁰ For decades from the early twentieth century, the Protection Board oversaw the removal of Aboriginal children from their families across New South Wales, to be trained as domestic servants, some of whom were sent to

⁷ Attenbrow, Val and Steele, Dominic (1995) "Fishing in Port Jackson, New South Wales - more than met the eye." *Antiquity* 69, no. 26, pp. 46-59; Attenbrow 2010, pp.86-87.

⁸ Attenbrow 2010, pp.89-90.

⁹ Irish 2010, Chapters 2-4.

¹⁰ Irish 2010, pp.106-131.

houses in Woollahra.¹¹ In more recent decades, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from across Australia have moved to the area by choice. These people are making their own links to Woollahra, while others living in and around the area have much deeper links back to the harbour clans.

6 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community

Greater Sydney has the largest gathering of Aboriginal people in Australia with many families originating from homelands in wider NSW and throughout the nation. The Australian Bureau of Statistics estimated in 2016 that 57,000 Aboriginal people live in Greater Sydney, representing approximately nine percent of the national population.¹²

The overall Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population of Woollahra LGA is lower in number than some other Sydney Metropolitan and Eastern Sydney Council's. According to the ABS Census 2016

- There were 160 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons living in the Woollahra Local Government Area
- This was 0.3% of the total population which is significantly lower than 1.5% for Greater Sydney

According to the ABS Census 2016 Randwick LGA Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population is 2,143 (1.5%), Bayside LGA 1,559 (1.0%) and Waverley LGA population is 274 (0.4%) compared to 1.5% of Greater Sydney.

7 Aboriginality/Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders

It is offensive to question the 'amount' of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander blood an Indigenous person may possess. The labels 'half caste', 'quarter caste' and 'full blood' were given to Aboriginal people to deny them social privileges afforded to non-Aboriginal people. These terms are considered racist and should not be used when referring to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It is advisable to ask people how they would like to be referred, this may include where they come from or the community, mob or clan with which they identify.¹³

8 Traditional Boundaries

Local Aboriginal Land Councils were established under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983 as the elected representatives for Aboriginal people in NSW. This role extends beyond representation of the interests of Land Council members, to all Aboriginal people living in NSW. For further information on Local Aboriginal Land Councils please visit:

<http://www.alc.org.au/land-councils/overview.aspx>

¹¹ Walden, Inara (1995) "That was slavery days": Aboriginal domestic servants in New South Wales in the twentieth century', *Labour History*, vol 69, 1995, pp. 196–209.

¹² The Sydney Ochre Grid (2018), Government Architect New South Wales
<http://www.governmentarchitect.nsw.gov.au/projects/the-sydney-ochre-grid>

¹³ City of Sydney (2012) City of Sydney Aboriginal Cultural Protocols p.7

Woollahra Council sits within the boundaries of the La Perouse Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC). As such, staff or community members should approach the La Perouse LALC when they are planning a Welcome to Country ceremony or for further advice on Aboriginal land, cultural sites or heritage in the Woollahra local government area.

9 Respecting Traditional Protocols

9.1 Traditional Owners and Custodians

Traditional owners and custodians are the terms used to describe the original Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people of this land. Contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are the descendants of the traditional owners/custodians and have an on-going spiritual and cultural connection to the land and waterways where their ancestors lived and practiced lore, law and ceremonies. For more information regarding Traditional Owners and Custodians please contact the La Perouse LALC.

9.2 Elders

In traditional times, Elders were the custodians of knowledge, ceremony and customs and were charged with the responsibility for cultural matters. In contemporary Aboriginal society the term 'Elder' is used to describe people who have knowledge, wisdom and the respect of their local Aboriginal community. An Elder is not necessarily an older person, but must have the trust and respect of their community and be recognised as a keeper of Aboriginal culture. Elders are frequently referred to as 'Uncle' or 'Aunty' by community members as a sign of respect.

9.3 Gender Protocol

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander society still regards some information as specific and sacred to either men or women. This knowledge is sacred and recorded in a way that only men or women can access. It is not likely that a council will be able to distinguish between men's and women's business. Woollahra Council needs to be aware that such issues exist and seek advice from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people about when they are likely to arise and how to manage such issues.¹⁴

9.4 Naming of the Deceased

In many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities it is offensive to refer to a deceased person by name or to show photographic images of the person during the mourning period, unless agreed to by the relevant family. Mourning periods differ between communities; sometimes the person's name or image cannot be used for a week or a year, sometimes it is for an indefinite period.

Before using the name of a deceased person or publishing their image, it is essential to obtain the family's permission. Many organisations and publishers use cultural warnings in publications to avoid causing offence to the families of the deceased. An example of this type of cultural warning can be found on the City of Sydney's Barani Website: "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander viewers are advised that this website contains images and voices of

¹⁴ Department of Local Government NSW and the Local Government and Shires Association of NSW (2007) Engaging with local Aboriginal communities: A resource kit for Local Government in New South Wales, p.20

people who have died. The story of Aboriginal Sydney could not be told without recognising their achievements.” In some Aboriginal communities, seeing the names and photographs of dead people may cause sadness and distress, particularly to relatives of those people”.¹⁵

9.5 Welcome to Country

A ‘Welcome to Country’ or ‘Traditional Welcome’ ceremony is where an Aboriginal descendant or elected representative of the local Aboriginal community welcomes people in attendance to their land prior to a meeting, event or function. Originally a Welcome to Country was to seek permission to enter and travel across another group’s country and was performed for safe passage. Contemporary Welcome to Country ceremonies are a modern version of a traditional ceremony that enables the custodians of the land to give their consent for the activity to take place on their land. As such, a Welcome to Country is a clear mark of respect from the organisers to the local Aboriginal community. If an Aboriginal community objects to performing a Welcome to Country it is important to respect their decision as there may be cultural or political reasons underlying this decision.

9.6 Booking – Welcome to Country

Where possible, a Welcome to Country should be undertaken by Elders of the local recognised community. To arrange a Welcome to Country for an event in Woollahra Council Local Government Area please contact the La Perouse LALC.

<https://www.laperouse.org.au/our-services>

9.7 Acknowledgment of Country

‘Acknowledgement of Country’ is where a non-Indigenous person or an Aboriginal person who is not from the local area acknowledges and shows respect to the traditional owners and custodians of the land. Like a Welcome to Country, an Acknowledgement of Country is conducted prior to meetings, events and functions.

It is important to note in the Acknowledgement of Country that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to be a part of the Woollahra Council community and that Aboriginal people have an on-going spiritual and cultural connection to the land and waterways.

The following Acknowledgement of Country has been developed for use by Council:

‘I would like to acknowledge that we are here today on the land of the Gadigal and Birrabirragal people, the traditional custodians of the land. On behalf of Woollahra Council, I acknowledge Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people attending today and I pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging’.

9.8 Smoking Ceremony

Smoking ceremonies are undertaken in Aboriginal communities to cleanse the space in which the ceremony is taking place. The Smoking Ceremony is a ritual of purification and unity and is always undertaken by an Aboriginal person with specialised cultural knowledge.

¹⁵ City of Sydney, Barani (2013) An Introduction to the Aboriginal History of the City of Sydney, sydneybarani.com.au

This is a very significant ceremony and is performed only at events deemed appropriate by the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community¹⁶.

9.9 Acknowledgment of Elders

Acknowledging Elders is an important mark of respect for the Elders of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community including, but not limited to, Traditional Owners or Custodians. This acknowledgment can follow the Welcome to Country or Acknowledgment of Country with the speaker paying respect to Elders past and present.

The acknowledgment of Elders statement for Council has been included as part of the Acknowledgement of Country (see 9.8).

9.10 Other Events and Ceremonies

An increasing number of people are Acknowledging Country in events and ceremonies undertaken by Council and in the community without Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander involvement. It is becoming recognised that some acknowledgement should be given to the local Aboriginal people of the area. If not acknowledging country in the Woollahra local government area, representatives of Council should always consult with the Local Aboriginal Land Councils to make sure they have correctly identified the Traditional Owners and Custodians and have the correct wording for Acknowledging Country¹⁷.

9.11 Fee for Services

It is important to acknowledge that Aboriginal people are using their intellectual property whenever they carry out a cultural ceremony or an artistic performance and it is appropriate that they receive payment for the service. The payment should take into account travel to the event, time and complexity of the service and the profile of the event. Contact the La Perouse LALC for further information.

10 Significant Symbols, Dates and Events

10.1 Flags

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flags were proclaimed as flags of Australia under Section 5 of the Flags Act (1953) on 14 July, 1995. Flags symbolise a country's historical past and are an important representation of a country's people, culture and values.

The *Australian Aboriginal Flag* was designed by Harold Thomas who was a Luritja man from the Arrernte Clan of Central Australia. The black symbolises the Aboriginal peoples, the yellow symbolises the sun and the red symbolises the earth and the spiritual relationship to the land. It was first flown in South Australia in 1971 then flown nationally in Canberra at the Aboriginal Tent Embassy 1972.

¹⁶ City of Sydney (2012), City of Sydney Aboriginal Cultural Protocols p.12

¹⁷ City of Sydney (2012), City of Sydney Aboriginal Cultural Protocols p.12



The *Torres Strait Islander Flag* was designed by Bernard Namok from Thursday Island and was formally adopted by all Torres Strait Islanders in 1992. The green symbolises the land, the black the people, the blue the sea, whilst the white Dhari (headdress) and the white five pointed star symbolises the five major island groups as well as the navigation which is important to these seafaring peoples.



10.2 Flying the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flags

Woollahra Council is committed to permanently flying the Aboriginal flag on the flag pole at Woollahra Council chambers, and also flies the Torres Strait Islander flag during NAIDOC Week (first full week in July), National Reconciliation Week (27 May – 3 June) and National Sorry Day (26 May).

10.3 Flag Flying Protocols

When flying the Australian National Flag alongside the State, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags, the order should follow the rule of precedence. The Australian flag should always be flown on the far left of the person facing the flags, then the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags followed by the State flag. The Australian flag will always be given precedence (Australian Flags 1998).

Always make sure that both flags are reproduced, hung and depicted in the correct way and that the Aboriginal flag is used for business relating to the Aboriginal community and the Torres Strait Islander flag is used for business relating to the Torres Strait Islander community.

Permission needs to be sought if you are reproducing either flag for commercial use or in reports or brochures. For guidance about using both the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags contact the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet at www.itsanhonour.gov.au ¹⁸

¹⁸ City of Sydney (2012), City of Sydney Aboriginal Cultural Protocols p.22

10.4 Dates of Significance

There are a number of significant dates throughout Australian history that have shaped Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs. Some of these are:

1965 – Freedom Ride

In 1965, students from the University of Sydney formed Student Action for Aborigines led by Charles Perkins and Jim Spigelman. They organised a bus tour of coastal and western New South Wales towns from 12 – 26 February 1965 and drew national and international attention to the poor state of Aboriginal housing, health and education as well as the racism that was rife in New South Wales country towns. They also sought to draw attention to the social discrimination barriers which existed and to encourage and support Aboriginal people themselves to resist discrimination and stand up for their civil rights. This event is seen by many as the beginning of resetting the relationship between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people in contemporary Australia.

1967 – Referendum

The 1967 Referendum was held on 27 May and expressed the will of the Australian people that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples would be counted in the national Census and be acknowledged as citizens within the Australian constitution. The Referendum results showed a high 90.77% YES vote proving that the vast majority of Australian felt goodwill towards Aboriginal peoples.

1992 – Mabo Decision

This was an historic High Court of Australia decision handed down on 3 June which rejected the notion of ‘terra nullius’ (land belonging to no-one), which claimed that Australia was unoccupied prior to European settlement. The High Court’s decision in favour of Mabo and the Meriam people recognised that Aboriginal peoples had lived in Australia for thousands of years as well as acknowledging that the development of Australia was based on dispossession.

10.5 Events

Australia Day / Survival Day (Yabun Festival / 26 January)

Australia Day is a celebration for most, however, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples the day represents invasion, dispossession and loss of culture. Yabun Festival is recognised as Australia’s premier Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander festival showcasing the best of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts and culture. www.yabun.org.au

National Apology Anniversary (13 February)

On this day in 2008 the Hon. Kevin Rudd MP, then Prime Minister of Australia, formally apologised to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations on behalf of the Australian Government. www.australia.gov.au

National Close the Gap Day (17 March)

This is a day for all Australians to join together to raise awareness and recognise the inequality of education, health and incarceration issues that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people face. www.oxfam.org.au

Harmony Day (21 March)

Living in Harmony is an Australian Government initiative designed to promote community harmony, build community relationships and address racism and discrimination. www.harmony.gov.au

National Sorry Day (26 May)

Commemorated to publicly acknowledge the pain and suffering by many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of the 'Stolen Generations' and the effects of their removal from family and community. www.reconciliation.org.au

National Reconciliation Week 27 May (1967 Referendum) to 3 June (Mabo decision)

National Reconciliation Week (NRW) involves recognition of the honoured place of the first Australians as well as practical measures to address the disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in health, employment, education and general opportunity. Woollahra Council participates in National Reconciliation Week each year. https://www.woollahra.nsw.gov.au/community/whats_happening/reconciliation_week
<http://www.reconciliation.org.au/nrw/>

NAIDOC Week (1st full week in July)

NAIDOC stands for National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee. This week involves cultural events to commemorate and celebrate culture, heritage and contributions made by these communities to modern Australia and promotes a greater understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Woollahra Council runs activities each NAIDOC Week. www.naidoc.org.au

NSW Aboriginal Rugby League Knockout (October long weekend)

Also known as 'The Koori Knockout', this event started in 1971 and is hosted annually by the previous year's winning club on the October long weekend. As many as 60 teams compete in a knockout competition with over 10,000 spectators.

10.6 Community Consultation

It is essential when undertaking community consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples that this is culturally sensitive and appropriate. If in doubt it is always best to seek guidance from the Land Councils. According to both the Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983 and in consultation with the local Aboriginal community, the La Perouse LALC are recognised as the key stakeholders and custodians of Aboriginal land, cultural sites and heritage within the area of Woollahra Council. It is appropriate that any issues concerning Aboriginal Land and heritage are addressed in close consultation with the Land Council.

Decision making in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is a consultative and lengthy process which usually involves all community members being invited to have their say before a final decision is made. Protocols involve allowing for time concerning decision making to work with the community at an agreed and acceptable pace. Woollahra Council is committed to a community consultation process that is two way and based on trust, respect, transparency and honesty.

11 Definitions

An Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person is someone who satisfies each of the following criteria in accordance with the Commonwealth government's definition:

- of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent
- identifies as an Aboriginal person or Torres Strait Islander and
- accepted as such by the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community in which they live.

According to the Interpretation Australian Association (IAA) guidelines, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians is the full official terminology. It should always be spelt out in full and NOT shortened to the acronym ATSI as this is offensive.

Always use a capital 'A' for Aboriginal and a capital 'T', 'S', 'I' for Torres Strait Islander.

Aboriginal People

Aboriginal people prefer not to be called an Aborigine, but prefer Aboriginal person or people.

Elders

Elders are custodians of knowledge of their local area and chosen, accepted and highly respected by their own communities. It is disrespectful to question an Elder's status within their community.

Indigenous

The term Indigenous Australian is acceptable in certain circumstances. Council staff should check before using the word by consulting the community when it is appropriate to use. Always use a capital 'I' in Indigenous as you would for the word Aboriginal.

Stolen Generations

The Stolen Generations are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who were forcibly removed from their families and communities as the result of Federal and State government policies between 1910 and 1970. Children were removed by governments, churches and welfare bodies to be brought up in institutions, fostered out or adopted by white families. It broke important cultural, spiritual and family ties and has left a lasting and intergenerational impact on the lives and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The full scale of removals is still not known because many records have been lost. In the 1997 Bringing Them Home Report, the Australian Human Rights Commission estimated that

between one-tenth and one-third of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were removed from their homes during the years in which forcible removal laws operated. Subsequent research by Professor Robert Manne estimated the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children removed from their families in the period 1910–70 was closer to the figure of one in ten, or between 20 000 and 25 000 individuals¹⁹.

Records about the Stolen Generations and their families were kept by governments, as well as by churches and missions. Lost records and changes to government departments can make it very difficult for Stolen Generations to trace family connections.

Although the official policies and practices of removal have been abandoned the Bringing Them Home Report reveals that the past still echoes in today's individuals, families and communities. Link-Up was established in 1997 as a result of the recommendations of the Bringing Them Home Report. Link-Up services around Australia provide family tracing and reunion services to Stolen Generations, their families, and foster and adoptive families. See: <http://www.linkupnsw.org.au/>

Lore

The term 'lore' refers to the customs and stories the Aboriginal peoples learned from The Dreaming or Dreamtime. Aboriginal lore was passed on through the generations through songs, stories and dance and it governed all aspects of traditional life.

Dreaming

The Dreaming has different meanings for different Aboriginal groups. The Dreaming can be seen as the embodiment of Aboriginal creation which gives meaning to everything; the essence of Aboriginal beliefs about creation, spirit and physical existence. The Dreaming is linked to the past, the present and the future.

Shared History

Woollahra Council recognises that Australia's history began long before 1788 and that, since then, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians have had diverse historical experiences and have occupied the same country. The term 'Australian history' is inclusive of the histories of all Australians.

Sorry Business

Sorry Business is an English expression mostly adopted from mainland Aboriginal people to refer to a period of cultural practices and protocols associated with death. The most widespread ceremonies of Sorry Business are conducted around the bereavement and funerals for a deceased person.

There are a number of responsibilities and obligations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to attend funerals and participate in Sorry Business or bereavement protocols. In some communities, the Sorry Business prohibitions extend to not conducting activities, events, meetings or consultations during the observance of Sorry Business and

¹⁹ Australian Human Right Commission (2010) Face the Facts - Some Questions and Answers about Indigenous Peoples, Migrants and Refugees and Asylum Seekers, pg.25 <http://www.humanrights.gov.au/publications/face-facts-2012/>

this must be observed and respected by all those working with Aboriginal organisations and communities. These prohibitions may last for various periods of time.

12 References

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13 Other resources

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| Australian Government, Torres Strait Regional Authority, “The Torres Strait – General History”: tsra.gov.au |
| Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Australian Flags: https://www.pmc.gov.au/government/australian-national-symbols/australian-flags |
| June 3 Mabo Day: takver.com/history/ph_maboday.htm |
| History of Sorry Day: https://www.reconciliation.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/150520-Sorry-Day.pdf |
| NAIDOC History: https://www.naidoc.org.au/about/history |
| National Aboriginal and Islander Children’s Day, August 4: http://aboriginalchildrensday.com.au/ |
| NSW Reconciliation Council: nswreconciliation.org.au |
| Oxfam Australia (2007), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Protocols: https://www.oxfam.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/2015-74-atsi-cultural-protocols-update_web.pdf |
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14 Related Policies and Procedures

| | HPECM Reference |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Acknowledgment of Country Procedure | 18/102413 |
| ERGATSIF Work Plan | 18/201488 |

This Policy will be reviewed every year or as required in the event of legislative changes. This Policy may also be changed as a result of other amendments that are to the advantage of Council and in the spirit of this Policy.

Any amendment to this Policy must be by way of the approval of the General Manager.

Policy Amendments

| Date | Responsible Officer | Description |
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