



CUMBERLAND
COUNCIL



Cumberland
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Protocols and Guidelines

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Protocols

Acknowledgement of Country

Cumberland Council acknowledges the Darug Nation and People as Traditional Custodians of the land on which the Cumberland Local Government Area (LGA) is situated and pays respect to Aboriginal Elders both past, present and future.

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the First Peoples of Australia.

Cumberland Council acknowledges other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples living in the Cumberland Local Government Area and reaffirms that we will work closely with all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to advance reconciliation within the area.

Community Engagement Acknowledgement

Cumberland Council would like to acknowledge Aunty Stacy Jane Etal as the Darug Elder and representative consulted in the development of this document.

Council would also like to acknowledge the contributions made by the Cumberland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Consultative Committee.

What are Protocols?

Cultural protocols are customs, values, and codes of behaviour that are important to the identity of a particular cultural group. Protocols are an important part of all cultures and provide guidance on how to treat and work with people in a respectful and useful way.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, are the original inhabitants of Australia. Observing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols at meetings, events, conferences and forums demonstrates respect and appreciation for the cultural traditions, history, diversity and contribution made by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community as the first peoples of this nation.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Protocols of Respect

In any event, meeting, forum or conference, paying respect at the beginning of the function is the appropriate protocol when working with both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This could involve either a Welcome to Country or an Acknowledgement of Country. These protocols recognise the knowledge, standing and status of

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australian culture and history, and demonstrate respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

When planning to include a Welcome to Country and/or an Acknowledgement of Country, it is important to consult with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of the community where the event will take place. This ensures that the event or meeting pays the appropriate level of recognition and involves the right peoples for the land on which you meet.

The Darug People are the traditional custodians of the land on which Cumberland Council stands.

Welcome to Country

A Welcome to Country is where a traditional custodian or descendant of the original Aboriginal and Torres Strait clan usually Elders, called an Uncle or Aunty welcomes people to their land at the beginning of a major event, ceremony or meeting.

It is an important mark of respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and history, and recognises respect for the land and culture. It was used to welcome people who visit and meet on the traditional area and set agreements of behaviour. The Welcome to Country should be undertaken by a traditional Aboriginal or Torres Strait Elder of the land where the event is taking place. In Cumberland, this should be a Darug Elder.

A Welcome to Country should be performed at all significant or major Council and community events, including but not limited to Australia Day and festivals, as well as openings, launches or where it is appropriate to welcome people into the local community.

The Elder or representative of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community performing the Welcome to Country should always be seated alongside other dignitaries and speakers at the event. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders should be asked how they would like to be referred to (e.g. Aunty or Uncle). There is no exact wording for a Welcome to Country and how it is performed is dependent upon the Elder (Uncle/Aunty) undertaking the role. It is carried out through a formal process, and may be a speech or a performance such as a traditional dance, song or smoking ceremony, or a combination of these. However, the following is an example wording of a Welcome to Country, from an Aboriginal perspective:

“Hello my name is [insert name of speaker] a representative/Elder of the Darug People. I would like to begin by paying my respect to the Darug People, the traditional custodians of this land where we are meeting upon today. On behalf of the traditional custodians [the Darug People] I welcome you all.”

A non-Aboriginal person, or an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person from a different community, **cannot** do a Welcome to Country. They should do an Acknowledgement of Country/traditional custodians.

Please note: a Welcome to Country ceremony is a right and not a privilege.

Acknowledgement of Country

An 'Acknowledgement of Country/traditional custodians' is a way that non-Aboriginal people and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples not from that land can show respect for the Traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and heritage and the ongoing relationship of traditional custodians with the land where the event, meeting, function or conference will take place.

Acknowledgement of Country can occur with or without a Welcome to Country and may take place when Traditional Elders are not available to provide an official Welcome to Country. A chair or speaker begins the meeting by acknowledging that the event or meeting is taking place in the country of the traditional custodians. In Cumberland this is the Darug People.

The following is considered a standard wording for an Acknowledgement of Country by a Council staff member:

"Cumberland Council acknowledges the traditional custodians of this land, the Darug People, and pays respects to their elders both past, present and future."

Where the person doing an Acknowledgement of Country is an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person, they are required to use the following format for their acknowledgement:

- Name
- Mention their Tribe
- Where they come from
- Permission from local Elders
- Acknowledge local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

The following is an example wording from an Aboriginal perspective:

"I am (name) an Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander person from (tribe/clan) and I acknowledge the Darug People as traditional custodians of the land we are meeting on. I also acknowledge any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders present here today and pay my respect to the Elders both past, present and future."

It is recommended that Council, community organisations and businesses perform an Acknowledgement of Country when running meetings, small-scale community programs or events.

Recommended Practice:

The Acknowledgment of Country is a minimum requirement for all Council and community events and meetings.

Please note: In the case of opening an important event, a Welcome to Country should be performed, not an Acknowledgement of Country.

Smoking Ceremony

A smoking ceremony is a religious ceremony and should only be performed with permission from the traditional custodians. The Darug People performed a range of rituals such as water cleansing ceremonies with song and dance.

Smoking Ceremonies are religious practices conducted by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with specialised cultural knowledge, such as an Elder, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with the spiritual knowledge or a cultural teacher. Most Aboriginal dance groups also provide Smoking Ceremonies as part of their services but it is a separate religious ceremony.

The Smoking Ceremony aims to spiritually cleanse the space in which the ceremony takes place, so as to allow peace and recognise the importance of event or meeting. Given the significant nature of the ceremony, Smoking Ceremonies are usually only performed on special occasions or at major events and places of spiritual significance.

It should also be noted that Smoking Ceremonies are also more appropriate for outdoor occasions due to ventilation requirements.

Recommended Practice:

A Smoking Ceremony should be performed on special occasions or at major outdoor events, such as Australia Day, festivals, and other culturally significant activities including Sorry Day, Cumberland Reconciliation Day on 3rd of May and Reconciliation and NAIDOC Week and when permission has been given by the traditional custodians.

Please note: Council's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Consultative Committee or Community Development & Planning Team can provide contact details for traditional custodians and suitable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who can be engaged for performing Smoking Ceremonies.

Aboriginal Cultural Practices and Considerations

Gender Protocols – Men’s and Women’s Business

Aboriginal 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 only women can access.

It is unlikely that you will be able to distinguish between men’s and women’s business. Councils need to be aware that such issues exist and seek advice from the traditional custodians and Aboriginal peoples about when they are likely to arise and how to manage such issues.

Sacred Sites

Sacred sites are places of cultural significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. They may be parts of the natural landscape such as hills, rocks, trees and springs that are not always spectacular or interesting to non-Aboriginal people. They may be places that are significant because they mark a particular act of a creation being. They also include burial grounds and places where particular ceremonies have been held.

In some cases the act of identifying or talking about a site may in itself be a violation. Custodians have particular responsibilities to protect and maintain sacred sites. This may be done in various ways including holding ceremonies, visiting the places and singing the songs associated with them.

Under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act*, the National Parks and Wildlife Service is responsible for the care, control and management of all historic sites, reserves and Aboriginal areas. More information is available from the *NSW Office of Environment and Heritage* website under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act*.

There are a number of significant Aboriginal sites in the Cumberland Council area around Duck River and Prospect Hill (Pemulwuy).

One of these sites was a meeting place where exchanges took place between the four main tribes of the Sydney area: Darug, Gandangara, Guringai and Tharawal Peoples. Further information about the cultural heritage and significance of the Duck River to the Wategora/Wangal Peoples and documentation of sites and places may be available through the ‘*On the Dreaming Tracks*’ project.

Please note: These sites must not be visited without first contacting a Traditional Aboriginal Elder or knowledge holder of this area.

Confidentiality

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have traditional customs, stories, and sacred information that may or may not be passed onto you. If you are given this information/knowledge, remember, it is given in trust. That trust requires that you respect that confidentiality. This includes translating, reproducing or passing on any information, practices or cultural product without permission.

You should assume that all information is confidential unless you have specifically negotiated permission to use it.

Naming the Deceased

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in NSW may have different protocols regarding naming deceased Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons than that which is often raised with northern Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. In many Aboriginal communities in northern Australia it is offensive to refer to a deceased person by name or show photographic images of the person during the mourning period, unless agreed to by the relevant family. Cultural warnings are often used to avoid causing offence to the families of deceased persons.

The best way for Council to use the appropriate protocol for their area regarding naming the deceased or showing photographic images is to consult the Local Aboriginal Land Council regarding the background of the particular community member(s).

Dignity and Respect

The past experience of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is that they were considered to be lesser people needing protection and assimilation into Australian society.

It is critical to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are treated with dignity and respect. This is much more than attitude. It must include tangible recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, heritage, cultures and protocols.

Community Engagement

Getting Permission

Getting permission is essential before starting work on any project that has an impact directly on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Getting permission involves forming strong partnerships with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and Traditional Elders. They can advise of the correct protocol for gaining consent.

Permission will rarely be refused if the purpose of the work is clearly understood and way of undertaking the work is properly negotiated. Where it is refused, the reason may relate to issues that are sacred or taboo, related to a death custom, or be specifically women's or men's business.

Consultation

It is important that Cumberland Council uses a range of strategies to involve and consult with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and provide opportunities for the communities to participate in Council decision-making.

For ideas on appropriate consultation and engagement strategies with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, contact Council's Community Development & Planning Team.

Ownership, Copyright, Cultural and Intellectual Property

In the past, non-Aboriginal people have appropriated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stories, languages, songs, dances and knowledge. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have not been recognised as the owners of this knowledge. In some cases non-Aboriginal authors, who have benefited from the knowledge given to them, have claimed the copyright and have profited from the information.

As a result, copyright and the protection of intellectual property are vital issues for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. They are the custodians of their culture and have the right to own and control their cultural heritage.

Any access to and use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural information must have permission from relevant individuals. Rights to use Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander material may be held by an individual, but mostly cultural material belongs to the traditional custodians of that knowledge as a community.

Council should reach formal agreement with the owner/s of knowledge before commencing a project that uses it. In some cases this should be in the form of a written contract.

Copyright and moral rights are complex issues and not always clear in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. The *Arts Law Centre of Australia* can provide further advice on relevant legal issues ([website: www.artslaw.com.au](http://www.artslaw.com.au)).

Communicating with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities

When seeking to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the issues must be clearly communicated, including priorities, limitations and benefits to the community. Care needs to be taken to cross check that all participants have understood these issues.

On any issue, the limitations to negotiation need to be clearly articulated. There may be legal, financial or policy restraints on Cumberland Council that will limit what can be achievable.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Contacts and Organisations

Council's Community Development Team maintains a database of Traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, Knowledge Holders, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community contacts that are suitable for engaging for Welcome to Country ceremonies, Smoking Ceremonies, other cultural performances as well as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media.

Other Ceremonies

As indicated previously, other ceremonies may be undertaken along with those outlined above. Agencies are encouraged to consult with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities on the best form of recognition for each event the ceremony reflects the NSW Government's commitment to Reconciliation.

In providing cultural services such as Welcome to Country, artistic performances and ceremonies Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are using their intellectual property. For this reason it is appropriate that people receive payment for their service. As such providers of these services should be appropriately remunerated. The remuneration should take into account travel to the event, time and complexity of the service as well as the profile of the event.

The Department of Aboriginal Affairs has developed guidelines for government agencies to consider when engaging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in cultural performances, or when conducting a Welcome to Country, Smoking Ceremonies or other Aboriginal cultural protocol.

It is important to note that this schedule below is only a guide and sets minimum fees for a range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural services. Quotes should be sought from individual suppliers.

Fee for Service

Cultural Practice	Minimum Fee
Welcome to Country	\$250
Smoking Ceremony	\$530 (depending on accepted religious person)
Didgeridoo Performance	\$360 (men only)
Dancer category (basic)	\$430
Dancer(s) category 2 (professional)	\$450-\$1800
Guest Lecturer/Speaker	\$110-\$500 (depending on knowledge)
Sitting Fee*	\$35-\$150 minimum

Source: *Cultural Practices and Performers Fee Schedule – Department of Aboriginal Affairs 2005.*

*Note: Sitting fees may be paid, where appropriate and by prior written agreement, to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members of a committee/ advisory board or individual to acknowledge the value of the unique and specialist expertise on cultural heritage issues provided by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person or committee members. This is determined by the funding of the specific project being undertaken.

Please beware the above 'fee for service table' serves as a price guide and quote only. Prices may vary when done in combination. E.g. Job request: Smoking and Cleansing Ceremony, Welcome to Country and Cultural Talk to be undertaken at the same event – will be treated as one job request and price will be negotiated depending on event type and targeted audience.

Do not hesitate to the Aboriginal Education and Programs Officer at Council on 02 8757 9000 if you require further information regarding the above quotes.

Significant Dates

Date	Significance
January 26	Australia Day is a day of celebration for most Australians however, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples it is a day that represents invasion, dispossession and loss of culture and sovereign rights. For this reason many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples choose to refer to Australia Day as Survival Day. The Survival Day concept was born out of the 1988 Bicentenary Australia Day celebrations in Sydney. Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who took part in the Bicentennial marches felt they would like to have an alternative celebration which told the story of how their history and culture had survived since colonisation. The first Survival concert was held in 1992 and local Australia/Survival Day ceremonies and celebrations are held annually across New South Wales.
March 21	Harmony Day is held on March 21 each year, which is also the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Harmony Day is an Australian Government initiative designed to promote community harmony, build relationships between people and address racism where it occurs. Harmony Day was first held in 1999 and has since developed into Australia's largest annual multicultural event.

<p>25 April</p>	<p>Coloured Diggers Day</p> <p>A Coloured Diggers March is held during Anzac Day each year as a way of raising awareness as well as honouring and recognising the contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders war veterans that were accorded to other servicemen and servicewomen but denied for so many years to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.</p> <p>More than 5,500 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander veterans served in World War I and WWII although many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Diggers did not identify themselves as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander when they joined the armed forces because as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples they would not have been allowed to join, or they wanted to avoid exposure to racism. Instead they pretended to be Maori or Indian.</p> <p>Upon their return to Australia, instead of recognition, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Diggers received ignorance and racism, were not eligible for returned servicemen land grants or even membership of Returned Services League (RSL) clubs, and sometimes even found that the government had taken their children away while they defended their country.</p> <p>The first official Coloured Diggers March was held on Anzac Day 2007 in Redfern, Sydney, with hundreds of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander veterans and their descendants marching in Sydney's first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Anzac Day parade.</p>
<p>3 May 1805</p> <p>Only celebrated in Cumberland</p>	<p>Prospect Hill was the site of the first Aboriginal – European reconciliation held in Sydney. On 3 May 1805, a group of Aboriginal women together with a young free settler, John Kennedy, facilitated a meeting on Prospect Hill between the Aboriginal leaders of the the First Nations peoples and European settlers headed by Rev John Marsden. This was the first recorded act of reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and Europeans in Australia, and brought about an end to the ongoing conflict in Parramatta and Prospect.</p> <p>Since 2010 this event has been commemorated on 3rd May each year in a ceremony on Prospect Hill.</p>

<p>26 May</p>	<p>National Sorry Day</p> <p>The start of the week (26 May) is National Sorry Day (a recommendation of the Stolen Generation Report) followed by the Anniversary of the 1967 Referendum which removed from the Constitution clauses that discriminated against the First Australians (27 May) and the end of the week.</p> <p>Sorry Day is recognised as a national day of commemoration and remembrance honouring the Stolen Generations, all they endured, and all they lost through the removal of generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children as a result of the policies of forced removal in the past.</p>
<p>26 May to 3 June</p>	<p>National Reconciliation Week</p> <p>Each year National Reconciliation Week celebrates the rich culture and history of the First Australians. It provides the opportunity to focus on reconciliation and to explore new and better ways of meeting challenges in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.</p>
<p>*27 May</p>	<p>Amendments to the Constitution regarding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (Referendum).</p>
<p>3 June</p>	<p>Mabo Day is the anniversary of the High Court decision in the Eddie Mabo land rights case of 1992. For more information go to: www.reconciliation.org.au</p>
<p>1 July</p>	<p>Coming of the Light Festival (Torres Strait Islander celebration)</p> <p>The start of the week (1 July) is the Coming of the Light Festival, a significant day for many of the predominantly Christian Torres Strait Islanders, as it marks the day that the London Missionary Society first arrived in the Torres Strait.</p>

<p>1st Week of July (Sunday to Sunday)</p>	<p>National Aboriginal and Islander Day of Celebration (NAIDOC) Week NAIDOC celebrations are held around Australia in the first full week in July to celebrate the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. For more information go to: www.naidoc.org.au</p>
<p>4 August</p>	<p>National Aboriginal and Islander Children’s Day Family relationships and emphasise the importance of culture for young children. Each year, the Children’s Day has a theme to highlight a significant issue, concern or hope for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.</p>
<p>9 August</p>	<p>International Day of the World’s Indigenous Peoples The day recognises the value and diversity of the cultures of Indigenous communities and the contributions that they can make to humanity.</p>

*Note: 27 May 3 June National Reconciliation Week Incorporates the following significant dates:

National Sorry Day – Amendments to the Constitution regarding Aboriginal peoples (Referendum)

Flags

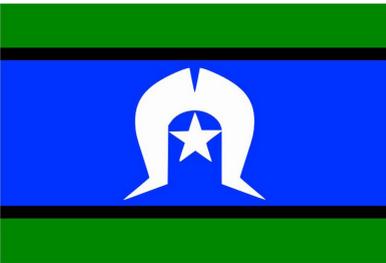
Aboriginal Flag



The Aboriginal flag is divided horizontally into equal halves of black (top) and red (bottom), and has a yellow circle in the centre. The colour black symbolises the Aboriginal peoples, the colour red represents the earth and the colour ochre which is used in Aboriginal ceremonies, and the yellow circle represents the sun.

The Aboriginal flag should be flown at all times and at half-mast on Sorry Day. If the flag cannot be raised all the time, it should be raised on important Aboriginal calendar events such as Survival Day, Sorry Day, and Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week.

Torres Strait Islander Flag



The Torres Strait Islander flag is used for business relating to the Torres Strait Islander Community.

The flag is emblazoned with a white Dhari (head dress) which is a symbol of Torres Strait Islanders. The white five pointed star beneath it symbolises peace, the five major island groups and the navigational importance of stars to the seafaring peoples of the Torres Strait.

Flag Flying Protocols

The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet provides protocols for the appropriate use and the flying of official Australian flags in the publication *'Australian flags – Part 2: The protocols for the appropriate use and the flying of the flag'*.

The flag order should follow the rules of precedence as follows, dependent upon the number of flag poles erected in any one location:

1. Australian National Flag (should always take precedence and be flown on the far left of the person/s facing the flags)

2. New South Wales state flag
3. Australian Aboriginal flag and/or Torres Strait Islander Flag in either order

(Source: *Flying and Use of the Australian National Flag*)

When lowering the flag from a half-mast position it should be briefly raised to the peak and then lowered ceremoniously.

The flag should never be flown at half-mast at night even if it is illuminated.

When flying the Australian National Flag with other flags, all flags in the set should be flown at half-mast.

(Commonwealth of Australia, *Australian flags - Part 2: The protocols for the appropriate use and the flying of the flag, 2006*, pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/publications/australian-flags-excerpt.pdf)

Recommended Practice:

The hierarchy for flying flags on Council property should follow the rules of precedence outlined above.

Council should fly both the Aboriginal flag and Torres Strait Islander flags on important Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander calendar events such as Sorry Day, Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week. During NAIDOC Week, Sorry Day and Reconciliation Week, the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander flags take precedence over the NSW State flag where only two flagpoles are available. They should not replace the Australian flag which will continue to be flown in the first flagpole in the position of precedence. Where there are three flagpoles, the Australian flag would be flown, followed by the NSW, followed by the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander flags.

Special Days for Flying Flags

May 26 – National Sorry Day

Sorry Day is recognised as a national day of commemoration and remembrance honouring the Stolen Generations, all they endured, and all they lost through the removal of generations of Aboriginal children as a result of the policies of forced removal in the past.

27 May to 3 June – National Reconciliation Week

National Reconciliation Week celebrates the rich culture and history of the First Australians. It provides the opportunity to focus on reconciliation and to explore new and better ways of meeting challenges in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

It commences on 27 May in recognition of the anniversary of the 1967 Referendum which successfully removed from the Constitution clauses that discriminated against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. It ends on 3 June (Mabo Day) as the anniversary of the High Court decision in the Eddie Mabo land rights case of 1992.

For more information go to www.reconciliation.org.au

Recommended Practice:

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags should both be flown at half-mast on Sorry Day (26th May) and then fly them both at full for the duration of National Reconciliation Week (27 May to 3 June).

For more information go to www.reconciliation.org.au

First week of July (Sunday to Sunday) – NAIDOC Week

NAIDOC Week (originally an acronym for National Aboriginal and Islanders' Day Observance Committee, the acronym has since become the name of the week) is held every year to celebrate and promote a greater understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures.

Recommended Practice:

The Australian Aboriginal Flag and the Torres Strait Islander Flag should be flown on additional flagpoles, where available, next to or near the Australian National Flag. If there is only one flagpole available, the Australian Aboriginal Flag and the Torres Strait Islander Flag should not replace the Australian National Flag. If there are two flagpoles available, the Aboriginal Flag should be flown with the Australian National Flag.

Locations of Council-owned flag poles in Cumberland

- Merrylands Council Building (16 Memorial Drive, Merrylands)
- Auburn Council Building (1 Susan Street, Auburn)
- Auburn Memorial Park (corner of Rawson Street)
- Peacock Gallery and Artist Studio, Auburn Botanic Gardens (Corner of Chiswick and Chisholm Street, Auburn) – Note: 1 flag pole only

Definitions and Terms

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

It is important to remember that while both are First Nations of Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are very different. Each Nation has its own cultural language and traditions with their own histories, beliefs and values. It is respectful to recognise the identity of each each cultural group.

In written works it is considered offensive to include a footnote to the word Aboriginal stating that 'It includes both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples', so it is advised not to do this.

When specifically referring to both cultures; use the term 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples'. In all other circumstances, use Aboriginal peoples. Always capitalise the 'A' in Aboriginal. Lower case refers to an aboriginal person or indigenous people in any part of the world.

Elders

Elders are custodians of knowledge. They are chosen and accepted by their own communities and are highly respected. An Elder is a member of a particular Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community, male or female, who is respected and has the authority within the community to give permission, advise others, and pass on knowledge. Elders are usually the holder of traditional knowledge and customs and are the only ones who have the authority to talk about it or not, and to pass it on or not.

An Elder is usually, but not always, an older person. Young people may also be given permission to talk on behalf of an acknowledged Elder not a 'self-proclaimed Elder'. You must also be aware of addressing an Elder in the appropriate way. Some Elders are referred to as Uncle or Aunty, but you should only use these titles if given permission by them to do so. Simply asking politely is the best way to find out if you can do so or not.

Indigenous

'Indigenous' is generally used when referring to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. 'Indigenous' is generally used by the Commonwealth Government as they have a charter of providing services and programs to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples at a national level. If you are going to use 'Indigenous,' it is advisable to use the word Australia (e.g. Australia Indigenous) to cover the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Australia. The word Indigenous can be very vague and is mostly use to describe Fauna and Flora.

The term Aboriginal refers specifically to the Aboriginal peoples of the mainland and Tasmania and does not necessarily include Torres Strait Islander peoples. Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are opposed to the term 'Indigenous' being used as it generalises both cultures. Council and agencies are advised against using this term where possible, and to use the inclusive language of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Land Council

An Aboriginal Land Council is a community organisation organised by regions that are state legislated and are caretakers of the land on behalf of Aboriginal peoples. They are organised by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples but (in some instances) they are not the traditional custodians of the land they care for. They have historically advocated for recognition of traditional land rights, and also for the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in other areas such as equal wages and adequate housing and basic human rights. Land Councils aim to provide employment, training and to explore business and community development opportunities for members. Land Council regions can be reflective of Aboriginal clan boundaries.

Under the NSW Aboriginal Land Rights Act, the function of a Land Council is to "to improve, protect and foster the best interests of all Aboriginal persons within the Council's area and other persons who are members of that Land Council." This includes promoting the protection of Aboriginal culture and the heritage of Aboriginal persons in its area, conservation and land management of Aboriginal sites and relics, and promoting the protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage with other Government authorities by advising and educating the broader community about the significance of Aboriginal culture, heritage and sites.

Cumberland Council falls within the Metropolitan, Gandangara and Deerubin Aboriginal Land Councils. The Darug were bounded by the Kuringgai to the northeast around Broken Bay, the Darkinjung to the north, the Wiradjuri to the west on the western fringe of the Blue Mountains, the Gandangara to the southwest in the Southern Highlands and the Tharawal to the southeast in the Illawarra area.

Nation, Tribe, Clan and Mob

These are all terms referring to a culturally distinct group of Aboriginal peoples associated with a particular, culturally defined area of land or country. A number of 'tribes' or 'clans' comprise a larger grouping of Aboriginal peoples that identify as a 'nation'.

Mob is a term that is being increasingly used by Aboriginal communities as a generic term. Aboriginal peoples will often refer to themselves as being Koori, Goori or Murri. These are terms drawn from Aboriginal languages.

‘Koori’ is usually used by Aboriginal peoples in parts of NSW and Victoria.

‘Goori’ is usually used by Aboriginal peoples in northern NSW coastal regions.

‘Murri’ is usually used by Aboriginal peoples in north-west NSW and Queensland. Koori is the term used by the local Aboriginal community in the Bega region.

Traditional Custodians

‘Traditional custodians’ is the term to describe the original Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples who inhabited an area. Traditional custodians today are descendants of the original inhabitants and have ongoing spiritual and cultural ties to the land and waterways where their ancestors lived.

Darug culture had (and still has) a strong spiritual connection with the place an individual was born or conceived, which demanded a responsibility by each person to look after the land, as well as plant and animal life. Depending on their time and place of conception, children were allocated totem animals and they had to respect and protect their totem.



‘Warali Wali’ means possum in the Darug language. The possum is one of the traditional totems of the Darug People.

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