

talking RESPECT



*Establishing Guidelines and Protocols for Respectful
Engagement with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
communities of the Cassowary Coast Region*

TALKING RESPECT

Establishing Guidelines and Protocols for Respectful Engagement with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities of the Cassowary Coast Region

Overview:

'Talking Respect' aligns with key objectives in the Cassowary Coast Council's 'Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan 2015-2016' (RRAP):

- Values, respects, promotes, supports and understands the uniqueness the Cassowary Coast Region's traditional clan's history, culture, heritage and relationship with the environment.
- Builds relationships based on mutual respect and understanding while valuing the positive contributions of all First People living in the region.
- Develops partnerships with the First People community to assist with reducing social and economic disadvantage within the region.

'Talking Respect' provides a clear understanding on how best to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the Cassowary Coast region. The Cassowary Coast Region is located on Aboriginal Land and it is important as a community we understand the significance of observing protocols in recognising the Traditional Owners of the land.

Additional information in 'Talking Respect' will also provide a brief background for understanding and respecting the history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. For information about the culture, traditions and stories associated with Aboriginal and

Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Cassowary Coast Council Region community should contact the appropriate cultural group, who are the only people with responsibility for such information.

Bagu Cluster - Curtesy Giringun Aboriginal Art Centre



Traditional Owner Groups within the CCRC Area



Traditional Owner Groups supplied by the Gurrumul Aboriginal Corporation and the Mares Aboriginal Corporation. Traditional Owner Group areas are approximate only. Latest source information obtained from the GOONS from Department of Environment and Heritage Management. Copyright CCRC. CCRC assumes any liability for any errors or omissions that appear on this map.

Why do we need a Traditional Owner to do a Welcome to Country in our area?

Observing agreed cultural protocols demonstrates the respect has for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as traditional owners or traditional custodians.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples should be consulted and involved in all decisions affecting their cultural heritage, and in particular, on the ways in which their history, community, stories, lives and families and cultural and intellectual property are represented and used. Speaking to the right people is very important, especially identifying who can represent clans to release traditionally collectively owned material.

Traditional welcoming ceremonies range from speeches of welcome and traditional dance to smoking ceremonies and are performed at the beginning of an event. A Welcome to Country can only be performed by a traditional owner and nominated representative from that particular country where the event is being held. This is usually a recognised Elder from the local community. The Elder welcomes people to their land.

The two ways of acknowledging the Traditional Owners in our region are:

- A Welcome to Country which can only be performed by a traditional owner or nominated representative from that particular Country where the event is being held. This is usually a recognised Elder from the local community. The Elder welcomes people to their land. A Welcome to Country usually consists of a speech and may also include traditional language, singing, dancing or playing of a traditional instrument.
- An Acknowledgement is a way that all people can demonstrate respect for Aboriginal protocols and can be performed by anyone who is not a traditional owner from the country of the land on which the event is being held. It is a respectful public acknowledgement of the traditional owners of the land. An Acknowledgement can be performed by a traditional custodian, who may be from another cultural group but lived and cared for the country for many years.

Cardwell Foreshore Bagu - Artists: Eileen Tep and Charlotte Beeron



Examples of Acknowledgement of Country

In place of a Welcome to Country

1a. _____ acknowledges the Mamu, Djiru, Girramay, Gulnay, Jirrbal and Bandjin peoples as Traditional Owners and the languages spoken of the country in which our local government is situated. We recognise and value their cultural heritage, beliefs and continuing relationship and responsibility to their land and sea country. We honour and respect their Elders past and present.

Or

1b. I would like to respectfully Acknowledge the _____ people who are the Traditional Owners and First People of the land on which we meet/stand. I would like to pay my respects to the Elders past and present and I would like to extend my respect to the Aboriginal people who are present today.

Or

1c. For youth events add acknowledgment - We honour and respect Elders past, present and future.

Brief - Following a Welcome or an Acknowledgement

Depending on your role in the event you may like to thank the Elder for their Welcome and then:

I would also like to pay my respects to the _____ people and Elders past and present.

When you are unsure of the Traditional Owners of the Land

If you are visiting another area/region and you are unsure of the name of the Traditional Owners of the Land on which you are meeting it is more respectful to perform a less specific Acknowledgement:

2a. I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodian of the land on which we meet today. I would like to pay my respects to the Elders past and present and I would like to extend my respect to the Aboriginal people who are present today.

Or

2b. Before I commence I wish to acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this place and all lands upon which the (organisation) is located, and the pay my respects to the Elders past, present and future for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of Indigenous Australia

Refer to guidelines in the Cassowary Coast Council document 'Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country Policy' Number: 4.14, Appendix 2: Examples of Acknowledgement of Country.

Why do we pay the Traditional Owners to do a Welcome to Country?

An Elder or representative of the local recognized Traditional Owner group will deliver a formal 'welcome' to visitors on their 'country', for which, they have had custodial responsibilities and spiritual connection to, both land and sea. Traditional Owners should be respected and Council and community should appreciate that their time is valuable. In providing cultural services, Aboriginal people are using their intellectual property. Appropriate remuneration should be discussed and arranged prior to the event.

If an Elder agrees to perform a Welcome to Country the following information should be discussed with them:

- who will meet them
- who will be their escort/chaperone for the event (Elders are dignitaries and should be treated as such)
- will they be attending with a guest
- dietary requirements
- what the arrangements for payment are
- whether it will be necessary to provide an ABN for fee to be paid, or will a Statement of Supplier form be accepted

A letter of thanks for their participation should be sent after the event.

Weaving Materials





Why do we need to seek permission to include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditions and stories in our work?

Presentation and representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and all aspects of 'culture', is the responsibility of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples only and permission must be acquired from the Traditional Owners to include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditions and stories in any activities. Should the community wish to use stories or artwork by any Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person, initial consultation with the Traditional Owner or artist should be followed by a formal licensing agreement for signature and fee.

- Permission from the Traditional Owners must be sought in writing to reproduce or make public any cultural information/ images/designs/stories etc, and includes photocopying, scanning, filming or photographing. Without written permission from a Traditional Owner or artist, use of such material can infringe copyright and incite the copyright owner/owners with the right to take legal action. For an individual Aboriginal artist, copyright applies for the duration of their life and remains 70years after their death.

- There are also guidelines to respecting Intellectual Property during media interviews.
- Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are embracing tourism to share culture and develop sustainable businesses in their communities. Cultural Tourism services attached to mainstream and other tourism enterprises should seek permission for use of culture.

More guidelines and Codes of Practice for engaging local Aboriginal people to present their traditions, stories or artwork can be found at:

- NAVA (National Association for the Visual Arts) Indigenous Practitioner Protocols https://visualarts.net.au/media/uploads/files/CHAPTER_9.pdf

This website also provides a document titled Valuing art, Respecting culture which offers protocols for working with the Australian Indigenous visual arts and craft sector. <https://visualarts.net.au/code-of-practice/>

- Australia Copyright Council (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Board) Indigenous Culture Protocols. http://www.copyright.org.au/acc_prod/ACC/Information_Sheets/Artists__Indigenous.aspx?WebsiteKey=8a471e74-3f78-4994-9023-316f0ecef4ef

This website contains information for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and arts organisations, and others interested in Indigenous culture, Indigenous intellectual property and traditional knowledge.

What are Cultural Sensitivities?

Some Indigenous cultural ceremonies and protocols are sensitive and may not be discussed or shared with the broader community. This may influence whether an Elder can attend an event and deliver a Welcome to Country. It is important that this is respected and the nature of your event and expected proceedings are discussed with the Traditional Owner or representative prior to the meeting or event. It is important that there is a contingency plan for your Master of Ceremonies to perform an 'Acknowledgement to Country' because the Traditional Owner or representative may have to cancel or not show.

Be aware that community members may prefer to deal with people of their own gender. As a mark of respect your initial approach should be to a person of the same gender.

Sorry Business: Community should understand and respect that some Aboriginal people may not attend, or cannot be contacted due to 'Sorry Business' (death, mourning period, funeral time) which may take 4 weeks or more. It is expected that all kin, including extended family will attend the rites associated with death. After a death, some communities will shut down for "Sorry Business", despite previous arrangements

Trust: Be sensitive to the fact that many Aboriginal people lived under state Government restrictions (until 1985) where they experienced control over their work and wages, including banning of cultural customs, and they may be reluctant to engage with community at first – be respectful but don't push. Be mindful of developing a trusting relationship and be patient without patronising.

Identity comes from one's own self-awareness and connections of place, people, histories, language and time. Identity is a sensitive issue pertaining to Australian history and the dispossession of Aboriginal peoples. Community should be sensitive to the impact of dispossession and forcible removals to Government reserves and Missions, far from traditional country, and removal of Aboriginal children from their families. It is important to avoid making assumptions about cultural knowledge based on physical appearance, as this can introduce or perpetrate stereotypes and generalisations. For example, do not assume that an individual with dark skin and hair has an intimate knowledge of traditional cultural practice — nor that someone with fair skin lacks Aboriginal cultural knowledge and experiences. Knowledge, experiences and cultural histories are based on personal and family histories and individual experiences. Community should understand that it is NOT appropriate to ask questions such as "How much Aboriginal blood do you have?" or make statements like "are you quarter cast" or "you don't look black!".

Indigenous: Many people prefer not to be collectively referred to as Indigenous. It is a term used to collectively refer to Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples. However, it is important to remember that Aboriginal peoples are the Traditional Owners of mainland Australia with many diverse cultures. Torres Strait Islander peoples live in our mainland communities and should be respected and invited to attend events, but, they cannot 'speak for' and are not able to deliver a Welcome to Country according to Australian Aboriginal cultural protocols.

Eye contact and body language: An indirect communication style is common in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, where being direct is seen as confrontational. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people may thus delay expressing a firm opinion. Instead, they may listen to others before offering their own view and if it conflicts with others, will often understate it.

Be sensitive of non-verbal cues. For instance, silence may mean that people are listening, remaining non-committal or waiting for community support.

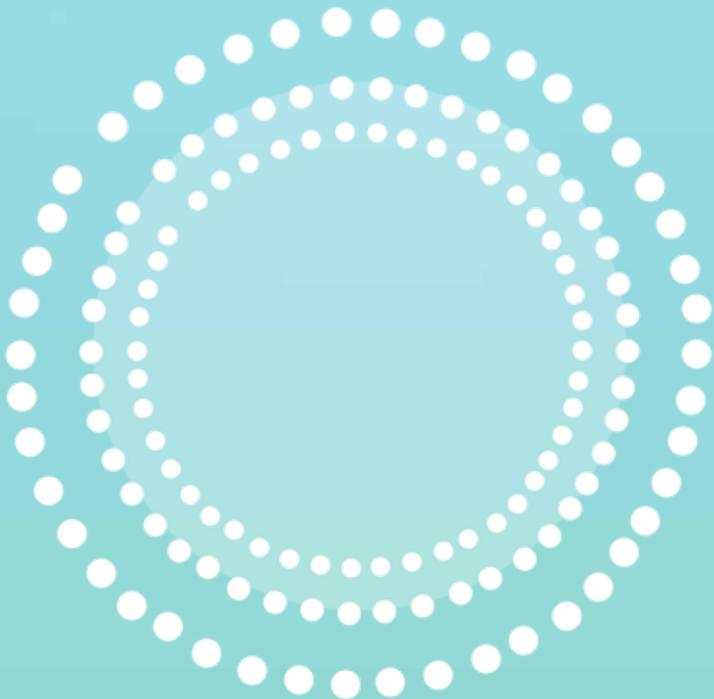
Body language is as important in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities as it is elsewhere, and includes: lowering your eyes and avoiding eye contact with older people or authority figures; not pointing when giving directions; avoiding body contact such as friendly touching or jostling or touching the upper torso or arm/ shaking hands only if initiated by the other party.

Dress codes: Dress appropriately and modestly. In many communities, it is a sign of respect to cover the shoulders. It is always inappropriate to wear short dresses or revealing shorts.

Didgeridoos: Contrary to popular belief, not all Aboriginal cultures used Didgeridoos or Yidaki. Performers engaged in any events, may or may not use a didgeridoo in the performance, and should not be expected to. Women do not play, and should not handle the didgeridoo.

Photography: Always 'ask' permission before taking ANY photograph of an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person, and remember they hold Intellectual Property over that image and need to know exactly how and where you would use their image. In some more traditional regions Aboriginal people believe part of their spirit will be taken.

Men's Business and Women's Business: Relates to gender-specific knowledge and practices (specifically health, well-being and religious matters) that cannot be known or observed by the opposite sex. It is a mark of cultural respect not to discuss traditionally female issues ("women's business") in the presence of men and vice versa.





Lomandra Baskets - KOCA (Keeping Our Culture Alive)

Traditional Adoption:

In some circumstances, a representative of a Traditional Owner group may nominate a member of their group to do a Welcome to Country, who they consider a custodian under 'Traditional Adoption', but also identify with another group distant to the specific country of the site. On occasion this may attract complaint from another Traditional Owner family who disputes this arrangement, but, community must remain impartial and follow the appropriate guidelines for engaging Traditional Owners and respect their nominated representative.

Kinship: Be aware that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island kinship systems are complex and will impact on how you can interact with members of a community. For instance, avoidance relationships dictate that a son-in-law cannot be in his mother-in-law's presence or a brother cannot use his sister's name.

Did you know?

The Aboriginal flag was designed by Harold Thomas. The top half of the flag is black to symbolise Aboriginal people. The red in the lower half stands for the earth and the colour of ochre which has ceremonial significance. The circle of yellow in the centre of the flag signifies the sun.

The Torres Strait Islander flag was designed by Bernard Namok of Thursday Island. The flag symbolises the unity and identity of all Torres Strait Islanders represented by the white Dhari (headdress). The green stripes represent the land, the black stripes represent the people and the blue the sea.

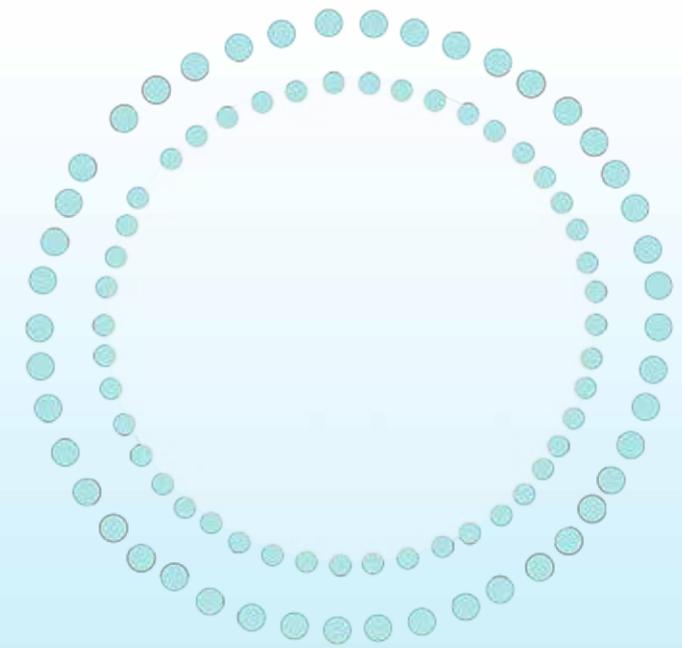


What are some significant days of recognition for the Aboriginal community?

- **NAIDOC week** (July) celebrates the National Aboriginal Day of Observance Committee (NADOC) formed in 1957 and inspired by the 'Day of Mourning' held on January 26 1938 to recognise inequality and injustice for Aboriginal people. Later it became known as NAIDOC to include Torres Strait Islanders. NAIDOC week encourage communities to continue building positive relationships between Aboriginal peoples, Torres Strait Islanders and non-Indigenous Australians.

- **National Reconciliation Week** (May/ June)

- o The 27th May marks the anniversary of Australia's most successful Referendum in 1967 when 90.77% of Australians voted for changes to the 1901 Constitution that gave the Commonwealth power to make laws to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the national census since 1971. Prior to the 1971 Census, only Aboriginal people identified as being 'less than 50% Aboriginal blood' could be included in the count. Torres Strait Islanders were considered to be 'Polynesian' and on that basis, have been counted since 1947. Citizenship was the first stage towards reconciliation although it did not give Aboriginal people 'citizenship rights'. The Commonwealth continued to manage Aboriginal affairs by establishing the Department of Aboriginal Affairs in 1972. Reconciliation is everyone's business.



- o **National Sorry Day** on 25 May recognises the removal of Aboriginal children from their families. Reserves were established for Queensland's Aboriginal people since 1837 and following an Amendment in 1910, children with light skin or from mixed parentage were removed from their homes, placed into State institutions or adopted by non-Indigenous parents. This policy of assimilation continued until the 1970s. These children are now referred to as the 'Stolen Generations'.

- o **MABO Day** on 3 June each year commemorates the landmark decision in 1992 by the High Court of Australia that overturned the doctrine of terra nullius (nobody's land) and recognises Eddie Koiki Mabo who campaigned for Indigenous land rights and traditional land ownership.

What words and terms can we use in our communication?

The Glossary of Appropriate Terminology below aligns with national education objectives in the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA, 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Handbook' Queensland Studies Authority, Queensland Government, 2010; 6.8 'Appropriate Terminology for Indigenous History and Cultures in Museums' by Museums Australia Inc, NSW, 1996; and 'Recommended Guidelines for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Terminology', Indigenous Education and Employment Committee Queensland University of Technology, 2015. Inclusive language recognises and values diversity among the many cultural groups.

Inappropriate terms for use in your printed material or oral presentations:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were present for at least fifty thousand years prior to the arrival of the Europeans and preferred term would be 'when Captain Cook arrived in Australia'.
- Inappropriate to use terms such as 'full-blood' (a person will identify as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander), 'half caste' etc (rather a person is of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent). 'Identity' comes from one's own self-awareness and self-image. Identity is connected with place, people, histories, language and time.
- The term 'tribe' is inappropriate and a Western term introduced to Australia informed by North America and Africa and not acceptable or appropriate terminology in Australia, because there is no hierarchal system in Australian Aboriginal society, and also discourage the use of terms such as 'King', 'Queen', 'Prince' or 'Princess'. Please also note that some Aboriginal people will use these terms to refer to their ancestry having been brought up with non-Aboriginal terminology, but they are not preferred.

- The terms 'blacks' and 'whites' should be avoided (because such language describes people by the colour of their skin and is therefore considered racist terminology), the terms 'blacks', 'blackfellas', and 'white fellas' are used by some Aboriginal communities and the acceptance and their use of these terms should be respected.

- The term 'Dreamtime' is inappropriate and the terms 'The Dreaming' and 'Dreamings' are preferred to have broadly come to mean the spirituality of Australian Aboriginal people. The term 'Dreamtime' places spirituality in the past and implies that Aboriginal people do not continue to have the same relationships and beliefs today.

- It is inappropriate to use terms such as 'myth' or 'legend' as these convey the impression that information and beliefs surrounding the Dreaming are untrue, trivial or that these events only happened in the distant past and stories about them may have changed over time. More appropriate terms are 'Cultural stories' or 'creation stories' (spiritual narratives positioned within the time of creation of life form and the environment), 'Dreaming stories' or 'ancestral stories'.

- It is inappropriate to use terms such as 'aborigines' (with no initial capital); 'Aborigine', 'Aborigines', 'aboriginals' (with no initial capital and no noun), 'ATSI' and 'you people'. Preferred terms are Aboriginal people, Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, Indigenous people, Indigenous Australians or First Australians.



Cassowary Coast Aboriginal Corporation Contacts:

Registered Native Title Bodies Corporate (RNTBC):

Mamu Aboriginal Corporation

PO Box 50, INNISFAIL QLD 4860
2 Stitt Street, INNISFAIL QLD 4860
Ph: 0484144 073
Contact: Jenny Joyce Daly
Email: mamurntbc@gmail.com
ABN: 20 894 321 353
Ref:
http://nativetitle.org.au/profiles/profile_qld_mamu.html

Girringun Aboriginal Corporation

PO Box 303, CARDWELL QLD 4849
235 Victoria St, CARDWELL QLD 4849
Contact: Phil Rist (EO)
Ph: 4066 8300

Email: eo@girringun.com.au
Enquiries: admin@girringun.com.au
Web: <http://girringun.com.au/about>
ABN: 55 744 388 981



The Regional Arts Development Fund is a Queensland Government and Cassowary Coast Regional Council partnership to support local arts and culture.

Published June 2017



In 2007, the 2nd annual National Indigenous Land and Sea Management Conference was held in Cardwell. The Flame Tree 'Dila' is a gift from the Girringun Aboriginal Corporation to the Australian community to remind us of Caring for Country and a symbol of reconciliation.

