



CORPORATE POLICY STATEMENT NO. 69

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF ABORIGINAL TRADITIONAL OWNERS

April 2016

1. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this policy are to:

- acknowledge Aboriginal people as the traditional owners of the lands and waters managed by the department;
- promote and demonstrate leadership in acknowledgment and respect for Aboriginal traditional owners of lands and waters by departmental staff;
- encourage genuine and positive cross-cultural relations;
- increase and enhance opportunities for the involvement and participation of Aboriginal people in the department's events and business; and
- guide staff in arranging Welcome to Country or Acknowledgment Statements on relevant occasions.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all lands and waters managed by the department, either solely or in partnership with Aboriginal people.

3. CONTEXT

This policy formalises the department's acknowledgment of Aboriginal people as the traditional owners of the lands and waters that the department manages. It also aims to encourage departmental staff to demonstrate leadership by appropriately respecting Aboriginal protocol when carrying out business for the department.

It should be read in conjunction with [Corporate Guideline No. 31: Acknowledgment of Aboriginal Traditional Owners](#).

In this policy, unless the contrary intention appears:

Acknowledgment Statement means the statement announced at the opening phase of a meeting which mentions and acknowledges the Aboriginal traditional owners of the land on which the meeting is taking place, and aims to demonstrate respect for Aboriginal protocol. It can be expressed by any individual attending the meeting.

country means the lands and waters that an Aboriginal community, clan or individuals have a traditional affiliation with and responsibility for.

departmental staff means full-time, part-time or casual employees of the department, contractors engaged by the department (and any person engaged by the contractor) and volunteers.

protocol means a custom or tradition practiced by the Aboriginal traditional owners of a specific area.

traditional owner means an Aboriginal person with traditional rights and interests in land, which may or may not be recognised under the common law, Commonwealth or State legislation, for example because native title has been extinguished over an area.

Welcome to Country means the ceremony where the Aboriginal traditional owners or elders welcome people to their land.

4. LEGISLATION

The *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984* (CALM Act) provides for:

- a management objective for the department to “protect and conserve the value of the land to the heritage and culture of Aboriginal persons”;
- joint management of lands and waters to which the CALM Act applies;
- joint vesting of the lands and waters to which the CALM Act applies;
- access to lands and waters managed by the department for Aboriginal customary activities.

The *Swan and Canning Rivers Management Act 2006* (SCRM Act) recognises the interests of the Noongar community and provides for their participation in the management of the Swan Canning Riverpark and its catchment area.

Acknowledging and respecting Aboriginal people as the traditional owners of the lands and waters that the department manages, and as joint management partners in a growing number of parks and reserves, is central to the department’s work and requires appropriate consideration by staff.

This policy supports some of the key corporate strategies of the department by fostering a positive work culture of trust and continual improvement, and by promoting opportunities for involvement of Aboriginal people in the management of lands and waters, biodiversity and ‘country’.

5. POLICY

- 5.1 The department recognises and acknowledges that Aboriginal people are the traditional owners of the land and waters it manages and of the land on which it conducts business.
- 5.2 Departmental staff shall acknowledge and respect Aboriginal protocol when carrying out business for the department by incorporating a Welcome to Country or an Acknowledgment Statement as a matter of course into appropriate events and meetings, in accordance with the department’s [Corporate Guideline No. 31: Acknowledgment of Aboriginal Traditional Owners](#).

6 STANDARDS

The department provides mandatory training in Aboriginal cultural awareness to all staff and key volunteer groups such as campground hosts. A cultural learning package that includes training on how to successfully engage with Aboriginal people, including providing opportunities for ‘cultural immersion’ by staff, is also being provided.

7 POLICY IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- 7.1 Departmental staff may seek advice from the department's Aboriginal Heritage Unit to identify the Aboriginal traditional owners of the land on which the event, function or meeting is taking place, as required.
- 7.2. The Director Parks and Visitor Services shall maintain and update as required [Corporate Guideline No. 31: Acknowledgment of Aboriginal Traditional Owners](#).
- 7.3 Aboriginal people will be paid for conducting Welcome to Country events in accordance with the payment guidelines included in [Corporate Guideline No. 31: Acknowledgment of Aboriginal Traditional Owners](#).

8 CUSTODIAN

Director Parks and Visitor Services.

9 PUBLICATION

This policy will be made available on the department's website and intranet.

10 KEY WORDS

Traditional owners; Welcome to Country; Acknowledgement of Country; joint management; customary activities.

11 REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed no later than February 2021.

12 DIRECTOR GENERAL APPROVAL.

Approved by



Jim Sharp
DIRECTOR GENERAL

Effective date: 22 April 2016