



POLICY No. 69

Acknowledgment of Aboriginal traditional custodians

November 2010

INTERPRETATION

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 custodians of the land in 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 by the contractor) and volunteers.

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

the department means the Department of Environment and Conservation.

Aboriginal traditional custodians means Aboriginal people, who through connection by descent to a group or clan, have responsibility for caring for a particular country.

Welcome to Country means the ceremony where the Aboriginal traditional custodians or elders welcomes people to their land.

1. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this policy are to:

- 1.1. Promote and demonstrate leadership in acknowledgment and respect for Aboriginal traditional custodians of lands and waters by departmental staff.
- 1.2. Encourage genuine and positive cross-cultural relations.
- 1.3. Increase and enhance opportunities for the involvement and participation of Aboriginal people in departmental events and business.
- 1.4. Guide staff in arranging Welcome to Country or Acknowledgment Statements on relevant occasions.

2. BACKGROUND

The purpose of this policy is to formalise the department's acknowledgment of Aboriginal people as the traditional custodians 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.

Formal policy and guidelines will assist in ensuring that there is a consistent approach to how and when these procedures are applied by staff and that they are conducted appropriately.

3. LEGISLATIVE BASIS

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 providing opportunities for meaningful involvement of Aboriginal people in the management of lands and waters, biodiversity and 'country'.

4. POLICY

- 4.1. The department recognises and acknowledges that Aboriginal people are the traditional custodians of the land and waters it manages and of the land on which it conducts business.
- 4.2. 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 *Guidelines for Acknowledgment Statements and Welcome to Country procedures*.

5. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

- 5.1. Departmental staff may seek advice from the department's Aboriginal Heritage Unit to identify the Aboriginal traditional custodians of the land on which the event, function or meeting is taking place, if required.
- 5.2. The Director Parks and Visitor Services shall maintain and update as required the *Guidelines for Acknowledgment Statements and Welcome to Country procedures*.

6. ASSOCIATED POLICIES / STRATEGIES

Guidelines for Acknowledgment Statements and Welcome to Country procedures.

Payment Guidelines for Consultation with Aboriginal People – Department of Environment and Conservation, 26 August 2003.

The Department of Environment and Conservation Corporate Plan 2007-2009

7. CUSTODIAN

Director Parks and Visitor Services.

8. DIRECTOR GENERAL APPROVAL

Approved on

14 January 2011

by Keiran McNamara
DIRECTOR GENERAL

Keira McNamara