



**Macedon
Ranges**
Shire Council

Organisational Protocols for recognising traditional owners/custodians



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CEO Foreword

I am very pleased to be able to present our 'Organisational Protocols for Recognising Traditional Owners/Custodians'. The Macedon Ranges region has a strong and rich Indigenous association, going back at least 26,000 years and evident in the range of significant Aboriginal sites within Macedon Ranges including Hanging Rock, Mount William, and Mount Macedon. Aboriginal protocols are a way to recognise the long Indigenous association in Macedon Ranges as well as a way to promote respect and recognition of the Traditional Owners/Custodians.

The protocols are a collection of guidelines to advise staff and Councillors in recognising, and therefore respecting, the Traditional Owners/Custodians. By using them our organisation will further develop relationships with local Aboriginal leaders and the Registered Aboriginal Parties. Through these relationships we can develop a better understanding and commitment to engaging with and recognising Aboriginal priorities. In addition, through implementing these protocols the wider community will be able to share in Aboriginal culture and heritage, enabling better relationships between Indigenous people and other Australians.



Peter Johnston

Chief Executive Officer

Protocols for Recognising Traditional Owners/Custodians¹

1. Introduction

Traditional Owners/Custodians are Aboriginal people who have ongoing traditional and cultural connections to country. Aboriginal people in Victoria were dispossessed of their traditional lands and often forced off their country onto missions and reserves following European settlement of Victoria. Many Aboriginal people do not live on their traditional lands today, however that does not diminish the rights or responsibilities of Traditional Owners/Custodians to their country.

Traditional Owners/Custodians have unique rights to their country and in some cases statutory authority in relation to land and natural resource management and heritage, stemming from Native Title and cultural heritage legislation.

These protocols recognise the unique position of Aboriginal people in Australian culture and history and specifically in Macedon Ranges Shire. There are three traditional owners/custodians in Macedon Ranges Shire: the Dja Dja Wurrung ('jah-jah wuh-rung'); Taungurung ('tun-guh-rung'); and Wurundjeri ('wuh-roon-jer-ee'). The protocols will promote respect and recognition of these traditional owners/custodians and enables the wider community to share in Aboriginal culture and heritage, facilitating better relationships between Indigenous people and other Australians.

2. History of Indigenous Australians in Macedon Ranges Shire²

While the Macedon Ranges has a strong Indigenous association, with evidence to suggest that Aboriginal people have lived in the area for at least 26,000 years, there is very little documented information on Indigenous history in the Macedon Ranges Shire.

Tribal clans, mainly the Wurundjeri, Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung, roamed along the grassy waterways of this region to hunt, fish and gather food across territory defined by tribal language, and bounded by geographical features such as mountain ridges, creeks or rivers.

The Wurundjeri people lived on the lands in and around the Yarra River and Maribyrnong watershed, which extended northwards to include the Macedon Ranges and the current towns of Gisborne, Heskett, Lancefield, Macedon, Riddells Creek and Romsey.

Dja Dja Wurrung tribes covered a very large area of central Victoria, including land around the present towns of Kyneton, Woodend and Malmsbury and the west side of the Campaspe River around Carlsruhe and Kyneton.

¹ Different Registered Aboriginal Parties use either the term 'traditional owners' or 'traditional custodians'. The Dja Dja Wurrung prefer 'traditional owners', while the Taungurung and Wurundjeri use 'traditional custodians'. In this document both will be referred to but its use in practice should reflect the specific traditional owner/custodians preferences.

² The text below can be used as preambles in official Council documents and other publications.

Taungurung tribes lived on lands that include the townships of Kyneton and Carlsruhe on the east side of the Campaspe River, and range through to Rushworth and Euroa in the north, extending east to Mt Buller.

Wurundjeri, Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung communities are active today, with respective tribes working throughout the community to manage and care for the land.

Although not obvious or easily located, indications of the Indigenous occupation of the Macedon Ranges can be found in the form of scarred trees, rock scatters, shell middens, quarries, grinding stones, ceremonial grounds and ochre pits.”

There are a range of significant Indigenous sites in Macedon Ranges³. Below are some of the most significant:

Mount William

Mount William, north of Lancefield, is one of the most important cultural sites of the Wurundjeri people, with highly-prized greenstone being extensively quarried for use as axe tools. Mount William was recently added to the National Heritage List in recognition of its national significance.

Hanging Rock

Hanging Rock is on the edge of several tribal boundaries and is believed to be a shared place which may have been used for gatherings.

Mt. Macedon/Geboor

At the base of Mount Macedon is an axe-grinding site important for the Gunung willam-balluk clan part of the Wurundjeri tribe. The stone from Mt. William was shaped and sharpened on the rock. Some of the finished axe heads were traded during night-time ceremonies held around Hanging Rock.

Yelka Park

Yelka Park was named after the Dja Dja Wurrung word for this section of the Campaspe River which features heavily in local Aboriginal history as a major meeting and trading place between local Aboriginal clans. On this site, the Wurundjeri people from Mt William Quarry traded greenstone blanks that could be shaped into axe heads, spear points and scraping tools.”

³ All Aboriginal cultural places and artefacts are protected by law in Victoria under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006. It is illegal to disturb or destroy a place and artefacts. If you believe you have found an artefact or a site of significance, report your find to Aboriginal Affairs Victoria.

3. Registered Aboriginal Parties in Macedon Ranges Shire

The Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 (the Act) recognises Aboriginal people as the primary guardians, keepers and knowledge holders of Aboriginal cultural heritage. At a local level, Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) are the voice of Aboriginal people in the management and protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage in Victoria.

Macedon Ranges Shire incorporates three RAPs reflecting the three Traditional Owners/Custodians: Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung; and Wurundjeri. These responsibilities are stated later in report. Council's role in protecting and conserving places of Aboriginal cultural heritage significance, and in promoting community awareness of Aboriginal history and cultural heritage can only be achieved through effective relationships with RAPs.

3.1 Who are the RAPs in Macedon Ranges Shire?

The three RAPs are listed below, as well as a map of the area that they cover in Macedon Ranges Shire and their most current contact details⁴.

3.1.1. Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation



⁴ For the most up-to-date information and more detailed maps please consult:
<http://www.dpc.vic.gov.au/index.php/aboriginal-affairs/registered-aboriginal-parties>

Contact Details:	
Rodney Carter Chief Executive Officer Email: ceo@djadjawurrung.com.au	
Address: 1/70 Powells Avenue, Bendigo 3552	Website: www.djadjawurrung.com.au
Postal: PO Box 1026, Bendigo VIC 3552	Phone: (03) 5444 2888 Fax: (03) 5441 647

3.1.2. Taungurung Clans Aboriginal Corporation



Contact Details:	
Marcus Stewart Chief Executive Officer Email: ceo@taungurung.com.au	Phone: (03) 5784 1433 Mobile: 0400 638 960
Address: 37 High Street Broadford VIC 3658	Postal: PO Box 505 Broadford, VIC, 3660

3.1.3. Wurundjeri Tribe Land and Compensation Cultural Heritage Council



Contact Details:	
Cheryl Krause Chief Executive Officer cherylk@wurundjeri.com.au	
Address: Level 1, Providence Building, Abbotsford Convent 1 St Heliers Street Abbotsford, VIC 3067	Webiste: www.wurundjeri.com.au
Phone: (03) 8673 0901	

3.2 Responsibilities of RAP's and when to engage with a RAP

RAPs have responsibilities under the Act relating to the management of Aboriginal cultural heritage, including:

- evaluating Cultural Heritage Management Plans
- providing advice on applications for Cultural Heritage Permits
- making decisions about Cultural Heritage Agreements
- providing advice or application for interim or ongoing Protection Declarations.

RAPs should be engaged with on any of the above issues (see below on Cultural Heritage Management Plans). In addition, RAPS can be engaged with during the development of planning schemes, invitations to Council events and activities and supporting Aboriginal participation in the management of public parks and places.

All engagement with RAP's provides an opportunity for Council to promote community awareness of Aboriginal history and cultural heritage and strengthen the formal and informal relationships between the Elders and people of each tribe and the civic and executive leadership of Council

3.3 Which RAP should I engage with?

Each RAP represents a traditional owner group and the land which they were stewards of. If you are clear about whom the Traditional Owners/Custodians of an area are and the associated RAP then contact that RAP directly using the contact details listed.

To accurately check a particular location, officers can use Intramaps. Using the 'basic enquiry' module, a check box can be selected to activate the RAP overlay. Alternatively, when a 'property enquiry' is performed, the appropriate RAP information will be in the information panel.

However, in some cases it may be unclear who the relevant RAP is. Traditionally, and in practice, land boundaries can be fluid with different traditional owners/custodians using and asserting ownership of land around the boundaries of recognised land areas. If it is unclear which RAP is the responsible group then you should contact both or all three RAPs to allow them to ascertain which RAP is responsible.

Protocols that Council commits to observe

4. Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country

The process of 'Acknowledgement of Country' and 'Welcome to Country' recognises the unique position of Aboriginal people in Australian culture and history. Recognising this unique position and incorporating it as part of official protocol enables the wider community to share in Aboriginal culture and heritage, facilitating better relationships between Indigenous people and other Australians.

4.1 What is an Acknowledgement of Country?

An Acknowledgement of Country recognises that the Macedon Ranges Shire has a strong and proud Aboriginal history and complex ownership and land stewardship systems stretching back many thousands of years. It pays respect to the Traditional Owners/Custodians.

4.2 When is an Acknowledgement of Country appropriate?

Generally, an Acknowledgement of Country should be given at all formal events, public forums and functions.

As a rule, an Acknowledgement of Country should be given at the following specific events/functions:

- All official Council Meetings
- All citizenship ceremonies
- Any public event/function
- Any official opening/unveiling/ launch
- Any event/function hosting external groups in the Shire

4.3 Who should give the Acknowledgement of Country?

The first speaker at an event or function (following the welcome or in the absence of a welcome) should give the Acknowledgment of Country.

Subsequent speakers may also give an acknowledgement, however, this is a matter of personal preference and judgement in relation to the particular occasion.

It is the responsibility of the Council officer organising an event to ensure that an Acknowledgement of Country is conducted.

If a Councillor is present at a public event and an Acknowledgment of Country has not been given then they should give a general Acknowledgment of Country (3).

4.4 What form should the Acknowledgement of Country take?

Macedon Ranges Shire incorporates three Traditional Owners/Custodians: Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung; and Wurundjeri.⁵

The Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council has appointed Traditional Owners/Custodians as Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) for the purposes of the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006. You can view each appointed RAP area here:

http://www.mrsc.vic.gov.au/Arts_Sport_Leisure/Arts_Culture/Culture_Heritage/Aboriginal_Cultural_Heritage

For Council meetings or events/functions that represent the whole of the Shire the following Acknowledgement should be used:

Acknowledgement of Country (1)

To start the official proceedings

I would like to acknowledge that Macedon Ranges Shire Council is on Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung and Wurundjeri Country

whose ancestors and their descendants are the traditional owners of this Country.

We acknowledge that they have been custodians for many centuries and continue to perform age old ceremonies of celebration, initiation and renewal.

We acknowledge their living culture and their unique role in the life of this region.

For events/functions that are located in a specific place and if you are clear about whom the Traditional Owners/Custodians of an area are, you should say:

Acknowledgement of Country (2)

To start the official proceedings

I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners/custodians of the land that we stand on today,

the [Traditional Owner/Custodian group's name] people

I would also like to pay my respects to their Elders, past and present, and the Elders from other communities who may be here today."

⁵ Note on pronunciation and preference for traditional owners/custodians:

Dja Dja Wurrung = 'jah-jah wuh-rung'. Traditional Owners

Taungurung = 'tun-guh-rung'. Traditional Custodians

Wurundjeri = 'wuh-roon-jer-ee'. Traditional Custodians

If you are uncertain about whom the Traditional Owners/Custodians of an area are, you should say:

Acknowledgement of Country (3)

"I acknowledge the Traditional Owners/Custodians of the land on which we are meeting. I pay my respects to their Elders, past and present, and the Elders from other communities who may be here today."

4.5 What is a Welcome to Country?

A Welcome to Country ceremony is performed by Aboriginal Traditional Owners/Custodians for people visiting their country. These ceremonies vary from speeches of welcome to traditional dance and smoking ceremonies.

4.6 When is a Welcome to Country appropriate?

If a function has broad impact on, or significance for, Aboriginal people or is connected to a significant Aboriginal site, a welcoming ceremony will be appropriate. A Welcome to Country may also be conducted as part of Reconciliation Week or NAIDOC week activities as per the current protocols.

A Welcome to Country should be conducted prior to the swearing in of a newly elected Council (every four years).

A Welcome to Country may also be conducted at other major public functions or events at the discretion of the organisers.

It is at the discretion of the organiser whether to give an Acknowledgment of Country prior to a Welcome to Country but it is not a requirement.

4.7 Who can perform a Welcome to Country?

A Welcome to Country should only be performed by a representative of the Traditional Owner group.

Asking an Aboriginal person to perform a Welcome to Country when they do not belong to the Traditional Owner group may cause them embarrassment and may offend the Traditional Owners/Custodians.

The organiser will need to ascertain who the traditional owners/custodians through their appointed RAP area maps. Contacting the relevant RAP should follow the current protocols on engaging with RAPs (below).

For Shire-wide events, such as the swearing on of a new Council, then the Welcome to Country should be rotated through each traditional owner group equally.

4.8 What wording should be used in performing the Welcome to Country ceremony?

There is no exact wording for Welcome to Country. As such, the content of the ceremony should be negotiated between the Council organiser and the provider with reference to the nature of the event and community practices. It is very important that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representative has been involved in and is comfortable with the arrangements.

4.9 Is there a fee for a Welcome to Country?

In providing cultural services such as Welcome to Country, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are using their intellectual property and should be appropriately remunerated.

Appropriate remuneration and/or assistance should be negotiated prior to the event with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representative and should take into consideration:

- Travel to and from the event
- Payment for performing the Welcome to Country
- Public profile of the event

5. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flags

5.1 Flying the Australian Aboriginal flag

Flying the Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander flags confirms our respect for Indigenous Australians. 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, it is at the discretion of the authority concerned to determine which flag should be flown with the Australian National Flag.⁶

Currently the Australian and Aboriginal flag is flown permanently at the Kyneton and Gisborne offices. The Australian Aboriginal flag is flown on the second flagpole and this practice will continue.

5.2 Lowering the Australian Aboriginal flag

If the Australian National flag is lowered at half-mast then the Aboriginal flag should also be lowered to half-mast after the Australian National flag.

6. Celebrating & Respecting Indigenous Culture

6.1 Why celebrate Indigenous culture?

In the 2011 census, 5% of Macedon Ranges Shire Council residents identified as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander decent. The region has a number of nationally significant sites for Aboriginal people. Celebrating Indigenous culture also recognises the unique position of Aboriginal people in Australian culture and history and responds to Councils clear responsibility to promote community awareness of Aboriginal history and cultural heritage to the 95% of Shire residents who are not of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander decent. Our commitment to this responsibility and any success we achieve enables the wider community to share in Aboriginal culture and heritage, facilitating better relationships between Indigenous people and other Australians.

Two national events provide all Macedon Ranges Shire residents with the opportunity to celebrate Aboriginal cultural heritage. These two events are Reconciliation and NAIDOC Weeks.

6.2 What is Reconciliation Week?

National Reconciliation Week (NRW) is celebrated across Australia each year between 27 May and 3 June. The dates commemorate two significant milestones in the reconciliation journey—

⁶ Part 2 of the booklet 'Australian Flags', Department of Prime Minister & Cabinet.

the anniversaries of the successful 1967 referendum (27 May) and the High Court Mabo decision (3 June).

This week is a time for all Australians to learn about their shared histories, cultures and achievements and to explore how each of them can join the national reconciliation effort

6.3 Reconciliation Week Activities

Reconciliation is focused on bringing together and building better relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. Each year, Council will invite the senior leaders of the three RAPs in Macedon Ranges Shire to meet with and engage in discussion with the senior leaders in Council. It is expected that at this time, all parties can brief each other on their current activities and plans for the future.

Generally, Macedon Ranges Shire Council will provide a civic reception and flag raising ceremony to acknowledge Reconciliation week. The ceremony will alternate each year between the Kyneton and Gisborne offices.

Council will invite representatives from all three RAPs, the Mayor and Councillors, and local residents to help celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. Appropriate remuneration and/or assistance should be negotiated with the Aboriginal representatives which may include travel to and from the event and performing at a civic function.

6.4 Special acknowledgement for Reconciliation Week

The acknowledgement for Reconciliation Week should be stated after the standard Acknowledgement of Country and is as follows:

“Reconciliation is about unity and respect between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and non-Indigenous Australians. It is about respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and valuing justice and equity for all Australians.”

6.5 What is NAIDOC week?

NAIDOC Week celebrations are held across Australia each July to celebrate the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. NAIDOC is celebrated not only in Indigenous communities, but by Australians from all walks of life. The week is a great opportunity to participate in a range of activities and to support your local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

NAIDOC originally stood for ‘National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee’. This committee was once responsible for organising national activities during NAIDOC Week and its acronym has since become the name of the week itself.

NAIDOC Week is usually held from the first to second Sunday in July each year.

6.6 What events will Council host for NAIDOC week?

Each year Council will work with the local community to engage in a NAIDOC week activity. The activity will aim to have broad community participation and will be held at different locations throughout the Shire each year.

Council Departments will also be encouraged to deliver activities that raise awareness across Council each year.

6.7 Special acknowledgment for NAIDOC Week?

The acknowledgement for NAIDOC week should be stated after the standard Acknowledgement of Country and is as follows:

“Today we honour the Indigenous peoples of this land, the oldest continuing cultures in human history. We reflect on their past mistreatment and acknowledge these wrongs of the past so that we can move forward with confidence to the future. A future based on mutual respect, mutual resolve and mutual responsibility.”

7. Staff and Councillor Induction

7.1 Councillor Induction

As part of the induction of a new Council and within the first six months of a general election, a formal component addresses these protocols and the history and culture of the Traditional Owners/Custodians of the Shire.

7.2 Staff Induction

The staff induction kit provided to new employees to contain the protocols and specific information on the history and culture of the Traditional Owners/Custodians of the Shire.

Summary of Adopted Protocols	Details	Responsible Person
Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners/Custodians at all Civic events	Refer to section 4.1 - 4.4 (p.9-11)	Council Officer responsible for event
Welcome to Country	Refer to section 4.5 - 4.9 (p.11-12)	Council Officer responsible for event
Aboriginal Flag	Refer to section 5 (p.13)	Manager Council & Customer Services
Reconciliation Week Events	Refer to section 6.1 - 6.4 (p.13-14)	Led by Community & Culture and Executive Office staff
NAIDOC Week Events	Refer to section 6.5 – 6.7 (p.14-15)	Led by Community & Culture
Councillor Induction	Refer to section 7.1 (p.16)	Led by Manager Council & Customer Services
Staff Induction	Refer to section 7.2 (p.16)	Led by Manager Council & Customer Services

8. Cultural Heritage Management Plans

8.1 What is a Cultural Heritage Management Plan?

A cultural heritage management plan is a way of protecting and managing Aboriginal cultural heritage when you are considering a development project. The Plan must be approved by the relevant RAP where one exists.

8.2 When do I need to get a Cultural Heritage Management Plan?

When you plan to undertake large scale developments and other high impact activities in culturally sensitive landscapes, it needs to be understood that this can cause significant harm to Aboriginal cultural heritage.

The burden of proving that an area has been subject to significant disturbance rests with the applicant for a statutory authorisation for the proposed activity. Authorities may assist by providing access to relevant records detailing past land use and development.

8.3 How do I prepare a Cultural Heritage Management Plan?

Preparing a Cultural Heritage Management Plan involves a cultural heritage advisor working with Aboriginal community representatives to identify and assess cultural heritage values in relation to a proposed development or activity. Where a RAP exists they must be notified of a proponent's intention to prepare a Cultural Heritage Management Plan and they then evaluate the Plan.

8.4 Costs associated with preparing a Cultural Heritage Management Plan

Preparing a Cultural Heritage Management Plan involves costs in undertaking on-ground assessment work, consulting with the RAP, and writing the Cultural Heritage Management Plan itself. A fee is also charged by the RAP responsible for evaluating the Cultural Heritage Management Plan.

8.5 Where are significant heritage sites in Macedon Ranges Shire?

Areas of cultural heritage sensitivity are landforms that are more likely to contain Aboriginal cultural heritage. A registered Aboriginal cultural heritage place is also an area of cultural sensitivity. Areas of cultural heritage sensitivity are displayed in a series of maps available at:

<http://www.dpc.vic.gov.au/index.php/aboriginal-affairs/heritage-tools/areas-of-cultural-heritage-sensitivity>

8.6 Where can I get more information?

For more information please refer to the Cultural Heritage Management Plan Fact Sheet located here:

http://mrscintra//Files/Cultural_Heritage_Management_Plans_Fact_Sheet.DOCX

9. Acknowledging and repatriating Indigenous material and objects

9.1 What protocols are relevant for repatriating Indigenous material and objects?

Traditional Owners/Custodians are the rightful custodians of their ancestral remains and are the rightful owners of associated grave goods and should be consulted prior to any such property being returned. The relevant traditional owners/custodians can be contacted through the appropriate RAP as outlined above.

The determination of who is involved in negotiations and consultations is made by the Traditional Owners/RAPs. Traditional Owners/RAPs should have access to and copies of all relevant documentation concerning their ancestral remains.

The study of ancestral remains should always be undertaken in consultation and with the informed consent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owners/Custodians or their identified representatives.