



Wellington Aboriginal

CULTURAL PROTOCOLS

A guide for visitors & services

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1. Introduction

1.1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Community of Wellington acknowledges the peoples who are the traditional custodians of the land and pays respect to Elders both past and present.

The Community of Wellington has a long Aboriginal history and values the diverse of our local community and supports reconciliation by working consistently in partnership with the wider Community always ensuring the process is based on respect, trust and a spirit of openness.

1.2 PURPOSE

Protocols are an important part of all cultures and are in place to ensure peoples behave and interact in an appropriate manner.

The aim of this document is to provide a comprehensive resource for all Services agencies and visitors including but limited to Minister and Government agencies)/ personnel to use when liaising, consulting and engaging with Aboriginal peoples within our community.

This document also provides cultural and historical content to assist our own Community when working with the Local Aboriginal peoples.

Observing cultural protocols of a Community demonstrates respect for cultural traditions, history, diversity and the continued connection to the Country.

It illustrates a willingness to acknowledge that the processes and procedures of one cultural community are equally valid and worthy of the same respect as one's own cultural protocols. Cross cultural engagement requires patience, understanding and a commitment from all parties.

2. Brief history Of Wellington

Wellington is a town in inland New South Wales, Australia, located at the junction of the Macquarie and Bell Rivers. It is within the local government area of Dubbo Regional Council. The town is 362 kilometers from Sydney on the Great Western Highway and Mitchell Highway.

According to the 2016 census of Population, there were 4,077 people in Wellington. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people made up 27.8% of the population of Wellington.

European settlement in the Wellington area commenced with the establishment of a convict agricultural station in 1823. By 1839 most of the frontage of the Macquarie River was taken up by squatters, and the first land holders in the Wellington Valley area date from the 1830s. As European settlement in the Wellington area intensified, the Wiradjuri were increasingly driven off their traditional lands. The Wiradjuri moved to a series of missions and camps around Wellington including: The Wellington Valley Mission, Apsley Mission, Blake's Fall Mission (also known as Apsley Mission), Blacks Camp, Wellington Town Common Camp and Nanima Reserve.

Wellington is home to one the oldest missions in Australia. The Mission was the first inland mission in Australia and the first of a series of missions around Wellington.

Blacks Camp is the earliest remembered Aboriginal camp in the Wellington area. The former camp site is part of a sequence of post contact Aboriginal settlements in Wellington, where Wiradjuri People lived segregated from the town's people.

Blacks Camp is significant to the Aboriginal community because the site tells part of the story of what became of the Wiradjuri People following the arrival of non-Aboriginal settlers in the Wellington Valley and the loss of Wiradjuri traditional lands. The former camp site is also significant to the local Aboriginal community as an Aboriginal burial ground and for its two traditional Aboriginal sites (a scarred tree and shell midden).

3. Aboriginal Community Engagement

For consultation purposes our Aboriginal community has created a community consultation process to ensure we cover all Aboriginal organisations in the area.

Our Aboriginal Community is united and we prefer you meet with all organisations at once. To arrange the one meeting, please email Wellington LALC and with information about what you are seeking and a suitable date can be arranged.

The contacts are below.

Wellington Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) CEO: Mike Nolan E: wellingtonlalc@yahoo.com P: 02 6845 2229 M: 0417 239 918 163 Simpson St, Wellington NSW Office opened Monday to Friday 9:30am-4:00pm
WACHS (Wellington Aboriginal Corporation Health Service) P: 02 6845 5400 E: enquiries@wachs.net.au 28 Maxwell St, Wellington NSW
Barnardos Wellington P: 02 5284 3000 141 Percy St, Wellington NSW
WINS Community Centre (Wellington Information and Neighborhood Services) Phone: P: 02 6845 1606 27 Swift St, Wellington
Three Rivers Regional Assembly Representatives are: Tara Stanley and Barry Smith



A little bit about Wellington LALC

Background:

The Wellington Local Aboriginal Land Council (Wellington LALC) was established in 1984.

Since its establishment, the Wellington Local Aboriginal Land Council has provided services to the Aboriginal community within the town as follows:

- Fulfilled its obligations under the ALRA.
- Purchased and erected housing.
- Obtained funding for operational purposes.
- Convened events and activities in accordance with its goals; *and*
- Maintained an office facility for members and the community.

The community assessment has been based upon analysis of the latest 2016 Census and Community Consultation.

Wellington LALC Vision:

Wellington Local Aboriginal Land Council aims to be an active contributor to the well-being and prosperity of Aboriginal people within Wellington through the protection of land, heritage and culture and its focus on strengthening the involvement of Aboriginal peoples in daily society.

Wellington Local Aboriginal Land Council is located in Simpson Street, Wellington in the Central Western region of NSW.

Wellington is a small community located between Dubbo and Orange.

It is 355 kms away Sydney and 50 kms from Dubbo.

DEMOGRAPHIC CONCLUSIONS

Drawing on the tables produced above, and which were obtained from 2011 Census data it can be concluded that there is very significant Aboriginal disadvantage in the Wellington Shire local government area. This is clearly evident in Aboriginal employment which is much lower than non-Aboriginal employment and where there is a very substantial gap and disadvantage.

Almost one quarter of the population of Wellington Shire are Aboriginal with almost half of the Aboriginal population being young people under the age of 24 years. A much lower of Aboriginal people complete year 12 which is another measure of the disadvantage they endure. One reason for the goal of preserving Aboriginal culture, Heritage and History is the knowledge of the Wellington LALC area statistics reveal a low level use of Indigenous language in the home, with only 0.4 of one percent speaking any indigenous language.

Aboriginal disadvantage is also manifested by the statistic of total employment income compared with non-Aboriginals are significantly lower. These demographic conclusions underline the vital importance of achieving the goals and the actions under this Plan.

As at the end of February 2015 the Wellington LALC had 218 members, 150 of which are currently voting members. The membership base represents approximately 9.7% of the total Aboriginal Population residing within the Wellington LALC boundaries.

LOCATION AND BOUNDARIES

Wellington LALC is located within the Central West Slopes and Plains of NSW. It is situated at the junction of the Bell and Macquarie Rivers, 100 kms north-west of Orange NSW, and 50 kms east of Dubbo NSW.

Wellington LALC boundaries surround Wellington NSW, and includes the areas of Mumbil, Stuart Town, Yeoval and Cumnock.



Map of Wellington Boundaries

4. Cultural Information

4.1 THE STOLEN GENERATIONS

The stolen Generations are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders individuals who were removed from their families through official government policy from 1909 to 1969. In 1883 the NSW Government established the Aboriginal Protection Board taking control over nearly all aspects of Aboriginal people's lives, including the power to remove Aboriginal children without parental consent or court order.

The Wellington community recognises the recognition of Sorry Day and acknowledges the lasting sorrow caused by past policy and law regarding the force removal of Aboriginal children.

For further information on the history of the Stolen Generation, go to <https://aiatsis.gov.au/research/finding-your-family/before-you-start/stolen-generations>



4.2 ELDERS

Traditionally, Elders are custodians of traditional knowledge and customs and are responsible for providing guidance to the community on cultural matters and cultural protocols.

It is the Elder who hold the history, know the culture and pass on the lore that govern the Community. The term "Elder" is used to describe peoples who have knowledge, wisdom and the respect of the local Community. Elders are not necessarily the older peoples but must have the trust and respect of their community and be recognise as cultural knowledge keepers.



5. Cultural Practices

5.1 USING THE TERM 'ABORIGINAL AND INDIGENOUS'

Locally, Aboriginal is the preferred term when referring to the Australia First Nations Peoples and should always be adjoined to people, community.

It is also respectful to use a capital letter when using both Aboriginal and Indigenous in the written form.

It is highly offensive to question how 'Aboriginal' a person is who identifies as Aboriginal or what % percentage are you?

Recommended Practice:

Refer to 'Aboriginal peoples and Aboriginal community' not Aborigines. Use capitals where Aboriginal or Indigenous are written. Abbreviations of "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders" to ATSI is deemed inappropriate and at all stages of the full words should be written.

5.2 GENDER PROTOCOLS

(Men's and women's Business)

It is important to be aware that there are many matters where the Aboriginal community view specific knowledge as sacred to either men or women.

For example: some sacred sites can only be visited by men or women.

Traditional stories may also be gender specific and will only be passed down to those in the appropriate gender.

Recommended Practice:

We ask that service providers seek advice from the local community regarding men and women's business.

5.3 SACRED SITES

Sacred sites are places of cultural significance to Aboriginal peoples. They can be hills, rocks, trees and waterways that are not always spectacular or interesting to the non- Aboriginal eye.

They may be places that are significant because they mark a particular act of a creation or being. They also include burial grounds and places where particular ceremonies have been held.

Aboriginal peoples have identified a number of significant sites in the Wellington area. A number of these sites have been grazed and destroyed in recent years.

Under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974, the Office of Environment and Heritage, through the National Parks and Wildlife Services is responsible for the care, control and management of all 'on parks' of reserved lands. While the heritage Division is responsible for the care of all 'off park' heritage values including State Heritage items under the NSW Heritage Act. 1977. Some Crown land area are managed by Wellington Land Council under the Crown land management program.

Recommended Practice:

We ask that Government agencies and service providers seek advice from the local community in regard to significant sites.

5.4 WELCOME TO COUNTRY

A Welcome to Country is a cultural practice whereby the traditional custodians of the land welcome people onto their country. A Welcome to Country should be the first item of any Civic/ Mayoral reception, opening ceremony, conference, major cultural or recreational events for example:

NAIDOC Week, sporting events, Official Local Government forums, invited guest, Services workshop.

Recommended Practice:

We ask that service providers seek advice from the local community in regard to significant sites.

5.5 ACKNOWLEDGMENT TO COUNTRY

An Acknowledgement of Country is a means by which all peoples can show respect for Aboriginal culture and heritage and the ongoing relationship the traditional custodians have with their land.

An Acknowledgement of Country must take place at all minor functions such as meetings, in-house training, workshops and seminars. On such occasions the chair or a speaker may begin by acknowledging that the meeting is taking place on the country of the traditional custodians.

Recommended Practice:

An Acknowledgement to Country is a minimum requirement for services and Community events.

5.6 SMOKING CEREMONY

Smoking ceremonies are undertaken to cleanse the space in which the ceremony is taking place. The Smoking Ceremony is a ritual of purification and unity and is always undertaken by an Aboriginal person with specialised cultural knowledge

This is a very sacred ceremony to be performed only at events deemed appropriate on advice of Local Aboriginal Organisations such as LALC, AECG, and Bogan Aboriginal Corporation and with cultural expertise.

Recommended Practice:

A smoking ceremony is a minimum requirement for services and Community events.

6. Fees for Service

In providing cultural services such as welcomes, artistic performances and other social ceremonies, it is important to acknowledge that Aboriginal peoples are using their intellectual property.

For this reason, it is appropriate that peoples receive payment for their service. The remuneration should take into account travel to the event, time and complexity of the service as well as the profile of the event.

This includes consultation of Cultural knowledge transmitting.

Recommended Practice:

We ask that Government agencies and service providers seek advice from the

local community regarding payment and process.

7. Community Engagement

Before work begins on any project, program or service delivery that relates to Aboriginal culture and heritage matters or has implications for the Aboriginal community, it is important to engage the local Aboriginal Community.

Community consultation is a process where the Aboriginal community can openly share information about significant matters that may impact on the Aboriginal community, culture, heritage and traditional lore. The consultation process aids Community in becoming aware of the views, beliefs and sensitivities of the local Aboriginal Community.

Achieving satisfactory outcomes from consultation involves forming a strong, ongoing, mutual relationships with the Aboriginal community utilising the fundamental principles of respect and readiness to learn, share and negotiate.

Recommended Practice:

It is advisable to consult with as many Aboriginal community representatives as possible especially on matters that have a high impact on the Aboriginal community. Undertaking this method will reduce the potential for missed input from community members during the consultation process and reduce future criticism from those feeling they should have been consulted.

*REMEMBER: CONSULT IS NOT CONSENT.
It's ongoing with mutual respect and agreement.*



Recommended Practice:

We ask that Government agencies and service providers seek advice from the local Aboriginal community in regard to planning your Reconciliation Action Plan throughout the whole process not just at the end.

8. Aboriginal Flag

The Aboriginal Flag represent a Australia's first Nation's peoples. It was designed due to the exclusion from past policies from previous government and due to the colonization.

The Aboriginal flag was proclaimed as the official flag of Australia under section 5 of the Flags Act 1953 on 14th July 1995.

As of 25th May 2015 the Aboriginal flags will be flown each day alongside the National Australian flags at Wellington Shire Council Chambers, this was a significant milestone for the Aboriginal Community. This demonstrates we are coming together, as one community should be a symbol of harmony and inclusion, so we can say we are walking together towards reconciliation.



The top half of the **flag** is black, which represents the **Aboriginal** people. The bottom half of the **flag** is red, representing the country's red earth.

9. Community Stats

https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/036

	Age 0-9	Age 10-19	Age 20-29	Age 30-44	Age 45- 54	Age 55-69	Age 70+
No. of Aboriginal peoples:							
No of Non Aboriginal People:							
Total Male							
Total Female							

10. Significant dates and events for our Community

Date	Events	Further Information
January 26 th	Survival Day	
February 13 th	National Apology Day	
March 20 th	National Close the Gap Day	www.oxfam.org.au/act/events.national-closing-the-gap-day
March 21 st	Harmony Day	www.harmony.gov.au
April 25 th	Coloured Diggers DAY/ ANZAC Day	
May 26 th	National Sorry Day	www.nsd.org.au
May 27 – June 3 rd	National Reconciliation Week	www.reconciliation.org.au/nrw
First full week of July	NAIDOC Week	www.naidoc.org.au
August 4 th	National Aboriginal and Islanders Children's Day	http://aboriginalchildrensdat.com.au/