

# Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Protocols

## Gadigal Country

The City acknowledges the Gadigal of the Eora Nation as the traditional custodians of this place we now call Sydney. Gadigal Country is bounded by Sydney Harbour in the north, from South Head to Petersham to the west.

There are hundreds of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language groups (nations) across Australia. Aboriginal people have lived in Sydney for tens of thousands of years.

In 1788, the British established a convict outpost on the shores of Sydney Harbour. This had far reaching and devastating impacts on the Eora Nation, including the occupation and appropriation of their traditional lands. Despite the destructive impact of invasion, Aboriginal culture endured and is globally recognised as one of the world's oldest living cultures.

## Welcome to Country

A Welcome to Country is where the traditional Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander custodians welcome people to their land at the beginning of a meeting, event or ceremony.

## Acknowledgement of Country

Acknowledgement of Country is where other people acknowledge and show respect for the traditional custodians of the land on which the event is taking place.

At the City when opening an event, or at the start of a speech, a statement like this can be used:

*"I would like to acknowledge the Gadigal of the Eora Nation, the traditional custodians of this land and pay my respects to the Elders both past and present."*

## Smoking Ceremony

The Smoking Ceremony is a ritual of purification and unity and is always undertaken by an Aboriginal person with specialised cultural knowledge.

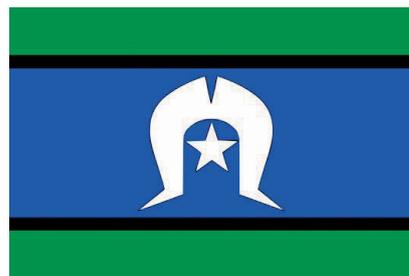
## Elders

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



### Aboriginal Flag

*The black symbolises the Aboriginal people, the red represents the earth and the colour of ochre used in Aboriginal ceremonies, and the yellow circle represents the sun.*



### Torres Strait Islander Flag

*The green is for the land, the blue is for the sea and the black represents the Torres Strait Islander people. In the centre of the flag is a white dari (dancer's headdress), which is a symbol for all Torres Strait Islander people. Underneath the dari is a white five-pointed star. These five points represent the island groups in the Torres Strait. The white stands for peace.*

## Stolen Generations

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were forcibly removed as children from their families, homes and communities under official government policy at the time.

## City of Sydney Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel

The City of Sydney's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel advises the City on projects and issues of importance. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who live, work or study in the local area make up the panel.

## Engaging the community

Before work begins on any City project that may affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities it is important to seek appropriate permission.

People to consult include traditional custodians, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and community representatives. An important organisation to consult in Sydney is the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council [metrolalc.org.au](http://metrolalc.org.au)

The National Indigenous Times, Koori Mail, Koori Radio and the ABC's Message Sticks are some of the media outlets dedicated to covering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stories and content.

## Culturally appropriate Language

There are many different Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities who speak different languages and have unique cultural practices, so we use the plural – 'peoples' and 'communities'. Do not use the term 'Aboriginal' as a short way to refer to groups that include Torres Strait Islanders.

### Prefer

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples or communities
- First Peoples of Australia
- First Nations People
- Indigenous peoples
- Indigenous Australians

### Avoid

- Aborigine
- ATSI

## Reconciliation action plan

The City's reconciliation action plan outlines how the City will work towards improving relationships between non-Indigenous Australians and our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The plan has actions to build relationships and respect and provide opportunities.

## Eora Journey

Through the Eora Journey, the City recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and communities. The Eora Journey is made up of four projects – a series of public artworks, a major event, an economic development plan and a cultural centre.

[cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/vision/towards-2030/communities-and-culture/eora-journey](http://cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/vision/towards-2030/communities-and-culture/eora-journey)

## Barani Barrabugu

The City has mapped over 255 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sites of significance. The website, booklet and Sydney Culture Walks app provide people with the opportunity to learn about these sites, their history and significance. [sydneybarani.com.au](http://sydneybarani.com.au)

## More information about the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Protocols

The City has staff with specialist knowledge to assist on cultural protocols. Please contact: David Beaumont [dbeaumont@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au](mailto:dbeaumont@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au)

[cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/community/community-support/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-communities](http://cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/community/community-support/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-communities)

## Important dates for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community

Survival Day / Yabun Festival	January 26
National Apology to the Stolen Generations	February 13
National Close the Gap Day	3rd Thursday of March
National Reconciliation Week	May 27 – June 3
National Sorry Day	May 26
Anniversary of the 1967 Referendum	May 27
Mabo Day	June 3
NAIDOC Week	First week in July
NSW Koori Knockout (Rugby League)	October long weekend
Anniversary of the Redfern Speech	December 10