



# Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.

An internal guide for  
City of Ballarat Councillors,  
staff and volunteers

This guide was developed to assist the City of Ballarat's Councillors, staff and volunteers to provide information about Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country and useful knowledge about our local Koorie community.



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The City of Ballarat acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land we live and work on, the Wadawurrung and Dja Dja Wurrung People, and recognises their continuing connection to the land and waterways.

We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging and extend this to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.

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## **Message from the CEO**

On behalf of the City of Ballarat, our staff and volunteers, I am proud to present this Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement to Country guide.

The City of Ballarat recognises the unique position of Aboriginal People in Australian culture and history and their continued connection to the land and waterways.

We recognise the Wadawurrung and the Dja Dja Wurrung Peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the land we live and work on, and we acknowledge the hard work and relationships we have built over many years with the wider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

This guide has been developed by the City of Ballarat to support the Ballarat community in respectfully acknowledging country and Indigenous communities in a meaningful way.

The purpose of the guide is to assist and ensure the correct cultural protocols are followed by the City of Ballarat staff, volunteers and Councillors for the two ceremonies, Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.

It is my privilege to lead an organisation that recognises the importance of incorporating Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country as part of its official proceedings; an organisation that respectfully connects and builds on our relationships with the Traditional Custodians and the wider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

This guide serves as an important and much-needed resource of information. It will assist in the planning of an event (whether it be a Council meeting, a forum, a briefing session or a major workshop or conference) where members of the public, representatives of governments and the media are present.

**Janet Dore**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

## Our vision for reconciliation – as written in the Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan May 2019 - May 2021

The City of Ballarat's vision is to acknowledge through actions, as well as words, the histories and continuing contributions made by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples – in particular the Wadawurrung and Dja Dja Wurrung People.

The City of Ballarat will support, foster and encourage the sharing of walking together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as well as non-Indigenous community members. Our vision for reconciliation is also built on a strong relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples within our municipality and demonstrates our commitment to further listen to diverse voices in our community, including young people and children.

At the City of Ballarat, we are committed to reconciliation and believe that it is everyone's business. We value, understand and promote the full landscape of our community, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People's cultural heritage and knowledge.

Building on the success of our previous Reconciliation Action Plans, the City of Ballarat commits to challenging and questioning the status quo and encourages strong and courageous leadership in pursuing reconciliation activities across the organisation and within the community we serve.

We aspire to become an employer of choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, strengthening our service offering to the community.

*“Together we celebrate  
our strong and vibrant  
Traditional Custodians,  
the Wadawurrung and  
Dja Dja Wurrung Peoples,  
and all Aboriginal and  
Torres Strait Islander  
Peoples who call this  
municipality their home”*

## **Acknowledgement of Country**

### **WHAT IS AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY?**

An Acknowledgement of Country can be done by anyone and is a way of showing awareness of, and respect for, the Aboriginal Traditional Custodians of the land on which a meeting or event is being held.

### **WHEN IS AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY APPROPRIATE?**

An Acknowledgement of Country should be given at the beginning of meetings, formal events, forums and functions such as Government and Local Government meetings, conferences, school assemblies, concerts, board meetings, and official openings.

The first speaker at an event (following a Welcome or in the absence of a Welcome) should give an Acknowledgement of Country.

Subsequent speakers may also give an Acknowledgement.





# **Welcome to Country**

## **WHAT IS A WELCOME TO COUNTRY?**

A Welcome to Country is a ceremony performed by Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander People who are the Traditional Custodians of the land on which the meeting, forum, event, is being held on. Traditional Custodians welcome people and visitors onto their traditional land.

Welcome to Country ceremonies can vary from speeches, traditional dances and smoking ceremonies.

## **WHEN IS A WELCOME TO COUNTRY APPROPRIATE?**

A Welcome to Country ceremony should be arranged for major public events, forums and functions in locations where Traditional Custodians have been formally recognised. A welcoming ceremony is also appropriate if the event has broad impact on, or is significant to, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander People.

## **CAN ANY ABORIGINAL PERSON PERFORM A WELCOME TO COUNTRY?**

No. A Welcome to Country should be performed by a Traditional Custodian.

## **HOW DO I ORGANISE A WELCOME TO COUNTRY?**

If your event or meeting is in Ballarat, you will need to contact Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation. If your event or meeting is in Creswick, you will need to contact Dja Dja Wurrung Traditional Custodians Corporation to arrange the Welcome to Country.

**Contact details can be found at the end of this document.**



## Is there a fee for a Welcome to Country?

Most Traditional Custodians will require at least a nominal fee to cover costs. A Welcome to Country that includes traditional dance and smoking ceremonies will generally involve a more substantial payment. Any fees should be agreed with the Traditional Custodians when planning the event.

A reminder when budgeting for a project or event, allow room in the budget for consultation with Traditional Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) and for a Traditional Custodian to perform a Welcome to Country. The **estimated** cost for a Welcome to Country can range from \$200 - \$550, this is dependent on what type of Welcome you require e.g. ceremony dance, smoking ceremony or a spoken Welcome to Country. Booking form: <https://www.wadawurrung.org.au/>

## Who are the Formally Recognised Traditional Owners?

### **BALLARAT YOU WILL NEED TO CONTACT:**



**Wadawurrung**

**Wadawurrung Traditional Owners  
Aboriginal Corporation**

**Phone:** (03) 4308 0420

**Address:** 99 Mair Street, Ballarat 3350

### **CRESWICK YOU WILL NEED TO CONTACT:**



Dja Dja Wurrung Clans  
Aboriginal Corporation

**Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation**

**Phone:** (03) 5444 2888

**Address:** 13-15 Forest Street Bendigo 4550

## **Acknowledgement of Country**

An Acknowledgement of Country can be done by anyone who chooses to do an Acknowledgement of Country. It's a way of showing awareness of, and respect to the Traditional Custodians of the land and the wider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

### **WHEN IS AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY APPROPRIATE?**

An Acknowledgement of Country should be given at meetings, forums and functions such as Government and Local Government meetings, conferences, and other official events.

The first speaker at an event (following a Welcome to Country or in the absence of a Welcome to Country) should give the Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians and extend that to the wider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. Subsequent speakers may also give an Acknowledgement.

### **WHAT FORM SHOULD THE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY TAKE IF THE VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT HAS FORMALLY RECOGNISED THE TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS OF THE RELEVANT AREA?**

If the Victorian Government has formally recognised the Traditional Custodians of the area where your event/meeting is taking place, you should specifically acknowledge Traditional Custodians and extend that to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community who have made Ballarat their home.





## Acknowledgement of Country

### THE CITY OF BALLARAT'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to Acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land we live and work on, the Wadawurrung and Dja Dja Wurrung People and recognise their continuing connection to the land and waterways, and pay my respects to their Elders past, present and emerging and extend this to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People

### OR

I would like to Acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land, the Wadawurrung People and pay my respects to their Elders past, present and emerging and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People



## Acknowledgement of Country

### VIRTUAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to Acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which I am meeting from today and pay my respect to their Elders past, present and emerging and extend that to all the Traditional Custodians of the land on where you are all meeting from and pay my respects to their Elders past, present and emerging and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

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*“If you are comfortable please add a bit of yourself to the Acknowledgement, something about your favorite place to go or barbecue with family and friends on the Traditional Country you’re on. Your Acknowledgement will come across more authentic”.*

## Useful links and resources:

### **More information on Welcome to Country:**

<https://www.aboriginalvictoria.vic.gov.au/welcome-country>

### **More information on Acknowledgement of Country:**

<https://www.aboriginalvictoria.vic.gov.au/acknowledgement-traditional-owners>

### **Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation**

[www.wadawurrung.org.au](http://www.wadawurrung.org.au)

### **Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation**

[www.djadjawurrung.com.au](http://www.djadjawurrung.com.au)

## Locally-based Wadawurrung recordings

**Mount Buninyong:** Wadawurrung Elder Uncle Byron Powell tells the creation story of Mount Buninyong and Mount Elephant.

<https://vimeo.com/117639890>

**Lake Burrumbeet:** Wadawurrung Elder Uncle Byron Powell explains the significance of Lake Burrumbeet (Lake Borombeet) and tells the story of the woman who lived on the cliffs.

<https://vimeo.com/117579114>

**Lal Lal Falls:** Wadawurrung Elder Uncle Byron Powell explains the significance of Lal Lal falls and the creator, Bundjil.

<https://vimeo.com/117638316>

**Food:** Wadawurrung Elder Uncle Byron Powell explains the types of foods the old people could eat at Lake Modewarre and the impacts of settlement on the lake.

<https://vimeo.com/117639030>

A short documentary exploring the use of the Aboriginal bark canoes in transporting European settlers. There are interviews with historian Associate Professor Fred Cahir, Wadawurrung Elder Uncle Bryon Powell, Jamie Lowe and Rick Nelson.

<https://cv.vic.gov.au/stories/aboriginal-culture/seeing-the-land-from-an-aboriginal-canoe/seeing-the-land-from-an-aboriginal-canoe/>

**Fire and land management:** This video explores the traditional use of fire as a land management strategy for maintaining Wadawurrung country.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wyh8lnMkZao>

**A journey across Wadawurrung country:** Sharing some of the stories behind its place names, creeks and coasts and includes modern towns such as Ballarat, Werribee and Geelong.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cF0dkvNRtJs>

**How Looern and Swan Sisters gave us granite:**

The Wadawurrng People of Victoria share a fascinating creating story with their neighbouring tribal groups. Wadawurrung man Barry James Gilson tells the story of Looern.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n3gqg9H4x54>

## **Ballarat and District Aboriginal Co-operative (BADAC)**

The Ballarat and District Aboriginal Co-operative was established by members of the Ballarat and District Aboriginal community in 1979. It became a co-operative to deliver health, social, welfare and community development programs to local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.

Since 1979, the organisation has grown considerably and now delivers a wide range of services, underpinned by its adaption of the Social Inclusion principles.

BADAC is the Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCHO) for the Ballarat and district area, covering four local government areas (LGAs). BADAC services are open to all members of the public, with priority given to their members.

BADAC is focused on prevention and early intervention, always with client-centred approaches, to ensure that its clients are personally engaging in the development and nurturing of their own futures.







## Koorie Services Hub (K-hub)

The Koorie Services Hub is a base for Aboriginal state-wide services and some of Victoria's Aboriginal peak bodies such as Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Association Ltd (VACSAL), Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (VALS), Victorian Aboriginal Housing (VAH), Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI), and the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA).

These services cover the Central Highlands and the Grampians Region.



VACSAL



Aboriginal Housing Victoria



VACCA  
Connected by culture

## Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation (Wath-corp)

Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation is the representative body for Wadawurrung Traditional Custodians. The Corporation works to support their aspirations and protect Aboriginal Cultural Heritage in accordance with the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006.

Wadawurrng's RAP area covers over 10,000 square kilometres on the western side of Melbourne and includes the major regional cities of Ballarat and Geelong. This area incorporates the activities of 11 separate local councils – including many which are experiencing development. Wadawurrung County also incorporates the start of the Great Ocean Road, one of Australia's most iconic and popular tourist destinations.

<https://www.wadawurrung.org.au/>



Wadawurrung



## **City of Ballarat's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)**

The City of Ballarat has orchestrated its third Reconciliation Action Plan. The current RAP is – Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan May 2019 – May 2021.

The Reconciliation Action Plan links to other City of Ballarat strategies and plans.

The RAP is a strategic framework to support national reconciliation and was developed over 16 months through an extensive consultation process. It was launched on 29 May 2019.

There continues to be a lot of work happening across the whole organisation. The RAP is a reflection of the commitment of Councillors, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members and staff. There are four key areas in the RAP - relationships, respect, opportunities and governance. The deliverables were developed in consultation with each area of the City of Ballarat.

**For more information about the RAP please click on the link below:**

[https://www.ballarat.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-05/Reconciliation\\_Action\\_Plan\\_2019-2021.pdf](https://www.ballarat.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-05/Reconciliation_Action_Plan_2019-2021.pdf)

## **Koorie Engagement Action Group (KEAG)**

KEAG is an advisory committee to Council. KEAG advises and provides recommendations to the City of Ballarat on matters of engagement for Koorie People in the region (not including cultural heritage matters).

KEAG oversees the implementation of Council's Reconciliation Action Plan (past, current and future), and enhances and promotes understanding within the Ballarat community of Aboriginal culture and society.

KEAG identifies issues affecting the health and wellbeing of Koorie People and develops responses in collaboration with key partners, agencies and other tiers of government.

KEAG influences change processes in agencies providing services to Koorie People to assist in building cultural sensitivity and service integration. This facilitates greater responsiveness in Ballarat for Koorie People.

KEAG advocates for and supports key elements of the existing current service and supports infrastructure in Ballarat for Koorie People.

The roles and responsibility of Council is to implement Council's commitment, facilitate the operation of KEAG and to ensure broad representation that provides relevant coverage for the items in the terms of reference. Its role is also to ensure Council activities, practices, decisions and strategic directions are undertaken in a way that is responsive and inclusive of Koorie culture, issues and community. Council is also responsible for advocating to other tiers of Government and key bodies and agencies regarding issues impacting on Koorie People living in Ballarat and influence and inform key policy directions of all tiers of Government on Koorie culture and issues relating to the Koorie community in Ballarat.



The role of the Committee is to work collaboratively with other KEAG members and their agencies to seek improved outcomes for Koorie People living in Ballarat; increase Ballarat community's level of awareness of Koorie issues; advise and support the Council and broader Ballarat community in the recognition and celebration of Koorie culture; inform the Council of member agency activities and upcoming opportunities to progress Koorie culture and issues in Ballarat; Councillors and officers of the City are welcomed to attend the KEAG meetings.



