

Review of Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement Protocols

Wednesday, 3 December 2025
Reconciliation Committee

Strategic Alignment - Our Community

Program Contact:
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Public

Approving Officer:
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Shaping

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to present the City of Adelaide's updated *Acknowledgement and Welcome to Kaurna Yarta Protocol* (the updated Protocol) (**Attachment A**).

The City of Adelaide has reviewed its *Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country Protocol* (the current Protocol) ([Link 1](#)) to ensure it continues to reflect best practice, cultural integrity, and the aspirations of Kaurna People as Traditional Custodians of Kaurna Yarta.

Following a competitive procurement process, Aboriginal owned and managed business KSJ Consulting was engaged to assist the City of Adelaide in updating its Protocol. Their role included consultation with key stakeholders, including the City of Adelaide Reconciliation Committee and Directors of the Kaurna Yerta Aboriginal Corporation (KYAC). The KSJ Consulting outcomes and key findings report is contained in **Attachment B** and informed the updated Protocol as per **Attachment A**.

This work aims to strengthen the City of Adelaide's commitment to reconciliation and its respectful engagement with Kaurna People, embedding cultural protocols that are inclusive, appropriate, and reflective of contemporary expectations and practices.

The updated Protocol provides practical guidance for Administration, Council Members, the public and stakeholders on delivering Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country with authenticity, consistency, and respect.

RECOMMENDATION

The following recommendation will be presented to Council on 9 December 2025 for consideration

THAT THE RECONCILIATION COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS TO COUNCIL

THAT COUNCIL

1. Approves the *Acknowledgement and Welcome to Kaurna Yarta Protocol* as contained in **Attachment A** to Item 6.2 on the Agenda for the Reconciliation Committee held on 3 December 2025.
2. Notes the KSJ Consulting Report on the Acknowledgement and Welcome to Country Review Report as contained in **Attachment B** to Item 6.2 on the Agenda for the Reconciliation Committee held on 3 December 2025.
3. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer, or delegate, to make minor typographical, technical and other amendments to the document as contained in **Attachment A** to Item 6.2 on the Agenda for the Reconciliation Committee held on 3 December 2025.
4. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer, or delegate, to complete graphic design of the document as contained in **Attachment A** to Item 6.2 on the Agenda for the Reconciliation Committee held on 3 September 2025.

IMPLICATIONS AND FINANCIALS

City of Adelaide 2024-2028 Strategic Plan	<p>Strategic Alignment – Our Community</p> <p>An inclusive, equitable and welcoming community where people feel a sense of belonging.</p>
Policy	<p>This report proposes to replace the current Protocol adopted by Council on 26 June 2012 (Link 1) with an updated Protocol.</p> <p>Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan 2024 – 2027</p> <p>8.1 Increase employee understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.</p> <p>8.2 Review and communicate a cultural protocol document (tailored for all local communities we operate in), including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.</p>
Consultation	Aboriginal Members of the Reconciliation Committee discussed the project at the meeting of Panpanpalya held on 5 February 2025. The Directors of the Kaurna Yerta Aboriginal Corporation (KYAC) discussed the project with Administration and KSJ Consulting at the City of Adelaide and KYAC pipeline meeting held on 19 July 2025.
Resource	Not as a result of this report
Risk / Legal / Legislative	Not as a result of this report
Opportunities	Not as a result of this report
25/26 Budget Allocation	Budget allocation of \$30,000 from the RAP Implementation budget.
Proposed 26/27 Budget Allocation	Not as a result of this report
Life of Project, Service, Initiative or (Expectancy of) Asset	The updated Protocol will be reviewed in four years.
25/26 Budget Reconsideration (if applicable)	Not as a result of this report
Ongoing Costs (eg maintenance cost)	Not as a result of this report
Other Funding Sources	Not as a result of this report

DISCUSSION

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to present the updated *Acknowledgement and Welcome to Kaurna Yarta Protocol* (the updated Protocol) (**Attachment A**). The updated Protocol is based on research, stakeholder feedback and best practice delivery of Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country.

Background

2. The City of Adelaide has reviewed its *Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country Protocol* (the current Protocol) ([Link 1](#)) to ensure it continues to reflect best practice, cultural integrity, and the aspirations of Kaurna People as Traditional Custodians of Kaurna Yarta.
3. Following a competitive procurement process, Aboriginal owned and managed business KSJ Consulting was engaged to assist the City of Adelaide in updating its Protocol.
4. Their role included consultation with key stakeholders, including the City of Adelaide Reconciliation Committee and Directors of the Kaurna Yerta Aboriginal Corporation (KYAC), to ensure the protocol is shaped by cultural authority and community voices.
5. The KSJ Consulting outcomes and key findings report (**Attachment B**) contains recommendations for implementing an updated Protocol and guidelines for its consistent and respectful use across the City of Adelaide.
6. The KSJ recommendations informed the development of an updated Protocol (**Attachment A**).
7. This work aims to strengthen the City of Adelaide's commitment to reconciliation and its respectful engagement with Kaurna People, embedding cultural protocols that are inclusive, appropriate, and reflective of contemporary expectations and practices.

Consultation Summary

8. Aboriginal Members of the Reconciliation Committee discussed the project at the meeting of Panpapanpalya held on 5 February 2025.
 - 8.1. The meeting provided an opportunity for Elders and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders to share experiences, feedback, and expectations around current Protocol use.
 - 8.2. Themes arising from the discussion at Panpapanpalya are summarised as follows:
 - 8.2.1. Strengthening cultural integrity
 - 8.2.2. Clear guidance on individual Acknowledgement of Country
 - 8.2.3. Information sharing about Protocols.
9. The Directors of KYAC discussed the project with Administration and KSJ Consulting at the City of Adelaide and KYAC Pipeline meeting held on 19 July 2025.
 - 9.1. KYAC Directors provided feedback on cultural accuracy, community-led delivery of Protocols, and the importance of visibility and recognition of Traditional Custodians in the City of Adelaide's processes.
 - 9.2. Emphasis was placed on ensuring Kaurna cultural authority is centred in both the development and future delivery of the updated Protocol, and elevating the role of Welcome to Country in civic life.
 - 9.3. Themes arising from the discussion with KYAC are summarised as follows:
 - 9.3.1. Safeguarding cultural authenticity
 - 9.3.2. Honouring traditional knowledge and protocols
 - 9.3.3. Promoting understanding of traditional and contemporary practices.

Updated Protocol

10. The updated Protocol was developed by Administration informed by KSJ's recommendations, with a final language and cultural peer review undertaken by an independent Aboriginal business.
11. The updated Protocol provides practical guidance on delivering a Welcome or Acknowledgment of Country with authenticity and respect. The Protocol:
 - 11.1. Is titled to recognise the CoA's relationship with Kaurna Country.
 - 11.2. Encourages personalisation and includes a broader range of Acknowledgment examples suited to different contexts.

- 11.3. Provides guidance on when each type of Acknowledgment is appropriate and how to engage with cultural authorities (if required).
- 11.4. Includes reference to Native Title and the Kaurna cultural authority to ensure alignment with appropriate cultural governance.
- 12. The updated Protocol provides standard Acknowledgement of Country statements in circumstances where a personalised statement is not being used. For meetings, the Protocol is updated, as follows:
 - 12.1. From (current): *Adelaide City Council acknowledges that we are meeting on the traditional Country of the Kaurna people of the Adelaide Plains and pays respect to Elders past and present. We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship with the land. We acknowledge that they are of continuing importance to the Kaurna people living today.*
 - 12.2. To (updated): *The City of Adelaide acknowledges the Kaurna People of the Adelaide Plains as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we meet today. We acknowledge and honour the spiritual and cultural stewardship of this Country and recognise their deep and enduring relationship with its lands, waters, the sky, and all living things. We pay our respects to Kaurna Elders past and present and recognise the important role of emerging leaders in sustaining and strengthening culture.*
- 13. For documents, including the updated Protocol, the standard Acknowledgement is:
 - 13.1. *The City of Adelaide acknowledges the Kaurna People of the Adelaide Plains as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we live, work and gather. We acknowledge and honour the spiritual and cultural stewardship of this Country and recognise their deep and enduring relationship with its lands, waters, the sky, and all living things. We pay our respects to Kaurna Elders past and present and recognise the important role of emerging leaders in sustaining and strengthening culture.*
- 14. The updated Protocol will be supported with new resources and tools to support employees in delivering a Welcome or Acknowledgment of Country confidently and respectfully.

Next Steps

- 15. The relevant decision-making body for a Protocol is the Council.
- 16. Pending the Reconciliation Committee's decision, the updated Protocol will progress to Council for decision on 9 December 2025.
- 17. Administration will complete the graphic design and formatting of the updated Protocol (**Attachment A**) to ensure consistency with Kaurna cultural identity, including the development of supporting resources.
- 18. A communications plan will be developed to support the implementation of the updated Protocol including internal briefings to build understanding and ensure consistent use across the CoA and at Council and community-facing events.
 - 18.1. The CoA website will be updated and include materials to support the understanding and use of the Protocol.
 - 18.2. The RAP Working Group will play a key role in promoting the updated Protocol across the organisation, advocating for its consistent and authentic use, supporting employee capability, and fostering broader cultural understanding in City of Adelaide programs, events, and communications.

DATA AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Link 1 – [City of Adelaide Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country Protocol](#) (the current Protocol)

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – [City of Adelaide Acknowledgement and Welcome to Kaurna Yarta Protocol](#) (the updated Protocol)

Attachment B – [KSJ Consulting Report – Acknowledgement and Welcome to Country Protocol Review Report](#).

- END OF REPORT -