

Acknowledgment of Country Policy 1.16

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out guiding principles for Riverina Water County Council, its management and staff in recognising and respecting the Traditional Custodians of the lands that we supply water on, the Wiradyuri people. The policy outlines appropriate use of Acknowledgment of Country and Welcome to Country protocols at meetings, events, and official functions, observing the appropriate protocols for the acknowledgement of Wiradjuri people at the commencement of board meetings, committees of council and official functions.

Policy Statement

Riverina Water acknowledges the importance of recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the land and waters we work on. An Acknowledgment of Country is a way to pay respect to the Wiradyuri people and to the continuing connection of all First Nations peoples to land, culture, and community. An Acknowledgement of Country is a means by which all people can show respect for the Wiradjuri and First Nations culture and heritage and the ongoing relationship the traditional custodians have with their land.

Scope

This policy applies to the Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson, Board Members, CEO, Directors and staff when conducting board meetings, committee meetings of councilCouncil, public-facing activities, or other events coordinated by Riverina Water, or official functions of Riverina Water.

Principles

This policy supports Riverina Water's commitment to reconciliation, inclusion and cultural safety. By incorporating an Acknowledgement of Country, Riverina Water is -at the opening of board meetings, committee meetings of council -and appropriate official functions we are able to:

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- Recognise and pay respect to First Nations Peoples, cultures and heritage
- Communicate First Nations' cultural practices to the broader community to promote respect and understanding
- Demonstrate that First Nations' cultures are living through maintenance and practice of ceremonies and protocols
- Acknowledge First Nations People's unique position which can assist in building relationships and partnerships

Policy Implementation

An Acknowledgement of Country takes place at board meetings, committee meetings of ~~council~~ Council and major official functions. It may also be included at other events, meetings, community presentations, or communications at the discretion of the presenter, ~~and by choice is available for other meetings or events.~~

For official functions or significant public events, may seek to engage a recognised Wiradyuri Elder to conduct a Welcome to Country ceremony. This may include a spoken welcome, traditional dance, music, or smoking ceremony. Appropriate consultation and compensation should be arranged where applicable.

~~Riverina Water may consider a Welcome to Country and/or other ceremonies.~~

Preferred Acknowledgment of Country wording:

"Riverina Water acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land and waters, the Wiradyuri people, and pays respect to Elders past and present. We extend our respect to all First Nations Peoples across our supply area."

This wording may be adapted slightly to suit the context, such as for written communication, signage, or informal gatherings.

~~Riverina Water's preferred statement for Acknowledgment of Country at Riverina Water is:~~

~~Riverina Water acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land, the Wiradjuri people, and pays respect to Elders past, present and emerging and extends our respect to all First Nations Peoples in our supply area~~

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Non Compliance

Non-compliance with adopted policy may be considered a breach under the Code of Conduct. As such, any suspected or known non-compliance will be reported to the CEO.

Policy number	Policy 1.16
Responsible area	CEO
Approved by	Riverina Water Board – Res 22/016
Approval date	23 February 2022
Legislation or related strategy	N/A
Documents associated with this policy	Code of Conduct Policy 1.01 Code of Meeting Practice Policy 1.02 Reconciliation Action Plan
Policy history	Original 25 August 2020 10/107 Review 27 February 2013 13/14 Review 22 February 2017 17/13
Review Schedule	Every 4 years (next review due Nov-2025 June 2029), or if required as per current Reconciliation Action Plan

Policy details may change prior to review date due to legislative or other changes, therefore this document is uncontrolled when printed.

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END OF POLICY STATEMENT

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