

Policy of acknowledgment

Preamble

Bass Coast Shire Council has demonstrated ongoing commitment to the principles of reconciliation through introducing a statement of acknowledgement at council meetings and flying the Aboriginal flag permanently at key council sites.

The practice of giving recognition to Traditional Owners is commonplace and is seen as an appropriate and respectful way of breaking down cultural barriers and progressing reconciliation.

A Statement of Acknowledgement and flying the Aboriginal Flags is recognition that Bass Coast Shire Council values the unique status of Aboriginal people as the original owners and custodians of this land and waters and is a positive step on the path to reconciliation. The objective of reconciliation is to create an understanding of the Aboriginal history of Australia and the place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in that history and in contemporary Australia.

Bass Coast Shire Council has shown commitment to Aboriginal people through support and membership of the Inter Council Aboriginal Consultative Committee, permanently flying the Aboriginal Flag and Acknowledging Traditional Owners at the start of council meetings and community events.

Policy objectives

Recognition through acknowledgement of traditional owners at meetings and events, flying the aboriginal flag at council offices and in the council chambers and displaying plaques acknowledging traditional owners on council offices.

Policy statement

1. Council will acknowledge the Traditional Owners of this land through a statement of acknowledgement read at the commencement of:

Council meetings: ordinary meeting of Council

Public meetings: all meetings organised by Council officers where external agencies or members of the public are present.

Events: all public events organised and run by Council officers.

The following options are respectful statements of acknowledgement and suit different situations.

Option 1 (suited to a Council meeting, public meeting or event)

“We respectfully acknowledge the traditional owners of this land, their spirits and ancestors.”

Option 2 (suited to a public meeting or event where Elders are known to be present)

“We acknowledge the traditional owners of this land and pay our respects to their Elders and all Elders present here tonight/today.”

Option 3 (Suited to an event)

“We acknowledge the traditional owners of this land and pay our respects to their elders past and present and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in our community today.”

2. Council will fly the Aboriginal Flag and display plaques on Council Offices to acknowledge Traditional Owners.

In recognition of the Aboriginal people as the first Australians, Council will fly the Aboriginal flag alongside the Australian, Victorian and Bass Coast flags in line with flag flying protocols.

At the request of a relevant Aboriginal community organisation, Council will fly the Aboriginal flag at half mast to mark the passing of an esteemed local elder.

Council will also display the Aboriginal Flag permanently in Council Chambers and will display plaques acknowledging the Traditional Owners on Council offices.

Additional documents

nil

Reference to other documents

Flags Act 1953

<http://www.itsanhonour.gov.au/symbols/flag.cfm#protocols> (flag flying protocols)

Review process

This policy will be reviewed every four years.

Accountability process

Councillors and senior staff are accountable for the application of this policy at public meetings and events.

Approval

Approved by Council at its meeting held on Date 21/03/2012

Signed by the Mayor (Name): Cr Veronica Dowman



Date 29/03/2012