



Gunaikurnai Acknowledgement, Awareness and Welcome to Country Protocol

1. Introduction

(a) Application of the Protocol

This protocol is applicable to all cultural ceremonies within Gunaikurnai region including Welcomes to Country, acknowledgements of the Gunaikurnai people as the traditional owners and cultural awareness programs that occur within our Agreement Area.

The protocol is between the State of Victoria and the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation ('GLaWAC') and applies to all State agencies, statutory authorities and their service providers. Local government, the Commonwealth and Commonwealth statutory authorities and agencies are also encouraged to adopt the Protocol.

(b) The Victorian Constitution and the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities

The State of Victoria recognises in its constitution that Victoria's Aboriginal people are the original custodians of the land on which the Colony of Victoria was established. Affirming the unique status of Victoria's Aboriginal people as the descendants of Australia's first people, the Victorian constitution also recognises the spiritual, social, cultural and economic relationship that the Aboriginal people of Victoria have with their traditional lands and waters within Victoria.

Conducting welcomes to country and acknowledging Gunaikurnai people as the traditional owners of the land provides a means for publically recognising the prior and continued ownership of the land by Gunaikurnai people. Public recognition of our status as traditional owners reflects the acknowledgement by the State of Victoria, in its constitution, that the establishment of the Colony of Victoria as a self-governing colony with responsible government occurred without proper consultation, recognition or involvement of the Aboriginal people of Victoria. In this respect the public recognition of Gunaikurnai people as traditional owners provides a measure of justice to our people who were unlawfully dispossessed of their land.

Conducting welcomes to country and acknowledging Gunaikurnai people as traditional owners is also necessary to ensure our people receive equal protection under the law of Victoria, a human right guaranteed to all Victorians under the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities. The Charter also recognises the special importance of human rights for the Aboriginal people of Victoria, and that Aboriginal persons hold distinct cultural rights with other members of their community.

These rights include the enjoyment of their identity and culture, the maintenance and use of their language, the maintenance of their kinship ties and the maintenance of their distinctive spiritual, material and economic relationship with the land and waters and other resources with which they have a connection under traditional laws and customs. Conducting welcomes to country and acknowledging Gunaikurnai people as traditional owners is necessary to enable the realisation of these cultural rights and to promote the health and well-being of Gunaikurnai people generally, recognising that cultural survival is a key determinant of the health and well-being of Indigenous people.



(c) Respect for the continuing culture and traditions of Gunaikurnai People in their traditional country

The Gunaikurnai people under their traditional laws and customs have a responsibility to welcome visitors to country by fire, smoke, water ceremonies and other specific cultural details including language, customs, protocols, relevant dreaming stories etc. In providing for the acknowledgement and cultural awareness of the Welcome to Country tradition and associated cultural traditions, this protocol enables Gunaikurnai people to fulfil their responsibilities with respect to the land and to maintain and strengthen their culture.

The protocol also recognises the unique and irreplaceable contribution of Victoria's Aboriginal People to the identity and well-being of Victoria. Maintaining the Welcome to Country tradition will educate and culturally enrich the lives of non-aboriginal visitors to Gunaikurnai country and provide an opportunity for non-aboriginal visitors to show their respect for the continuing culture and traditions of the Gunaikurnai people in their traditional country. This respect for Aboriginal culture and tradition is fundamental to building strong relationships and promoting reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-aboriginal Australians.

2. Welcome to Country

(a) When is a Welcome to Country to be conducted?

A Welcome to Country is to be conducted for all major official events occurring within the Agreement Area, where members of the public, representatives of government and / or the media are present unless determined by GLaWAC to be inappropriate. Such events may include but are not limited to:

- (i) community Cabinet meetings and Parliamentary committee sittings;
- (ii) commemorations and major festivals;
- (iii) major launches of government policies and programs;
- (iv) conferences held or sponsored by the Victorian Government;
- (v) international events of which the Victorian Government is an organiser or sponsor;
- (vi) citizenship ceremonies; and
- (vii) major and international sporting events.
- (viii) major and international artistic events including exhibitions and performances
- (ix) events at schools and educational institutions

At events which are not official events, but where a State government body or agency is a sponsor, the relevant body or agency should facilitate negotiations with GLaWAC and the event organiser to incorporate a Welcome to Country into the event, where GLaWAC holds the view that this is appropriate.

Other private organisations or members of the public may also request that a Welcome to Country be conducted.



(b) Who is to conduct a Welcome to Country?

A Welcome to Country may only be conducted by an Elder or persons who have been determined to be appropriate persons by GLaWAC. GLaWAC is committed to engaging members across all family groups in cultural heritage work when determining who is an appropriate person.

The Directors of the GLaWAC Board will select the relevant person / s for each event request.

(c) Etiquette to be observed during a Welcome to Country

A Welcome to Country is a traditional custom of cultural significance to Gunaikurnai people as such it is important that appropriate respect be given to those conducting a Welcome to Country. Visitors to Gunaikurnai country can show their respect for the continuing culture and traditions of Gunaikurnai people in their traditional country by observing cultural etiquette.

This etiquette shall be advised, if necessary at the time of a Welcome to Country booking.

(d) Requests to conduct a Welcome to Country

All requests to conduct a Welcome to Country within the Agreement Area are to be made through the GLaWAC CEO. A business or agency may request that a particular Traditional Owner perform the work if they have a relationship with them and all reasonable attempts will be made to meet their request, however only through the GLaWAC office, can this request be made. If no request is made GLaWAC will select a person suitable to the relevant event.

(e) Notice required

A request made to GLaWAC, to conduct a Welcome to Country must be made with a minimum of two (2) weeks prior to the date of the event at which the Welcome to Country is to be conducted.

Where the required notice is given, GLaWAC is to respond to the request within a reasonable time. This time will be no less than two (2) business days after the initial request.

(f) Fees involved in conducting a Welcome to Country

Where GLaWAC approves a request to conduct a Welcome to Country, it will advise those making the request of the relevant fee involved. Fees for conducting a Welcome to Country are set out in the Schedule of Fees and reviewed annually. Where work is cancelled within 48 hours of the scheduled event, GLaWAC will charge 50% of the rate, with field workers booked being paid appropriately.

3. Acknowledgement of the Gunaikurnai as Traditional Owners

(a) When is an acknowledgement of the Gunaikurnai people as traditional owners required?

An acknowledgement of the Gunaikurnai people as traditional owners is required at the commencement of all major official events occurring within the Agreement Area.

The following words should be used when acknowledging the Gunaikurnai people as the traditional owners "I would like to acknowledge the Gunaikurnai People, the Traditional Owners of the land on which we are gathered and pay my respects to their Elders both past and present"



4. Other Traditional Ceremonies and Practises to which the Protocol Applies

(a) Traditional Ceremonies of the Gunaikurnai people

In addition to conducting Welcomes to Country, other traditional ceremonies and practises of the Gunaikurnai people include music performances, dancing and smoking ceremonies.

(b) Who may perform a traditional ceremony

A traditional ceremony may only be conducted by person / s who have been determined to be appropriate persons by GLaWAC. GLaWAC is committed to engaging members across all family groups in cultural heritage work when determining who is an appropriate person.

The Directors of the GLaWAC Board will select the relevant person / s for each event request.

(c) Etiquette to observe during traditional ceremonies

Traditional ceremonies under Gunaikurnai custom hold important cultural significance for Gunaikurnai people, as such it is important that appropriate respect be given to those performing a traditional ceremony. Visitors to Gunaikurnai country can show their respect for the continuing culture and traditions of Gunaikurnai people in their traditional country by observing the following cultural etiquette.

This etiquette shall be advised, if necessary at the time of a traditional ceremony booking.

(d) Requests to conduct a traditional ceremony

All requests to conduct a traditional ceremony within the Agreement Area are to be made through the GLaWAC CEO. A business or agency may request that a particular Traditional Owner perform the work if they have a relationship with them and all reasonable attempts will be made to meet their request, however only through the GLaWAC office, can this request be made. If no request is made GLaWAC will select a person suitable to the relevant event.

(e) Notice required

A request made to GLaWAC, to conduct a traditional ceremony must be made with a minimum of two (2) weeks prior to the date of the event at which the traditional ceremony is to be conducted.

Where the required notice is given, GLaWAC is to respond to the request within a reasonable time. This time will be no less than two (2) business days after the initial request.

(f) Fees involved with traditional ceremonies

Where GLaWAC approves a request to conduct a traditional ceremony, it will advise those making the request of the relevant fee involved. Fees for conducting a traditional ceremony are set out in the Schedule of Fees and reviewed annually. Where work is cancelled within 48 hours of the scheduled event, GLaWAC will charge 50% of the rate, with field workers booked being paid appropriately.



Gunaikurnai Standard Fees and Charges

Item	Details	Cost
Welcome to Country	The Welcome to Country is performed by an Elder or appropriate nominated person as a GLaWAC representative to formally welcome people to our land as an oral welcome.	\$ 500.00 per function
Smoking Ceremony	A Smoking Ceremony is an ancient custom, that involves smouldering various native plants to produce smoke with cleansing properties to ward off any bad spirits.	\$ 500.00 per function
Music and Dance Ceremony	Ceremonial performances are seen as the core of cultural life. These ceremonies bring together all aspects of Gunaikurnai culture – song, dance, body decoration, sculpture and painting. A ceremony can be planned according to your event requirements; it can even incorporate 'Welcome to Country, and can be as little as one performer or as many as your budget and space allows. The cost is based on the number of performers, allow approximately \$ 300.00 each .	Quoted based on discussion with GLaWAC CEO
Cultural Heritage Session* (refer to following for a guideline on costs)	A Cultural Heritage presentation by a GLaWAC representative educating the knowledge and understanding of the Gunaikurnai culture. This session includes a presentation in-house at GLaWAC office in Bairnsdale and may include a field trip to a place of significance (on-country). Sessions can be arranged at another requested location, however travel would be incurred at a rate of 0.73c per km from the GLaWAC office.	Quoted based on disucssion with GLaWAC CEO and numbers of the group (catering can be arranged for an additional cost)

* all these fees are subject to 10% GST and will be charged accordingly



Gunaikurnai Cultural Heritage Session

Item	Details	Cost
Cultural Heritage Session (less than 10 people)	A Cultural Heritage presentation by a GLaWAC representative in-house at the GLaWAC office – less than 10 people – including tea, coffee and lunch (rolls / wraps or sandwiches)	\$ 200.00 per person
Cultural Heritage Session (10 - 20 people)	A Cultural Heritage presentation by a GLaWAC representative in-house at the GLaWAC office – 10 - 20 people – including tea, coffee and lunch (rolls / wraps or sandwiches)	\$ 2,500.00 set fee
Cultural Heritage Session (20 or more people)	A Cultural Heritage presentation by a GLaWAC representative in-house at the GLaWAC office – 20 or more people – including tea, coffee and lunch (rolls / wraps or sandwiches)	\$ 3,000.00 PLUS however would be quoted based on discussion with GLaWAC CEO
Cultural Heritage Session (additional requirements)	Any additional catering requirements more than the listed items above such as finger food, hot food or full meals can be quoted. Any other dietary requirements can be arranged. The cost for a visit to The Keeping Place should be negotiated with them, however another site visit (on-country) can be arranged and charged depending on the location. Travel arrangements for any on-country site is to arranged independently.	

* all these fees are subject to 10% GST and will be charged accordingly