**Department of the Premier and Cabinet**

**Services Division – Strategic Engagement and Protocol**

**SECTION:** Protocol Queensland

**SUBJECT:** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Protocol - Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

1. **Purpose**
   1. The purpose of this protocol is to acknowledge and demonstrate respect for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First peoples of Australia and recognise their ongoing ties with land, winds, waters and sea.
   2. This policy outlines the guidelines established by the Queensland Government for all Queensland Government staff speaking at official Queensland Government business requiring acknowledgement of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owners.
2. **Scope**
   1. This policy applies to all Queensland Government members and employees conducting Government business at events listed under clause 4.1.
3. **Criteria**
   1. The wording to be used for acknowledgement of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owners is:

"I would like to respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land [and/or sea] (insert name of the Traditional Owner group if known and appropriate) on which this event is taking place and the Elders past and present."

* 1. A short pause should be taken after the acknowledgement as a sign of respect, before progressing with the remainder of the speech.

1. **Operational Guidelines**
   1. This policy would apply to significant public events and key meetings including:

Government organised, funded and co-funded functions

* + 1. Queensland Government events and functions
    2. Queensland Government sponsored conferences, meetings, seminars and workshops

**4.1.4** Official launch ceremonies for Queensland Government policies, programs and services

**4.1.5** Significant community engagement meetings

* 1. This will ensure appropriate acknowledgement of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owners at all relevant government-related events.
  2. An internal business meeting would not require the acknowledgement of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owners.
  3. The first speaker and all subsequent speakers, as appropriate, can also acknowledge the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owners.
  4. Government members and employees are encouraged to research the identity of the Traditional Owners of the local area.
  5. Should any Government employee be uncertain as to whether the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Protocol applies to a specific function or event, advice should be sought from Protocol Queensland, Department of the Premier and Cabinet.
  6. Organisers of Queensland Government hosted or funded events and functions should contact the relevant Regional Office, Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (DATSIP) to confirm the name, pronunciation and appropriateness to mention the name, of the relevant Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owners of the land and/or sea on which the event is taking place, refer to clause 6.1.

1. **Other Relevant Information**
   1. A "Welcome to Country" is different to an acknowledgment in that it is a cultural practice performed by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owners and can be used to open significant events and formal functions. It is often used in tandem with the protocol of acknowledging Traditional Owners.
   2. Some community-based meetings in the Torres Strait and in some mainland communities are opened with a prayer
   3. Government Officials responsible for organising an event and who require advice about the appropriateness of incorporating a “Welcome to Country” or a prayer at an event should refer to clause 6. These clauses identify appropriate contact officers for further advice.
2. **Actions**
   1. To confirm the name and other details of the relevant Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owners contact DATSIP Regional offices. Regional contacts are available at: <http://www.datsip.qld.gov.au/people-communities/regional-contacts>.
   2. Further supporting information for the Protocol Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners and Welcome to Country is available at <http://datsima.govnet.qld.gov.au/>.
   3. Enquiries regarding this Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Protocol should be directed to DATSIP in the first instance, should further information be required please contact:

Protocol Queensland

Department of the Premier and Cabinet

Phone: (07) 3003 9253.