



griffith city council

Aboriginal Cultural Protocols

2017



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WARNING

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are warned that the following document may contain images deceased persons.



Griffith is located in the heart of the Wiradjuri Nation – the largest nation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia.

Griffith City Council recognises Aboriginal people in the history and growth of Griffith and its surrounding villages. As such, Council acknowledges the Wiradjuri people as the traditional owners of the land and pays respect to Wiradjuri Elders past, present and future.

We recognise and respect the Wiradjuri cultural heritage, beliefs and their ongoing relationship with the land for people living today.

Griffith is a thriving and innovative regional capital with a vibrant lifestyle and diverse economy.

“ We embrace our community, heritage, culture and environment.”



overview

Griffith is located within the heartland of the Wiradjuri Nation which is one of the largest tribal groups across Australia.

There is widespread evidence of Aboriginal occupation across this region prior to European settlement with artefacts that include scarred trees, stone axes, rock grinding grooves, oven mounds and middens, especially in places such as Lake Wyangan, Scenic Hill, Barren Box Swamp, Binya Hills, Cocoparra National Park, Mirrool Creek and recently Tharbogang Swamp.

Griffith City Council:

- acknowledges Aboriginal people as the traditional owners of the land and the first people to inhabit the area.
- recognises the contribution of the Aboriginal people in Griffith and surrounding areas.
- recognises the importance of these Aboriginal Cultural Protocols as an essential source of information for Council and for the wider community in demonstrating respect to Aboriginal people and their culture.

This document will be reviewed every 4 years along with Council's suite of Strategic Planning documents.

Aboriginal community consultation

The Griffith Aboriginal community requires any negotiations to be meaningful and allow an equal relationship to develop and reject tokenistic consultations or negotiations from occurring.

Face to face is the preferred method of engaging and communicating with either the community or key Aboriginal organisations.

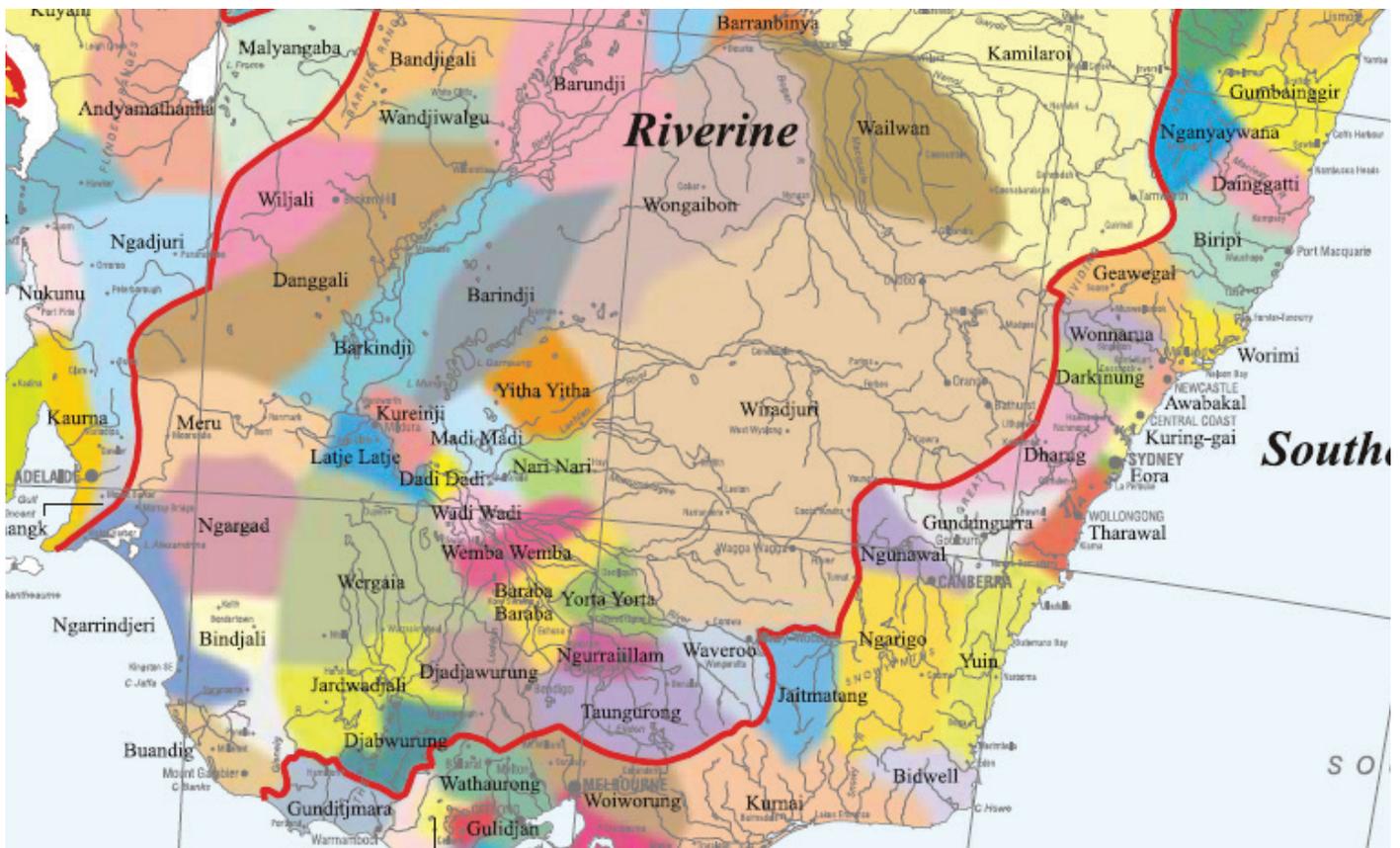
A formal request to consult is essential via a letter or email to one of the following.

- Griffith City Council Community Development Officer – Aboriginal Liaison (ALO)
- The Griffith Local Aboriginal Land Council (GLALC)
- Griffith Aboriginal Community Working Party (CWP)
- Other Aboriginal agencies

Why Consult?

Historically Aboriginal people were excluded from the opportunity for consultation or to provide input regarding matters that had direct or indirect impacts on their community, culture and heritage. Council are aware that this occurred across all levels of governments with many decisions made without input from the local Aboriginal community.

Respect for local Aboriginal communities' rights, culture and heritage, their perspectives and participation must be included during decision making processes. This ensures that mistakes of the past that have had an adverse effect on the Aboriginal community, culture and heritage don't continue to happen.



The Wiradjuri Nation is geographically the largest Indigenous Nation within NSW and is possibly the largest in terms of population.

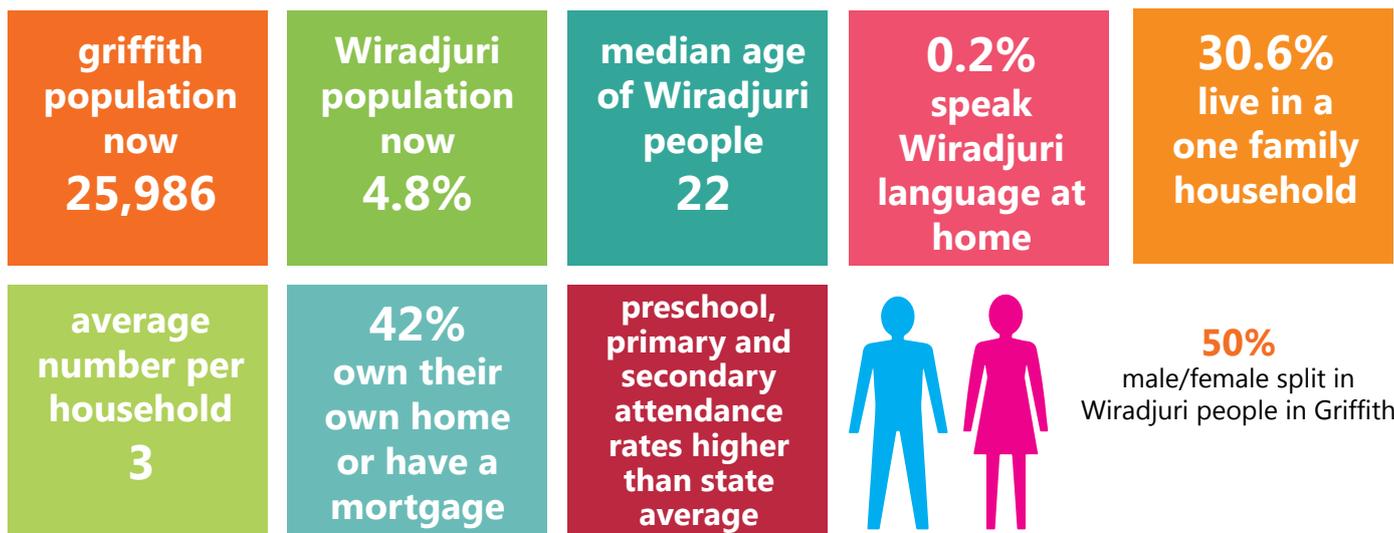
The boundary of the Wiradjuri Nation extends from Coonabarabran in the north, straddling the Great Dividing Range down to the Murray River and out to western NSW. Wiradjuri traditional country includes the townships of Dubbo, Condobolin, Orange, Bathurst, Wagga Wagga, Albury, Narrandera, and Griffith.

All of these centres have large populations of Wiradjuri traditional owners. There is also a significant Wiradjuri population in Sydney, particularly Western Sydney.

The Wiradjuri people are represented by the Wiradjuri Council of Elders and each community has established their own form of governance to represent local interests.

Prominent Wiradjuri people include the Aboriginal Warrior Windradyne, Paul Coe, Elders Ces, Florence and Stan Grant, Journalist Stan Grant, NRL Footballer David Peachey and NSW MP Linda Burney, Shadow Minister for Human Services.

snapshot of Wiradjuri people in griffith



Elders

The term Elder is used to describe people who have knowledge, wisdom and respect from the community, is a custodian of this cultural knowledge and referred to as Uncle/Aunty.

It is considered good practice to consult with Elders during any discussion that may have a direct or indirect impact on Aboriginal people within their community. Elders know the history of their people, kinship systems and cultural lore, which governs the community.

Aboriginality

Griffith Aboriginal communities use three (3) criteria that identify an Aboriginal person. These are indicated below:

- To be of Aboriginal or Torres Strait islander descent
- Identify themselves as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait
- Be accepted as Aboriginal or Torres Strait by your local Aboriginal community which you currently or formerly lived in.

Application for Aboriginality must be lodged with the Griffith Local Aboriginal Land Council.

welcome to country

A Welcome to Country is performed by an Aboriginal Elder, who welcomes people to the Land. In the Griffith Local Government Area this can only be undertaken by a Wiradjuri Elder who is recognised, respected and accepted by the Griffith Aboriginal community.

Welcome to Country occurs when there are major events, functions, festivals and whenever there is a gathering that includes members of public and Government representatives.

Elders must be formally introduced to the people attending the event. The introduction includes a brief history of the Elder and their story.

If a Welcome to Country is required please contact Griffith City Council or Griffith Local Aboriginal Land Council.

acknowledgment of country

An Acknowledgement of Country can be performed by non-Aboriginal people to show respect towards Aboriginal people. Aboriginal people who do not have a status of an 'Elder' are also expected to perform an Acknowledgment of Country.

Here is an example that Griffith City Council frequently uses:

"I would like to acknowledge the Wiradjuri people who are the traditional owners of this land on which we meet. I would also like to pay my respect to the Elders both past and present of the Wiradjuri Nation and extend that respect to the Aboriginal community and any Aboriginal people present."

ceremony

Major Ceremonies are held to support a significant event occurring in the community such as conferences, exhibitions, functions, naming or new opening, that are conducted under the guidance of Elders. This occurs when a blessing or cleansing is performed to warn off any negative spirits. The types of activities include:

- Smoking Ceremony
- Traditional Dance
- Didgeridoo Performance

fee for service

Welcome to Country, performances and ceremonies all need to be remunerated accordingly, as they hold the intellectual property rights to their own culture and heritage. Council understands these important activities cannot be undertaken without payment.

The fee should be negotiated with the Elder.

significant events

- 26 January- Survival Day
- February – Anniversary of the Apology (2008)
- 13 March – National Close the Gap Day
- 26 May – National Sorry Day
- May/June – National Reconciliation Week (1967)
- 3 June – Mabo Day (1992)
- 2-9 July- NAIDOC Week
- 4 August – National Aboriginal & Islander Children's Day
- 9 August – International Day of the World's Indigenous People



Griffith NAIDOC Week celebrations - Flag raising ceremony, July 2017

flag protocols

The Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flag are both recognised as national flags of Australia being proclaimed as such in July 1995, under section 5 of the Flags Act 1953.

The Aboriginal Flag, designed by Harold Thomas, a Luritja Man from Central Australia was first flown in Adelaide on 12 July 1971. The Flag is also seen as a symbol of identity and unity. The Black colour represents Aboriginal Australia; the yellow is the sun, giver and protector of life; the red is representative of the red earth especially symbolic to Aboriginal people's spiritual connection to the land and red ochre that is used by Aboriginal people during ceremonies.

The Torres Strait Islander Flag designed by Bernard Namok (deceased) of Thursday Island was adopted in 1992. The Flag is divided into three horizontal panels. The panels are separated by two thick black lines with the white star and headdress in the centre. The black colour is for Indigenous people of the Torres Strait, white for peace, green the colour of the land, and blue representing the colour of the sea.

Flying the flag at half-mast

Flags are flown at half-mast as a sign of mourning upon the death of a local Aboriginal Elder or significant person. A formal letter of request to Council's General Manager is required to lower the flag on the day of their funeral.

All flags will be lowered to half-mast in accordance with Australian National Flag Protocols.



Griffith Centenary Celebrations, 2016

Griffith Local Aboriginal Land Council

Griffith Local Aboriginal Lands Council gives the local Aboriginal community a voice on issues affecting their land, heritage, culture and people. It is the key Aboriginal organisation in Griffith in relation to Aboriginal Cultural and Heritage matters.

Griffith City Council is committed to building a positive relationship with the Griffith Local Aboriginal Land Council that is built on mutual respect, goodwill and trust. Council will foster an environment where this relationship will continue to evolve and strengthen.

Council views the Griffith Local Aboriginal Land Council as an essential stakeholder and partner in the Griffith community. This close relationship is fundamental to ensuring that all of the Griffith Aboriginal community prosper and move forward together towards a brighter future for all.

Griffith Aboriginal Community Working Party

The Griffith Community Working Party provides clear strategic direction of the community through good governance practices.

The Community Working Party's main objective is to play an integral role in developing the Aboriginal communities' strategic directions, priorities and goal settings through the Griffith Aboriginal Social Action Plan developed in 2007.

NOTE: A review is underway for the Griffith Aboriginal Social Action Plan and expected to be completed in 2017.



(above) Strong Girls dance workshop

(below) Opening of the Exhibition



key Aboriginal contacts in the griffith local government area

Griffith Local Aboriginal Land Council

5 Wiradjuri Place, Griffith NSW 2680
Robert Carroll- Chief Executive Officer
E griffalac@bigpond.com
T 02 69 626 711
M 0407 965 009

Griffith Aboriginal Community Working Party

1 Neville Place, Griffith City Council
Council's designated Aboriginal staff person
E admin@griffith.nsw.gov.au
T 02 69 628 100

Griffith City Council - Community Development Officer - Aboriginal Liaison

1 Neville Place, Griffith
E admin@griffith.nsw.gov.au
T 02 69 628 100

other Aboriginal contacts

Griffith Aboriginal Medical Service

38-42 Jondaryan Avenue, Griffith NSW 2680
Stacey Meredith, Chief Executive Officer
E enquiries@griffithams.org.au
T 02 69 620 000
M 0428 644 533

Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT) Limited

112 Yambil Street / PO Box 1374 Griffith NSW 2680
Lynette Kilby, Field Officer
E lynette.kilby@alsnswact.org.au
T 02 6962 7675
M 0419 770 298

Aboriginal Health Murrumbidgee Local Health

Network team
Griffith Base Hospital
17 Animoo Ave Griffith NSW
Michelle Druitt, Team Leader |
E michelle.druitt@gsahs.health.nsw.gov.au
T 02 6969 5646
M 0477 712688

Dyirri –Bang-Gu Aboriginal Aged Care Service

Shop 6/26 Ulong Street, Griffith NSW 2680
Beverly Johnson, Coordinator
E dyirri1@bigpond.com
T 02 69 640 518
M 0429 640 518

Wiradjuri Aboriginal Preschool

101 Blumer Avenue Griffith NSW 2680
Karen Thurston, Director
E karen@wiradjurips.com.au
T 6962-2106

Aboriginal Education Consultative Group

Lisa Penrith
E lpnrith@griffithams.com.au
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Artwork from the Murrumbidgee Marramorra Exhibition at Griffith Regional Art Gallery, 2016



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