ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to members of Liverpool City Council’s Aboriginal Consultative who guided and supported the development of this document.

Thank you also to the support staff from Liverpool City Council who provided valuable feedback during the production of this resource. The views expressed by the authors do not necessarily reflect the views of Liverpool City Council.

Norma Burrows, who took one of the photographs in this document, is gratefully acknowledged.

A note on terminology:
It is important to note that the term ‘Aboriginal’ is more appropriate than ‘Aborigine’, and should always be used when referring to Aboriginal people, their history and culture. It is also acknowledged that Indigenous peoples from the Torres Strait Islands should be consulted if they are part of the local community.

ACRONYMS USED IN THIS POLICY

AECG       NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Inc
ARTSLAW    The Arts Law Centre of Australia
DAA        Department of Aboriginal Affairs
DET        NSW Department of Education and Training
GLALC      Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council
LCC        Liverpool City Council
TAFE       Technical and Further Education
TLALC      Tharawal Local Aboriginal Land Council
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE OF CONTENTS</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional Protocols</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcome to Country</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoking Ceremonies</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ownership, copyright, cultural and intellectual property</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flag Flying Protocol</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significant calendar events</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevant Government Policies</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcome to Country Performance Letter</td>
<td>Appendix A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fact Sheet for consulting with Aboriginal people</td>
<td>Appendix B</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PURPOSE

Liverpool City Council (LCC) values cultural diversity and is committed to working in partnership with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. It is important that Aboriginal culture is acknowledged at all levels of government to show respect for and build strong equal partnerships with Aboriginal peoples and communities.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are complex and diverse. The aim of these Protocols is to assist Council staff and partners with ways we can work, communicate, consult and recognise our local Aboriginal community. It is hoped that these protocols will provide the reader with a better understanding of Aboriginal culture and traditions.
INTRODUCTION

Observing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols demonstrates respect for the cultural traditions, history and diversity of the Aboriginal peoples and communities living within the Liverpool Local Government Area (LGA).

This document has been developed with reference to the NSW Aboriginal Cultural Protocols and Practices Policy that provides guidance for incorporating Aboriginal cultural practices and ceremony practices at official events to:

• Recognise and pay respects to Aboriginal peoples, culture and heritage;
• Communicate Aboriginal cultural practices to the broader community;
• Demonstrate that Aboriginal cultures are living through maintenance and practice of ceremonies and protocols; and
• Recognise that Aboriginal people within Liverpool Council which can assist in building relationships and partnerships.

These protocols will only be effective if they are acknowledged and implemented where appropriate within our organisation.
LOCAL ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE

Liverpool City Council acknowledges the original inhabitants of the Liverpool LGA as the Darug, Gandangara and Tharawal Aboriginal People.

Council recognise the devastating impact of European invasion and the effects of forced assimilation by the removal and separation of Aboriginal people from their families and communities. The impact has created a loss of culture, language and identity. Liverpool City Council adopts the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation’s Vision Statement:

“A united Australia which respects this land of ours; values the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage; and provides justice, and equity for all”.

For further information in relation to local Aboriginal nations in NSW visit the NSW Aboriginal Land Council website: www.nswalc.org.au or contact Liverpool City Council on 1300 36 2170 or visit www.liverpool.nsw.gov.au.

TRADITIONAL PROTOCOLS

Aboriginality and Torres Strait Islander Australians

An Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person is someone who is:

- Of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent;
- Identifies as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent; or
- Is accepted by the community in which he or she lives as being of Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander descent.

According to the DAA Guidelines Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians is the full, official terminology. It should always be spelt out in full and not shortened to its acronym ‘ATSI’. Always use a capital ‘A’ for Aboriginal and capitals ‘T’, ‘S’ and ‘I’ for Torres Strait Islander.

Most Aboriginal people prefer not to be called an ‘Aborigine’, the preferred term is ‘Aboriginal person’.

Koori/Koorie, Murri, Goorie

These are terms used by Aboriginal people in NSW when referring to themselves. They are generally not to be used by non-Aboriginal people unless permission has been sought, except when using recognised industry names such as ‘Koori Mail’.

Indigenous

The term Indigenous Australians is acceptable in certain circumstances with a capital ‘I’.
Terms
It is most important to check which term is preferred by a particular community, and when it is appropriate to use each term.

It is Important to know that it is offensive to question the ‘amount’ of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander blood a person may possess. Rather, it is advisable to ask people how they would like to be described. This may include where they come from or which community or clan they identify with.

Elders
Elders are custodians of knowledge. They are chosen and accepted by their own communities and are highly respected.

Gender Protocols
Aboriginal society still regards some information as specific and sacred to either men or women. This knowledge is sacred and recorded in a way that only men or only women can access.

It may be difficult to distinguish between men’s and women’s business. We need to be aware that such issues exist, seek advice from Aboriginal people about when they are likely to arise and how to manage such issues.

Traditional Custodians
‘Traditional Custodians’ is the term to describe the original Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people who inhabited an area. Traditional custodians today are descendants of the original inhabitants and have ongoing spiritual and cultural ties to the land and waterways where their ancestors lived.

It is often important to find out the name of the particular group/s of local Aboriginal people that are the traditional custodians of land, particularly when an event is held on that land and a ‘Welcome to Country’ and/or ‘Acknowledgement of Country’ is planned.

Sources of information about traditional custodians include the local council and/or the local Aboriginal Land Council.

Getting Permission
Getting permission is essential before starting work on any project that has an impact directly on Aboriginal communities.

Getting permission involves forming strong partnerships with Aboriginal organisations. They can advise of the correct protocol for gaining consent. Permission will rarely be refused if the purpose of the work is clearly understood and the way of undertaking the work is properly negotiated. Where it is refused, the reason may relate to issues that are sacred or taboo, related to a death custom, or be specifically women’s or men’s business.
Naming the deceased
In many Aboriginal communities it is offensive to refer to a deceased person by name or show photographic images of the person during the mourning period, unless agreed to by the relevant family.

Many organisations are now using cultural warnings to avoid causing offence to the families of deceased persons.

Disclaimer
When using images of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people in publications such as Annual Reports and Operational Plans, it is appropriate to include the following at the front or end of the document:

Warning: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are advised that this document (Title of the document) may contain images of deceased Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.

Sorry Business

Sorry Business is a term used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders which refers to the passing of a family or community member. It is extremely important in Indigenous cultures that people participate in Sorry Business. Sorry Business includes attending funerals and taking part in mourning activities with the community.

Due to the extended family make up, Sorry Business can sadly be common for Indigenous Australians and the workplace should be supportive and respectful of such commitments.

Be aware that it is common practice not to mention the name of a deceased person or show pictures of them for some time after they have passed away.

Attending the funeral of people they know and/or are related to (extended family may mean a person has three grannies) ensures that the spirit of the person that has passed away is put to rest properly. If they do not attend or the funeral is not done according to culture, the spirit may cause the person problems.

Funerals are also important family times. If a person didn’t attend a funeral and spend time with the family, he/she may be seen as not valuing family. Take the time to discuss with the worker the support he/she needs to fulfil his/her obligation. This can take an extended period of time, a week or more, and may also involve travelling long distances.
WELCOME TO COUNTRY

A ‘Welcome to Country’ is where an Aboriginal custodian welcomes people to their land at the beginning of a meeting, event or ceremony. An appropriate person such as a recognised Elder within the local area needs to conduct this welcome. Welcome to Country enables Traditional Custodians to give their blessing for the event. It is an important mark of respect for Aboriginal people.

Local Aboriginal organisations may be contacted to recommend an appropriate local Elder to conduct a Welcome to Country. Alternatively contact Council for advice.

Acknowledgement of Country

An ‘Acknowledgement of Country’ is where other people acknowledge and show respect for the traditional custodians of the land on which an event is taking place. It is sign of respect. Council encourages the practice of Acknowledgement of Country at events including conferences, seminars, workshops, formal meetings and gatherings, including team meetings, forums, community and civic events.

Appropriate wording for a written acknowledgement of country:

We would like to acknowledge the Cabrogal Clan of the Darug Nation who are the traditional custodians of the land that now resides within Liverpool City Council’s boundaries. We acknowledge that this land was also accessed by peoples of the Dhurawal and Darug Nations.

Note: This text can be used for Local reports relating to the City of Liverpool, NSW.
Appropriate wording for Acknowledgement of Country in speeches:

“Before we begin proceedings (this morning, this afternoon, this evening), I would like to acknowledge and pay respect to the traditional owners of the land on which we meet; the Cabrogal Clan of the Darug Nation.

We acknowledge that this land was also accessed by peoples of the Dhurawal and Darug Nations”.

Note: An acknowledgement is usually performed before the commencement of a meeting, event and or official ceremonies where Aboriginal or Torres Straits Islanders are present or where Aboriginal affairs are being discussed. Organisers of such events should always consult with Local Aboriginal Groups / Individuals to ensure approval and to appoint an appropriate Elder and /or Local Aboriginal Community Representative to conduct all acknowledgments of country prior to such events.

The Aboriginal Representative may feel comfortable to include a short speech that relates to the event. A service fee applies and should be discussed prior to the event.
SMOKE, LIGHTNING OR WATER FLOW
SMOKING CEREMONIES

Smoking Ceremonies are undertaken in Aboriginal communities in order to cleanse a space. The Smoking Ceremony is a purification ritual and is always undertaken by an Aboriginal person with specialised cultural knowledge.

Aboriginal people may request a Smoking Ceremony in a workplace where a death or other traumatic event has occurred. This request is of tremendous significance to them and should be respected. Failure to do so may cause significant distress.

Council engages local Aboriginal Elders and specialists to conduct Smoking Ceremonies on a regular basis.

If you are planning to have a Smoking Ceremony conducted at your event you will need to plan ahead. It is considered disrespectful to ask a local Aboriginal Elder / specialist at short notice. There is a lot of preparation required to conduct a Smoking Ceremony and it should be treated with respect.

Fee for service

Aboriginal knowledge is complex, specialised and owned by Aboriginal people. As in Western culture, specialised knowledge is not something that is usually given away for free.

Aboriginal people, groups and/or Aboriginal Organisations that provide a cultural service i.e. Smoking Ceremony and/or perform a traditional dance, give a speech or traditional welcome, provide artwork or participate in a project are entitled to be paid for their time and expertise.

In providing cultural services such as Welcome to Country, artistic performances and ceremonies, Aboriginal people are using their intellectual property. Appropriate remuneration should be discussed and arranged prior to their engagement.

The fee for service can vary, so consultation and negotiation must be conducted and agreed upon before the event. It is suggested that a confirmation letter be created which should include the date of the event, the performance time, the venue location and the agreed service fee. Include a program and list of VIP guests and performances, as this will assist the performer in preparing speech notes. A suggested template ‘Confirmation Letter’ can be found at attachment A.
OWNERSHIP, COPYRIGHT, CULTURAL AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

In the past, non-Aboriginal people have appropriated Aboriginal stories, language, songs, dance and knowledge.

Just as with any other artist, Aboriginal People should be recognised as the owners of the knowledge. An acknowledgement statement on or near the cultural item should always be present, as it is acknowledging the performance for example, after an event.

Any access to and use of Aboriginal cultural information requires permission from relevant individuals or organisations.

Council should seek written permission and should reach formal agreement with the owner/s of knowledge before commencing a project that uses it. Copyright and moral rights are complex issues and not always clear in relation to Aboriginal culture.

Council and Aboriginal individuals should seek specific legal advice when these issues arise. The Arts Law Centre of Australia can provide further advice on these issues (www.artslaw.com.au).

Media Release:

Organisers must ensure that the representative’s full name, title and group (clan) is acknowledged.

Note: Some Aboriginal Individuals and Torres Straits Islander’s do not like their photos taken. Approval for public use must be gained before publication.

Consultation with Aboriginal people:

Consultation with Aboriginal people is an important component of working with the local community. Observing appropriate protocols when working with Aboriginal people and communities is critical to establishing positive and respectful relationships.

Council has developed a fact sheet that provides tips and resources to assist with consulting and communicating with Aboriginal community members. This fact sheet can be found at Attachment B or on Council’s website: www.liverpool.nsw.gov.au.
FLAG FLYING PROTOCOL

The Australian National Flag should always take precedence. It should be flown on the far left of the person/s facing the flags.

After the Australian National Flag, the order of precedence of flags is:
National flag of other nations state and territory flags other Australian flags prescribed by the Flags Act 1953 (including Indigenous flags) ensigns and pennants.

Always make sure that Indigenous flags are reproduced, hung and depicted in the correct way and are used for business relating to Indigenous communities. The same applies to the Torres Strait Islander Flag.

Permission needs to be sought if either Indigenous flag is being reproduced for commercial use. Further Information is available from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, website: www.itsanhonour.gov.au

Council proudly flies the Australian Aboriginal Flag at most of our facilities.

Indigenous Flags
The Aboriginal Flag and the Torres Strait Islander Flag were proclaimed as flags of Australia under section 5 of the Flags Act 1953 in July 1995.

The Aboriginal flag
This is now well recognised as the flag of Aboriginal people. The black top half of the flag symbolises the Aboriginal people. The Red bottom half, represents the earth and the yellow circle in the centre represents the sun. Mr Harold Thomas, an Aboriginal Elder, holds the copyright for the flag. The Australian Aboriginal Flag was proclaimed on 14 July 1995. Permission is not required to fly the Australian Aboriginal Flag.

Torres Strait Island Flag
This flag has three horizontal panels; the top and bottom are green and the middle one is blue. The panels are divided by thin black lines. The green represents the land, the blue represents the sea, and the black represents the Torres Strait Islander people. In the centre is a white dari (dancer’s headdress), which is a symbol of the Torres Strait Islander people. Underneath the dari is a white five-pointed star. This represents the island groups in the Torres Strait and the white represents peace. Bernard Namok of Thursday Island created this flag.

Flying Indigenous Flags
The Australian Aboriginal Flag is displayed at Aboriginal centers and is well recognised as the flag of Aboriginal peoples of Australia.

The State Government encourages all agencies to fly the Aboriginal flag during NAIDOC Week held in July each year and during National Reconciliation Week from 26 May – 3 June each year. There may also be other occasions and events for which it is appropriate to fly the Australian Aboriginal Flag. If you require clarification, contact Council.
SIGNIFICANT CALENDAR EVENTS

National Reconciliation Week (26 May – 3 June)

National Reconciliation Week offers people across Australia the opportunity to focus on reconciliation, to hear about the culture and history of Australia’s Indigenous people, and to explore new and better ways of meeting challenges in Indigenous communities.

National Reconciliation Week is a time to renew commitment to reconciliation and to think about how to help turn around the continuing disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

National Sorry Day

National Sorry Day is an annual event that has been held in Australia on 26 May, since 1998, to remember and commemorate the mistreatment of the continent’s indigenous population. During the 20th century, the Australian government’s policies resulted in what is known as a Stolen Generation - Aboriginal children separated, often forcibly, from their families in the interest of turning them into white Australians.

The date of 26 May carries great significance for the Stolen Generations, as well as for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and non-indigenous Australians. On 26 May 1997, the “Bringing Them Home” report was tabled in Parliament on the 3 June, the anniversary of the High Court decision in the Eddie Mabo land rights case of 1992. For more information go to www.reconciliation.org.au.

NAIDOC Week (in July)

NAIDOC celebrations are held around Australia in the first full week in July to celebrate the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. NAIDOC originally stood for ‘National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee’. This committee was once responsible for organising national activities during NAIDOC Week (see History of NAIDOC), and its acronym has become the name of the week itself. For more information go to www.naidoc.org.au. NAIDOC week is celebrated not just in the Indigenous community, but also in increasing numbers of government agencies, schools, local councils and workplaces. www.tsra.gov.au/the-torres-strait/regional-events-calendar.

Coming of the Light Festival

The start of the week (1 July) is the Coming of the Light Festival, a significant day for many of the predominantly Christian Torres Strait Islanders, as it marks the day that the London Missionary Society first arrived in the Torres Strait.
Other significant dates include:

**26 JANUARY**  
Australia Day/ Survival Day (Yabun Festival)

**21 MARCH**  
Harmony Day (Elimination of Racial Discrimination Day)

**1 TO 10 APRIL**  
NSW Seniors Festival

**8 APRIL**  
NSW Youth Week

**4 AUGUST**  
National Aboriginal and Islander Children’s Day

**9 AUGUST**  
International Day of the World’s Indigenous People

**OCTOBER LONG WEEKEND**  
NSW Annual Aboriginal Rugby League Knockout

**10 DECEMBER**  
Human Rights Day.

**31 DECEMBER**  
New Years Eve (NYE)

Check Council’s website for other Civic functions including Citizenship Ceremonies and Order of Liverpool Awards. For further information on Council’s “What On” visit www.liverpool.nsw.gov.au/whats-on

Relevant Government Policies

Department of Premier and Cabinet - Aboriginal Cultural Protocols and Practices Policy:  

Relevant Government Organisations

NSW Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA) -  
www.daa.nsw.gov.au

NSW Reconciliation Council (NSWRC) -  
www.daa.nsw.gov.au/about/nswrecon

Department of Immigration and Citizenship -  
www.immi.gov.au


References:

1. NSW Aboriginal Cultural Protocols and Practices Policy  

2. Aboriginal protocols Department of Local Government  
www.dpc.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0016/781/Indigenous...
APPENDIX A

Welcome to Country Performance Letter Template

Add Name
Contact Details

Dear (add name)

RE: CONFIRMATION OF PERFORMANCE AT …………………………(name of event).

Thank you for agreeing to do a Welcome to Country at ……………………………

Listed below are the details for your performance:

Date: ⎮####
Event Time: ⎮####
Performance time: ⎮####
Contribution: Example: $100

Venue:

Transport / Parking:

Media Equipment: Video recording and photos will be taken of the event (Add).

Please find attached a copy of the programme for your convenience.(add copy)

I can be contacted on ……… if you require further otherwise I look forward to seeing you at the event.

Yours faithfully,

YOUR NAME
Consulting with the local Aboriginal Community

Consultation with Aboriginal people is an important component of working with the local community. Observing appropriate protocols when working with Aboriginal people and communities is critical to establishing positive and respectful relationships. This fact sheet provides staff with tips and resources to assist with consulting and communicating with Aboriginal community members.

About Aboriginal people in Liverpool

The traditional custodians of the land in Liverpool are the Cabrogal Clan of the Darug Nation. It is also acknowledged that the land was accessed by peoples of the Tharawal and Gandangara Nations. There are many sites across Liverpool today, such as the Georges River, which are recognised as sites of Aboriginal historical significance.

Map of Western Sydney Local Aboriginal Land Councils
Source: Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council

In 2011, 2,677 people in Liverpool identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, making up 1.5 per cent of the population. The proportion is slightly higher than Greater Sydney (1.2%). Most of Liverpool lies within Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council boundaries, with some parts in the south within Tharawal Local Aboriginal Land Council.

These days the local Aboriginal community is made up of different groups and clans from across Australia. Many Aboriginal people can be easily approached when it comes to Aboriginal cultural matters.

Consulting Aboriginal Communities

Community consultation encompasses the ways we interact with the community and the processes and practices we use to listen to the community about their concerns and aspirations. Consulting with Aboriginal communities is important as it ensures the community is aware of Council policies and activities, and that they support these policies and activities.

Consultation with the Aboriginal community should be seen as a two-way process, with both parties learning together and from each other. Consultations should occur regularly throughout a project, particularly during the decision making process. This requires openness about how, why and when the community will be consulted and how much influence they will have over the decisions being made.

If you intend to consult with a particular Aboriginal group, it is useful to do some initial research and to invite Aboriginal leaders relevant to your consultation. For example, if you are consulting with the community about a playground upgrade, you should invite the Local Aboriginal Land Council and other Aboriginal Groups to participate.

Tips for effective consultation include:
- Seeking advice from Council’s Community Development Worker (ATSI)
- Do your research about the community
- Be respectful and use appropriate language
- Work with local Aboriginal organisations
- Build rapport with the community
- Foster and encourage participation
- Provide feedback to the group so they know their input had meaning
- Provide the group with the outcome
Local Aboriginal organisations and groups

Council’s Aboriginal Consultative Committee
Contact: Community Development Worker (ATSI)
Phone: 9821 7758

Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council
103 Moore Street, Liverpool
Phone: 9602 5280
Website: www.glalc.org.au
Gandangara also provides Health and Transports to the community.

Tharawal Local Aboriginal Land Council
220 West Parade, Couridjah
Phone: 4681 0059
Website: www.tharawal.com.au

KARI Aboriginal Resources Inc
Level 3, 131-135 George Street, Liverpool
Phone: 8782 0300
Website: www.kari.com.au

Aboriginal Community Health Services
Woodward Crescent, Miller
Phone: 9607 8112

Aboriginal Day Care (Elders group)
596 Hoxton Park Rd, Hoxton Park
Phone: 9827 2234

Tharawal Aboriginal Corporation (Medical Centre)
187 Riverside Drive, Airds
Phone: 4682 4837
Website: www.tacams.com.au

Useful resources

Liverpool City Council has an Aboriginal Consultative Committee made up of local Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal residents who are interested in Aboriginal affairs within the area. Staff are encouraged to consult with the committee in relation to their projects and initiatives. Contact the Community Development Worker (ATSI) on 9821 7758.

NSW Families and Community Services 2009, Working with Aboriginal People and Communities, A Practice Resource.


Community Cultural Development NSW 2003, Respect, Acknowledge, Listen: Practical protocols for working with the Indigenous Community of Western Sydney.

Significant Dates

Keep the below dates in mind when you plan to consult with the Aboriginal community to avoid clashes with significant events. Alternatively, there may be some event dates which provide opportunities for consultation and dialogue.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yabun (Survival Day)</td>
<td>26 January</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Sorry Day</td>
<td>26 May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconciliation Week</td>
<td>27 May – 3 June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mabo Day</td>
<td>3 June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coming of the Light Festival</td>
<td>1 July</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAIDOC Week</td>
<td>First week of July</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Aboriginal and Islander Children’s Day</td>
<td>4 August</td>
</tr>
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<td>International Day of the World’s Indigenous People</td>
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Coming of the Light Festival 1 July
NAIDOC Week First week of July
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International Day of the World’s Indigenous People 9 August

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