

Media Response

27 June 2025



Please attribute the following responses to Greater Dandenong City Council Executive Manager Strategic Growth and Advocacy, Marjan Hajjari.

1. What events (such as citizenship ceremonies, Australia Day celebrations) does your council partake in on January 26?

We hold a Citizenship Ceremony and the Greater Dandenong Civic Awards every year on Australia Day. We also hold a Run, Walk and Roll event on the nearest weekend to Australia Day.

2. Have you ever moved any of those events to a different date? Why, why not?

The Run, Walk and Roll event is always held on a weekend near the end of January, and the date varies. The Citizenship Ceremony and the Greater Dandenong Civic Awards is held on Australia Day every year.

3. If you have moved some or all those ceremonies to a different date, have you moved any or all those ceremonies back to January 26? Why, why not?

N/A

4. At what occasions, if any, do you commission a Welcome to Country? Why, why not?

At significant community, civic and cultural occasions.

5. To what extent do you believe Welcome to Country is important? Why, why not?

Welcome to Country is an important way of recognising our Traditional Custodians and their continuing connection to land, country, culture and waters. It is important that Bunworrung language and voices are heard in our community. Elders in our

community often have thoughtful, valuable contributions to make, and take leadership positions. For example, on our annual Walk Against family Violence, our Aboriginal elders often speak powerfully about the scourge of family violence and the role we can all play in eliminating gendered and family violence.

6. At what occasions, if any, does council make an acknowledgement of Country? Why, why not?

We usually Acknowledge Country at the beginning of formal meetings. It is part of our Reconciliation Action Plan that we raise awareness of our Traditional Custodians and their culture and connections to country and water.

7. Do you have an acknowledgement of Country at the beginning of Council meetings? Why, why not?

Yes. We also have a prayer. Each meeting the prayer is delivered by someone from our interfaith network, from different faiths in turn.

8. In the past, did you commission Welcome to Country more frequently? If that has changed, why?

No.

9. In the past, did you make more-frequent acknowledgements of Country? If that has changed, why?

No.

10. Do you commission a Welcome to Country at ANZAC Day ceremonies? Why, why not?

Council doesn't host Anzac Day ceremonies. We support ceremonies hosted by branches of the RSL.

11. To what extent are your council decisions and direction informed by Traditional Owners? Why, why not?

We engage with our diverse community on new policies, programs and facilities, according to our Community Engagement Policy. This also includes engaging with Traditional Custodians.

ENDS