



Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council Protocols

The information contain the protocols that should be adhered to when visiting Palm Island

Each of Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is culturally unique.

It is important to remember, however that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people live in all parts of the State and public servants should be aware of this when engaging with any Queensland Indigenous community.

The protocols outlined are considered a minimum requirement for all Queensland Government officers who work with and/or live on Palm Island, and visitors travelling to and from Palm Island, who are all encouraged to learn more about our culture and history by actively interacting with community members.

Acknowledging the uniqueness of a community and endeavouring to understand its history and culture will assist in building meaningful and respectful relationships.

Welcome to Country and Acknowledgment of Traditional Owners / Custodians and Elders

The traditional practice of acknowledging Traditional Owners / Custodians and seeking permission to enter the land and sea has always been in place in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander societies.

Traditional Owners / Custodians = Manbarra people – (Mun-burra) & Bwngcolman people

Language/s- English is predominantly spoken on Palm Island.

It is acknowledged that a number of residents speak the language of their ancestors who were from a diverse range of tribes across Queensland.

Palm Island Sorry Business protocols

No business is to be conducted on Palm Island during Sorry Business.

Essential services such as policing, child safety, health, education and justice still continue throughout this period.

Alcohol restrictions

It would be disrespectful for public servants to take alcohol into communities where there are alcohol restrictions.

Restricted Area

The maximum amount of alcohol a person can have in Palm Island Shire is limited to 11.25 litres (1 carton of 30 x 375ml cans) of light or mid strength beer.

This amount is per person travelling on foot; or per vehicle, boat or aircraft regardless of the number of people in it.

It is an offence to drink alcohol in a public place. You can find the latest information on community alcohol limits by visiting www.olgr.qld.gov.au or call 13 QGOV (13 74 68).

Understanding community structures

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities generally feature an extended kinship system that is traditionally interconnected with the land, sea and waterways. An awareness and understanding of the diversity within different language and kinship groups in the community is vital to the development of strong working and living relationships.

Communities may comprise of people with diverse connections to the land and surrounding waters. Therefore, it is important when acknowledging Traditional Owners / Custodians to know who are the Traditional Owners / Custodians of the land and/or surrounding waters on which you are meeting.

Be aware that there may be conflict in the community as to Traditional/Custodial ownership of the land and/or waterways.

It is important to gain an understanding of the community social structure.

Community expectations of you

The community expects you to conduct yourself in a professional and culturally appropriate manner. This includes speaking, dressing and conducting yourself in keeping with your role. You need to be aware of community values and beliefs including respect, listening, and sensitivity and sharing. Community members will expect you to know the background and current issues that will impact on the business you are there for, so prepare yourself for any community meeting. The community may also expect you to answer questions about other government agencies' (including Local and Australian Governments) activities and policies. Always undertake to follow up on anything you are unaware of and provide timely feedback to those who requested the information. This could include providing a name and contact number for community members to call, or arranging for someone from another agency to contact the community.

Liaising and providing advice – Communication should always be up front, honest and sincere. Take into consideration the person's or peoples' background that you are speaking with, as this could alter the way you respond to/or phrase sentences. Always speak in a logical sequence of events and repeat advice in a different manner if the client is having trouble understanding.

Non-verbal communication – Be aware that unspoken messages may have an impact on communication. Reading between the lines is important and not difficult to learn, but it does take time.

Patience – Whilst working with some communities, you may not achieve the result you wanted in the time allocated. Be prepared for business to take time. The people you are meeting with may need to go away to hold discussions with other community members. You may have to wait until your next meeting to hear about the community's decision.

Respect – In all communications treat Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with dignity and respect. Get to know community members, in particular the Elders, and understand and honour their protocols, expectations and unique qualities without stereotyping.

Safety – Always take your personal safety and security as seriously as you would anywhere else. Always let other people know where you are going and when you are planning to return.

Sharing – Be prepared to spend time sharing personal background information about yourself and the purpose of your visit.

Silence – The use of silence should not be misunderstood. It may mean that people do not want to express an opinion at that point in time, or that they are listening and reflecting on what has been said. It is important that this silence is respected and not interrupted unnecessarily.

Taking photographs – Be courteous and always ask people if it is appropriate to take their photograph. Taking photographs of children will require the permission of their parents or guardians. Avoid walking around the community taking random photographs. Be aware of any sacred sites around the community that will be off limits to you. Taking photographs of these sites without permission is strictly forbidden. If you are considering using your photograph/s for publicity purposes you must also obtain written permission from the subjects.

What to wear – The community may have certain expectations about the way you should dress. As a government representative, they may reasonably expect you to dress in a way that reflects this role. The dress code is particularly important when meeting older members of the community and members of the opposite sex.

Acceptable

- Dresses and skirts below the knee
- Dresses, blouses and tops with sleeves to the elbow (with a modest neckline)
- Ladies three quarter length trousers or full length trousers
- Polo Shirts (men's and women's); men's business shirts

Unacceptable

- Short skirts and shorts (above the knee)
- Ladies sleeveless and/or low cut tops
- Tight fitting or very casual jeans; thongs
- Any clothing that displays explicit graphics or writing

Please note: Dress standards may differ in communities.