

Speech by Mayor Logan K Howlett, JP

‘Purple Bench’ Unveiling

Yangebup Family Centre

25 November 2021

Kaya, Wonju. Hello and Welcome to today’s unveiling of a ‘purple bench’ at the Yangebup Family Centre.

However, it is much more than a purple bench – it is symbolic of the world wide Domestic and Family Violence awareness movement and unites us all with the challenge of changing public perception of violence against women and children.

Importantly, it requires an on-going commitment from all levels of government, the business and ‘not-for-profit’ sectors and the community at large; indeed each and every one of us.

The Purple Bench acts as a stark reminder that as a society we can make a difference, with both little and large steps.

Purple was chosen due to its worldwide association with the Domestic Violence Awareness movement much like the blue tree is used to help promote awareness of mental health across our communities.

I acknowledge the Whadjup people of the Nyungar Nation the traditional custodians of the land on which we are gathered and pay respect to their Elders past, present & emerging and extend that respect to Indigenous Australians who are with us today.

I acknowledge:

- My wife Patricia;
- Deputy Mayor Tom Widenbar;
- Samantha Williams, Centre Manager, Yangebup Family Centre and the staff and volunteers who make this Centre home away from home for many people in more ways than one;
- Other invited guests;
- Ladies and gentlemen, one and all.

Many of us are wearing Purple today to honour the International Elimination of Violence against Women Day or Orange as part of the 16 Days in WA initiative.

By way of background, in Nova Scotia, Canada purple benches are located in public parks to honour the memory of women murdered by their partners and to provide help numbers for people experiencing Domestic and Family Violence.

They are known as Barb's Benches and were launched in 2015 to mark the 25-year anniversary of the murder of Barb Baillie by her husband.

The first Purple Bench in Western Australia was unveiled in May 2018 in Fremantle, by the Honourable Simone McGurk, Minister for Child Protection; Women's Interests; Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence; Community Services and Dr Brad Pettit, then Mayor of Fremantle, with the support of the Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services WA.

The presence of the Purple Bench helps to raise public awareness; provide the opportunity for this important issue to remain visible as well as providing a physical place to reflect about the important work achieved to date and how we can work throughout the next generations to bring an end to domestic and family violence.

On 6 June 2018 a Purple Bench honouring victims of domestic homicide in Western Australia was dedicated at the City of Cockburn's civic square.

As we know, family and domestic violence involves people of all ages and backgrounds, and has a flow on effect to the wider family, to children and the local community.

The purple bench is also a reminder to all for the continuing need to provide free and accessible support services to those in our community who need it.

Ladies and gentlemen, in closing, I acknowledge and thank Samantha and the team of staff and volunteers at the Centre for this important initiative and for the continuing value they add to the growth and resilience of our community – you are all champions. Thank you.