

Speech by Mayor Logan K Howlett, JP
Blue Growth Conference
Esplanade Hotel, Fremantle
22 February 2024

Kaya and thank you Deputy Mayor Jenny Archibald, City of Fremantle and another local government colleague in Cr Andrew Sullivan, City of Fremantle, Members of Parliament here today, and the Director General, Heather Bayford, Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD), ladies and gentlemen, one and all.

I'm delighted to be here today on Whadjuk Boodja and I acknowledge the Nyungar people of Beeliar and Walyalup.

On behalf of the City of Cockburn I acknowledge their continuing connection to land, waters and culture and pay my respects to Elders, past and present.

The City of Cockburn is deeply connected to the ocean, or Derbal Nara.

It is this connection that has helped Cockburn secure thousands of jobs, skills and opportunities and become a leader in the blue economy.

Cockburn economy

We're home to five of Western Australia's most successful commercial and industrial hubs including the Australian Maritime Complex and Latitude 32.

Cockburn is an epicentre of innovation and opportunity for industry and a major contributor to economic activity and employment in Western Australia.

Our economy supports over 52,000 local jobs, providing for, on average, almost 30 per cent of the employment opportunities for Perth's south-west region.

Blue economy and City of Cockburn

The United Nations describes the Blue Economy as a long-term strategy to support sustainable economic growth through ocean-related sectors and activities while improving human wellbeing and social equity and preserving the environment.

The City of Cockburn is taking a leadership role in economic development and building our blue economy.

We recognise the potential of the blue economy and it's one of four key outcome areas within our Economic Development Framework.

The blue economy is a natural fit for Cockburn. Much of the industry is already here, including fisheries, tourism, defence, and shipbuilding.

With an estimated 45 billion dollars' worth of shipbuilding orders in the pipeline, Cockburn is a leader in Western Australia's defence and maritime industry.

Cockburn is also the centre of a 15 billion-dollar cluster of excellence in marine manufacturing and technology development alongside other industries supported along the Indian Ocean coastline including:

- tourism
- recreation
- fishing
- research and development,
- advanced manufacturing,
- energy, and
- coastal preservation.

We believe a thriving blue economy will attract further public and private investment, resulting in the proliferation of support industries, training options and quality employment opportunities to futureproof our local economy.

By harnessing the passion of our world-leading marine industries, connecting them with researchers and innovators, developing training for our young people for future jobs and building the necessary infrastructure to sustain growth, Cockburn can become an epicentre of the blue economy.

Blue Economy Advisory Group

To assist council in guiding our path forward we have appointed a Blue Economy Advisory Group.

The group consists of 25 industry members focused on marine technologies and business solutions.

It includes representatives from BAE Systems, Cvmec, Luerssen and Austal... the Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation... and the Office of Defence and Industry Support to name a few.

We're grateful to have this expertise and commitment to help us realise our vision for Cockburn.

Blue Gravity Program Partnership

We joined the Blue Gravity Program in 2022 and we're proud to be working alongside For Blue and industry partners.

It's by working together we can achieve excellence.

At this point, I acknowledge Ms Victoria Green and Lisa Kniebe who have driven the City's economic activities along with their colleges.

Business support program

Eight of our businesses have progressed through the venture diagnosis stage of the Blue Gravity Program in 2023 and four have received further funding to enter into the 'venture support' part of the program.

I'd like to acknowledge and congratulate Hyperion Systems, Kelp Island, Over 3 Oceans Pty Ltd and Reef Craft on their entrepreneurial endeavours and innovations. You'll hear more about Hyperion Systems later today.

Closing

In closing I invite you all to leverage the opportunities we are facilitating in the City of Cockburn through these blue economy initiatives, and I express my optimism and hope for the outcomes of today's conference.

The future is blue, thank you.