

Speech by His Worship the Mayor Logan K. Howlett, JP

Defence Supplier Yarn – City of Cockburn

Wednesday, 12 February 2025

Thank you Christine Ross (MC)

Kaya, Wonju Wonju. (Hello and Welcome).

Welcome to the Defence Supplier Yarn where we have come together today to shape a future of opportunity, collaboration, and shared success.

I acknowledge and thank Reverend Mitchell Garlett for his Welcome to Country and the earlier smoking ceremony and for sharing the importance of caring for country in an ever-changing world.

It is a privilege to stand on this land with you and reflect on its rich history – one that spans tens of thousands of years.

On 13 February 2008 the Australian Parliament made a formal apology to members of the Stolen Generations.

On behalf of the City of Cockburn I also acknowledge the anniversary of the 'Apology' in recognition of First Nations Australians – that day being tomorrow.

I acknowledge the Whadjuk People of the Nyungar Nation, the traditional Custodians of the land on which we have gathered and I pay my respects to their Elders past and present and I extend that respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with us today.

I acknowledge:

- Deputy Mayor Chontelle Stone;
- Mr Daniel Simms, Chief Executive Officer, City of Cockburn and other members of staff;

- Our event partners: the Waalitj [Wahlitch] Hub and Henderson Alliance; and
- Our Event Sponsors Babcock and Adisyn;
- Our guest speakers today:

Ladies and gentlemen, one and all.

Your collaboration and commitment have brought us here today to explore opportunities in the defence industry that foster meaningful partnerships and growth.

Today's gathering is about more than connecting businesses.

It's about creating opportunities that empower First Nations people, contributing to reconciliation and economic self-determination.

With the Defence sector gaining prominence through investments by Huntington Babcock Industries (HBI) and the AUKUS partnership, there is growing demand for resources, services, and support in this area.

In response, the City is leveraging this opportunity to connect First Nation businesses with key players in the Defence sector.

This event aims to enhance the participation of First Nation businesses in the Defence industry while increasing your awareness of available support services.

By fostering these connections, the initiative seeks to close the gap and create opportunities, contributing to reconciliation and economic empowerment for First Nations people.

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The City of Cockburn is proud to be at the forefront of innovation in local government.

Traditionally Local Governments are seen as regulators and service providers, but we are expanding our role by actively fostering economic development.

Cockburn's unique location within the Western Trade Coast positions us as a hub for defence, maritime, and industrial innovation.

At the heart of this is the Australian Marine Complex — 874 hectares of world-class shipbuilding and marine engineering facilities and businesses supporting job creation and connecting local businesses to global opportunities.

The defence sector's growing prominence opens the door to many new possibilities, however it is essential that these opportunities benefit all members of our community, especially First Nations businesses and entrepreneurs.

That is why events like the Defence Supplier Yarn are so critical.

Through this initiative, we aim to connect First Nations businesses with key players in the defence sector, raising awareness of the resources and support available.

The Waalitj [Wahlitch] Hub, for example, provides invaluable training and employment pathways, while Henderson Alliance fosters growth for small and medium enterprises in defence supply chains.

Together, we can ensure that these opportunities empower Aboriginal people and their businesses to thrive.

As we look to the future, the City remains committed to reconciliation and inclusivity.

Through our Reconciliation Action Plan, we work to build understanding, respect, and trust—cornerstones of a united community.

We believe that empowering First Nations people through opportunity is not only a pathway to economic success but also a step toward a more equitable Australia.

I want to thank you all for your participation today.

The conversations and connections formed here have the potential to drive real change.

On behalf of the City of Cockburn, I wish you all a productive and inspiring event.

As I said earlier, together, let's shape a future of opportunity, collaboration, and shared success.

Thank you.