

**Speech by Mayor Logan K. Howlett, JP
Celebrating Welcoming Week 2025 Expo
Atwell Community Centre
3 September 2025**

Good morning everyone.

It's my pleasure to welcome you to the Welcoming Week 2025 Expo, a celebration of community, connection, and belonging.

This year marks the inaugural South Metro Multicultural Network Expo, and we're proud to host it here in Cockburn — alongside our partners from the Cities of Melville and Fremantle, and Multicultural Futures.

I begin by acknowledging the Whadjuk Nyungar people of Beeliar Boodja, the Traditional Custodians of this land and I pay my respects to their Elders past and present, and I extend that respect to all First Nations people gathered here today.

I'd like to warmly acknowledge:

- Mayor Katy Mair, City of Melville;
- Kate Rowlands, Executive Director, Office of Multicultural Interests;
- Elected Members of the City of Cockburn
- Ms Liz Vuchocho, Cultural Diversity Officer, City of Cockburn and staff from the Cities of Cockburn, Fremantle and Melville;

- All the agencies representing the South Metro Multicultural Network;
- Residents from the Cities of Cockburn, Melville, and Fremantle.

Thank you all for your ongoing support and commitment to inclusion and welcoming spaces.

The theme for this year's Welcoming Week is "Belonging Starts Here", which is a powerful reminder that inclusion begins with each of us.

And there's no better place to celebrate that message than right here in Cockburn, which is the most culturally diverse local government area in the South Metropolitan region.

Our community is home to people from over 100 countries, speaking more than 80 languages.

This diversity is not only a source of pride for us, it's a strength that enriches our city's identity, resilience, and future.

Events like today's Expo help us build bridges across cultures, foster understanding, and create spaces where everyone feels safe, supported, and welcome.

The City of Cockburn is deeply committed to promoting a healthy, inclusive, and connected community.

We believe that every resident regardless of background should feel a sense of belonging and have access to the services and opportunities that help them thrive.

This commitment is reflected in our ongoing support for initiatives that celebrate cultural diversity, improve wellbeing, and strengthen community connections.

I encourage everyone to explore the stalls, engage with the activities, and connect with the many local services available.

These connections are what make our community stronger, healthier, and more united.

On behalf of the City of Cockburn, thank you for attending and contributing to this special event.

Let's continue working together to ensure that belonging truly starts here.

Thank you.