

**Speech by Mayor Logan Howlett**  
**SSI Conference - 10 March 2026**  
**Esplanade Hotel, Fremantle,**

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Good morning.

I acknowledge the Whadjuk Noongar people of Beeliar Boodja, the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we meet and I pay my respects to their Elders past and present.

I would also like to acknowledge our defence representatives, industry leaders, international delegates, and our hosts from SSI.

My name is Logan Howlett, the Mayor of the City of Cockburn, and it is my pleasure to welcome you to the SSI World Shipbuilding Conference APAC 2026 together with Daniel Simms, Chief Executive Officer and Michael Faulkner, Principal Economic Development.

We are proud to be the lunchtime sponsor of this important global gathering.

For Cockburn, the ocean is not simply part of our landscape – it is our gateway to the world and central to our economic future.

Our coast is home to a \$15 billion marine industrial ecosystem, anchored by an 874-hectare Australian Marine Complex at Henderson.

Cockburn connects Australia directly to the world's fastest growing economies across Asia, the Middle East and Africa.

The AMC is one of only two locations in Australia suitable for naval shipbuilding and is home to major global players including Austal, BAE Systems and Cvmec.

The precinct's Common User Facility continues to service major oil and gas projects, including fabrication, assembly and decommissioning works associated with the Gorgon Project.

Today, the AMC precinct is supporting three major shipbuilding pathways:

- Austal's Landing Craft Heavy program
- The proposed Mogami frigates
- And AUKUS

The latter has been supported by a \$12 billion commitment from the Federal Government.

But it should be said, our vision extends beyond defence alone.

The blue economy is about the sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth while protecting marine ecosystems.

Cockburn's ambition is to lead nationally in this space.

We are partnering with For Blue to deliver the Engineering Ocean Solutions conference, supporting innovators tackling ocean-related challenges.

We sponsor five local participants in Blue Gravity Cockburn, an incubator and accelerator for ocean-focused start-ups and scale-ups.

We have established a Blue Economy Advisory Group bringing together industry, academia and government to guide sustainable growth – this includes representation from the UWA Oceans Institute, Austal, Cvmec and Defence West.

And we are progressing the Henderson Innovation and Research Hub, a dedicated facility that supports defence, advanced manufacturing and maritime commercialisation.

Internationally, we continue to lead delegations to Vietnam and Indonesia to strengthen trade and education partnerships aligned to shipbuilding and marine capability.

Local government's role is evolving.

We are not just regulators.

We are facilitators of collaboration, connectors of supply chains and advocates for infrastructure.

Conferences like this are vital to that work.

They strengthen global partnerships, accelerate innovation and help ensure that shipbuilding programs are delivered with capability, certainty and collaboration.

I wish you a productive and successful conference.

Know that Cockburn stands ready to work with you – to build defence capability, strengthen supply chains and shape the future of shipbuilding in the region. Thank you.