

**Speech by Mayor Logan Howlett JP**  
**Cockburn Libraries 50th Anniversary - 23 March 2026**  
**Spearwood Library**

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Kaya, Wonju, Wonju – Hello and welcome.

Welcome to the Cockburn Libraries 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations.

I thank Rueben Hayden-Nelson for his thought provoking welcome to country and the sharing of the Nyungar language, culture and dream time stories that continue to inform our communities of the customs and practices that have endured in Aboriginal and Torres Strait peoples for tens of thousands of years.

I acknowledge the Whadjup people of the Nyungar Nation the traditional custodians of the land on which we gather today, and I pay my respects to their Elders past and present.

And I extend that respect to First Nations people who are with us today.

I also acknowledge:

- The Honourable John Day AM, Chair of Library Board of WA;
- Ms Susan McEwan, Acting State Librarian;
- Ms Janet Deegan and Mr Steve McQuade, State Library of WA;
- Members of the Carcione family:
  - Rob Carcione;
  - Linda Perdija;
  - Ron Carcione;
  - My wife Patricia;
- Deputy Mayor Phoebe Corke;
- Councillor Carol Zhang;
- Councillor Hilda Shroy;
- City of Cockburn CEO; Mr Daniel Simms;
- Members of the Executive;
- Former City Librarian: Duncan Furphy and Linda Seymour and other former library staff;
- Janette Wright, Service Manager for Library, Place and Culture, City of Cockburn, Cockburn Libraries staff and volunteers;
- Ladies and Gentlemen.

What a wonderful milestone to be celebrating.

Fifty years ago today – on 23 March 1976 – Spearwood Library opened its doors for the very first time.

At that stage, it was Cockburn's one and only public library.

I don't think anyone could have imagined just how many lives would pass through those doors over the next five decades.

From the very beginning, this library was ahead of its time and forward-looking.

It opened as one of Western Australia's first automated public libraries, using a computerised lending system, which was cutting-edge technology for 1976.

Over the years, as our community has grown, so too has our library service.

Coolbellup Library opened in 1990.

Success Library followed in 2000 as a shop front in the Cockburn Gateway Shopping Centre and later moved into its purpose-built home in 2014.

In 2002, John (Giovanni) Carcione gifted the City a 233 square metre extension to Spearwood Library to provide long-term benefit for young people in the Spearwood area.

Opened in 2005 by the then mayor, Stephen Lee and John's widow, Mrs Maria Carcione, it contains the Children's and Young Adults collections and activities.

John's family members, Rob Carcione, Ron Carcione and Linda Perdija are here with us today and we want to express our gratitude to the family for their father's gift to the City which has enabled many years of children's activities in the John Carcione Wing.

Further renovations in 2018 provided upgraded furniture and fittings to suit the many different activities now provided at Spearwood Library.

While the buildings have changed and the technology has advanced, the heart of this place has stayed the same.

Libraries are about people.

They're about the child who comes in for Storytime and discovers a love of books.

They're about students working on assignments after school.

They're about adults learning new digital skills, researching their family history, joining a book club, playing mahjong, improving their English, or simply finding a quiet place to sit and read.

And one of the loveliest things about a 50-year milestone is knowing that we've seen generations grow up here.

Our long-serving staff often talk about children who used to visit with their parents and who now return years later with children of their own.

That's something very special.

It speaks to trust.

It speaks to belonging.

And it speaks to the role libraries play as safe, welcoming spaces in our community.

In a world that has changed dramatically since 1976 – from card catalogues to eBooks, from cassette tapes to streaming – our libraries have continued to adapt.

Today, residents can access digital collections from home, apply for jobs or visas online, and build essential digital skills with support from our team.

And yet, despite all that change, the printed book is still thriving.

People still value the experience of walking through the doors, browsing the shelves, and having a conversation with a friendly librarian.

As our lives become more digitally focused, places that bring us together in person matter more than ever.

Libraries are one of those places.

I would like to acknowledge the strong partnership between the City of Cockburn and the Library Board of Western Australia.

That partnership has helped ensure our libraries remain innovative, responsive and connected to the broader library network across the State.

Most importantly, I want to thank our dedicated library staff past and present.

Many have served this community for decades.

Their passion, knowledge and care are the reason these spaces continue to thrive.

And of course, thank you to our community.

A library only flourishes when it is used, loved and supported, and Spearwood Library is clearly all three.

If the first 50 years are anything to go by, the next 50 look very bright indeed.

Thank you for being here to celebrate this golden jubilee.

I encourage you to enjoy the displays, the activities, and the wonderful program of events planned this week.

And now, I think it's time we cut the cake. Fifty years deserves a very generous slice.

Thank you.