

Speech by Mayor Logan K Howlett, JP
**City of Cockburn Australia Day Coogee Beach Festival, Coogee
Beach Reserve**
Monday 26 January, 2026

Kaya, Wanju Wonju Beelias Boodjar (Hello, Welcome to the land of the Beelias people) and to the City of Cockburn's Australia Day Coogee Beach Festival.

On behalf of Council, I thank Marie Taylor for the 'Welcome to Country' and her sharing of aspects of the Nyungar culture that reflect the importance of the land in which we live and the need to protect and promote the natural beauty of Beelias Boodjar (the land of the Beelias People).

I acknowledge the Whadjuk People of the Nyungar Nation as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we are gathered today and I pay respect to their Elders both past and present and I extend that respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are with us today.

I welcome our special guests today including:

- my wife Patricia;
- Elected Members of the City;
- Mrs Marie Taylor, Nyungar Elder who presented today's 'Welcome to Country';
- Auspire Australia Day Ambassador Jimmy Murphy representing the Australia Day Council;
- The City of Cockburn Events Team;
The performers here today to entertain and engage you;
- The Friends of the Community who provided volunteering services throughout the year raising funds to 'give back' to the community;
- Members of the Cockburn State Emergency Services who are assisting today in car parking arrangements;
- Members of the South Coogee Bush Fire Brigade here today providing advice on how to protect your home from bush fire attack;
Other volunteers here today that pursue their passions throughout the year;
- Ladies and gentlemen, girls and boys.

Australia Day is a day that reminds us of the common bond we share as Australians, connected by a desire for unity, and the promise of safety, stability and prosperity. As Australians, there is much of which we can be proud - our democracy, our values, the strength, diversity and generosity of our people and our beautiful natural environment.

However, I also acknowledge that many people have mixed feelings about celebrating this day. January 26th has different meanings for people – for some, particularly our Aboriginal community, it is a painful reminder of the day that European people arrived on this land and began the process of colonization and the resulting negative impact on First Nation culture, language, family and community.

The National Australia Day Council has stated that our national day can be a time where we ‘celebrate and mourn at the same time and we can honour all that is great about Australia and being Australian, remember the sufferings and our shortcomings; and commit to build a more cohesive and inclusive nation’.

In our Reconciliation Action Plan, the City’s vision is to create an inclusive community with strong relationships across cultures based on mutual respect and understanding.

Today is an ideal time for everyone to join the conversation and reflect on our shared histories, contributions and achievements as a tolerant and progressive society.

We are a progressive community that is taking steps to reconcile our past and to embrace our future for the benefit of all Australians. We have come a long way, and although there is still much to be done, we have demonstrated an ongoing commitment to moving forward and creating a place that people are proud to call home.

Today I will welcome 128 new citizens to our City who will make their pledge to Australia and its people and contribute to the diverse Cockburn community that is made up of people from more than 120 countries across the world.

Today’s event continues to be a day to reflect on our achievements and recommit to making this country a great place to live for many generations to come.

On behalf of the City of Cockburn I wish you a wonderful day; and consider how lucky we all are to call ourselves Australians?

Happy Australia Day!

Thank you.