



# Media Release

24 March 2026

## **Sensory toolkits strike a chord as City improves accessibility at large events for people with sensory needs**

Community take-up of a toolkit designed to increase comfort for people with sensory needs to help them enjoy large City of Cockburn events has been a resounding success.

Twenty Travelling Sensory Bags were made available as part of a trial at the City's Cockburn Sun Sets community concert, headlined in February 2026 by Perth rockers Birds Of Tokyo.

In a WA-first, the bags were on constant loan for two-hour blocks at the five-hour concert. They were available to people who wanted to enjoy the large-scale event but needed support to regulate their senses in a highly stimulating environment with loud noise and lots of activities.

The bags contain a variety of tools, including headphones, fidget toys and sunglasses, with parents and carers of children with neurodiverse needs full of praise for the initiative.

The trial is the brainchild of City of Cockburn Events Coordinator Emma Howe, and the free-to-hire toolkits will be available at the City's large events throughout 2026-27.

Motivated by personal experience following her daughter's traumatic brain injury in 2022, Ms Howe began exploring practical ways to make large-scale events more accessible for people with sensitivity to stimulating environments.

"Working in the events industry meant my kids were often dragged along to events their whole lives, particularly live gigs," Ms Howe said.

"That all changed for Bella after she sustained a severe traumatic brain injury in 2022.

"When she returned home from hospital months later, I became acutely aware of how difficult and overstimulating events could be, particularly for neurodivergent people and those with sensory processing challenges.

"Both as a mum and as an event manager, it became very clear to me the lack of readily available, practical tools to help people regulate in large-scale, high-stimulus event environments. That gap is what sparked the initial concept.

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“I’m very motivated to help the many people in our community with sensory processing challenges who want to attend City events but feel they will be too overwhelmed to participate comfortably. And so they stay home instead.

“It’s about including as many people as we can and making access to the City’s events a real possibility for everyone.

“As far as we are aware, this is the first initiative of its kind specifically designed for use at large-scale events in WA and possibly Australia wide.”

Ms Howe worked with the Youth Disability Advocacy Network to develop the bags to help reduce the feeling of overwhelm in the busy, loud, stimulating environments.

The City invested \$4,900 to launch the trial including extensive community consultation and co-design, procurement of sensory tools and materials, and preparation of the bags for hire.

The bags are part of a suite of accessibility options made available at a variety of Cockburn LIVE events in 2025-26.

Other initiatives included:

- Auslan interpreted performances
- Convergence Container: Sensory-Sports Hub, a thoughtfully designed, portable space offering a safe, calming, and engaging environment for individuals who may become overwhelmed in the busy festival environment
- Guided tactile tours for people who are blind or have low vision, allowing participants to explore elements of performances through touch prior to the show
- Food concierge service to assist people with dietary requirements or accessibility needs to navigate food vendors
- Dedicated rideshare and drop-off zones to make arrival and departure easier for people with mobility or accessibility requirements
- Connected accessible pathways/wheelchair matting
- Accessible parking, drop-off bays and amenities throughout the event location



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- Beach wheelchair hire for beach events
- Hidden Disabilities Sunflower lanyards available to discreetly signal a patron may need additional support from staff or volunteers.

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