

# Soundings

Whadjuk Nyungar Boodjar



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The City of Cockburn acknowledges we are on the Boodjar (country) of the Whadjuk Nyungar people.

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Craig Wilson,  
Cockburn Coastcare.

## Stay Connected



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The distribution of this edition is 2-6 May 2026. Dates may change due to State and Federal Government regulations or for reasons unknown at the time of printing.



## Message from the Mayor

**As the weather takes a cooler turn, I hope you take the opportunity to make yourself a warm cup of tea and curl up with this edition of Soundings.**

Inside the May issue, read how the City has been readying our 27 active sports fields for winter sports (page 5), learn about the recently upgraded tennis and netball courts, and discover Beale Park upgrades that are nearing completion (page 4).

The promise of rain heralds the start of our planting season, which puts 50,000 native seedlings, 1,250 street trees and 1,000 shrubs in the ground each year. Read more about our popular native plant subsidy on page 11, which is available this month for you to kickstart your own planting journey with some hardy native seedlings.

Also inside, we bust common recycling myths (page 10) – the answers may shock you!

Our volunteers are the backbone of Cockburn and resident Craig Wilson has spent hundreds of volunteer hours rehabilitating coastal vegetation. Read more about Craig and his work on page 8 as part of our Quintessentially Cockburn series.

We also speak to Aboriginal Elder Neta Knapp about her artwork 'Footprints on the Waters: Boodja to Kep – healing through spiritual connection' which now features at the City's administration building and on employee uniforms.

And finally, heed our storm preparation advice inside (page 10), to ensure you and your family remain safe this winter.

**His Worship the Mayor Logan K. Howlett, JP**

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## Elected Members



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Read more about your Elected Members:

[www.cockburn.wa.gov.au/ElectedMembers](http://www.cockburn.wa.gov.au/ElectedMembers)

# Upgraded courts and clubrooms for our community

**As we head into winter, several major recreation projects are either complete or almost complete.**

## **Beale Park redevelopment**

The new Beale Park changing rooms are on track for completion later this month, marking a major milestone in the transformation of one of the City's largest sporting reserves. Since the building reached lock-up in March, the internal fit-out has progressed steadily, and the wall linings, wet areas and services have been installed.

External cladding, floodlighting, glazing and final waterproofing are also finished. The new centrally located facility boasts six accessible unisex changing rooms, function spaces and other public amenities. The broader redevelopment – including seven pitches, parking, playground and landscaping – remains on schedule for completion in December.

The \$15.18 million project has been assisted by a \$1 million contribution from the WA Government's PlayOn WA program, an exciting initiative to deliver 2,030 community infrastructure items across WA by 2030.

## **Len Packham tennis courts**

Upgrades to the Len Packham tennis courts were completed in March, delivering modern, high-quality facilities for the community. The project included resurfaced hard courts, improved drainage and concrete base works, upgraded floodlighting, new perimeter fencing and a Venue Automated System for online bookings. Importantly, the upgrade has introduced Cockburn's first outdoor pickleball courts, expanding opportunities for one of Australia's fastest-growing sports.

## **Success netball courts upgrade**

The Success netball courts upgrade is now complete, with resurfacing and new floodlighting ready for the 2026 season. Eight new 25-metre light towers were installed, so all 20 courts can host evening games and training.

The courts were resurfaced with Rebound Synpave, a durable, high-performance surface designed for regular community use. With practical completion achieved in April, the courts will allow players to step onto safer, brighter and more consistent courts this month.

The floodlighting was supported by the Western Australian Government's Club Night Lights Program and PlayOn WA program, an exciting initiative to deliver 2,030 community infrastructure items across WA by 2030.



Image: Beale Park redevelopment, locals can now see this in real life.



# Come for the exercise, stay for the people

Visiting Cockburn ARC has become part of John and Cheryl's daily routine.

John trains regularly in the gym to help manage Charcot-Marie-Tooth disease, a neurological condition that affects the peripheral nerves and balance. Staying active helps him maintain strength and mobility so he can keep doing the things he enjoys, like helping Cheryl in the garden at home.

John said the support he receives from the ARC fitness coaches makes a real difference.

"The trainers always keep an eye out for me," he said.

The couple visit the centre most days of the week. While John works through his gym routine, Cheryl moves between the gym floor, swimming and pickleball.

They've built friendships with both staff and members, and many of those connections now



Photo:  
(L-R) John  
and Cheryl  
Van Der  
Spuy, Juan  
de Santana  
Silva.

extend beyond the ARC, from coffee at Plunge Café to movies and lunches with Cheryl's pickleball group.

For John and Cheryl, ARC offers more than great facilities. It's a community that keeps them active, social and feeling good.

[www.cockburnarc.com.au](http://www.cockburnarc.com.au)

## Getting our reserves match ready for winter

**As local footy, soccer and community sport return for winter, a huge amount of work has been happening behind the scenes to make sure our reserves are ready for play.**

Across the City's 27 active sports fields, seasonal fertiliser has been applied to strengthen turf after summer and encourage healthy growth through the cooler months. Targeted preventative treatments have also been carried out at Treeby Reserve, Anning Park, Aubin Grove Reserve and Meller Park to protect turf from fungal disease.

The annual changeover from summer to winter sport began in mid-March. This includes removing or covering cricket infrastructure and reinstating AFL and soccer goalposts at key locations including Aubin

Grove, Beeliar Oval, Beale Park, Santich Park, Atwell Reserve and Frankland Reserve.

At Botany Park and Anning Park, two new sets of senior regional AFL-standard goalposts have been installed.

Turf health has been another major focus. At Frankland and Atwell reserves, sections of grass impacted by nematodes – microscopic soil pests that damage turf roots – have been removed and replaced with hard-wearing Wintergreen Couch. At Beeliar Reserve, a compost top-dressing program has delivered strong recovery results in affected areas.

We look forward to seeing our local clubs kick off their seasons shortly.



# Walking Together: Neta Knapp's legacy of colour, culture and connection

**For respected Cockburn artist and Nyungar Elder Neta Knapp, art is more than paint on canvas.**

It is legacy, identity and a way of bringing people together.

Her artwork 'Footprints on the Waters: Boodja to Kep – healing through spiritual connection' now features in the City of Cockburn administration building and on staff uniforms, sharing a powerful story about culture, place and reconciliation.

For Neta, creating art is not something she does occasionally.

"Art is a daily practice for me," she said.

"I'm a proud Nyungar woman and through my artwork I share the history of this land and the stories passed down to me by my Elders."

Those stories carry knowledge about the land, the seasons and the environment – knowledge that sustained Aboriginal people for tens of thousands of years.

"Our Elders understood the land and how to care for it. That knowledge is still important today," Neta said.

A member of the Stolen Generations, Neta's journey to find her identity was not always easy. Separated from her family and culture as a child, she spent many years searching for where she belonged.

"For a long time, I didn't really know who I was. I was taken away from my family, from my culture and from my identity," she said.

It wasn't until adulthood that Neta began reconnecting with her heritage and discovering her voice as a Nyungar woman and artist.

"My husband showed me; he guided me to find myself."

Today she shares that understanding through her artwork and community work, helping others learn about culture, country and the importance of reconciliation.



Image: 'Footprints on the Waters: Boodja to Kep – healing through spiritual connection' by Cockburn artist and Nyungar Elder Neta Knapp.

As Australia marks National Reconciliation Week later this month (26 May-3 June), Neta said the path forward lies in walking together.

Neta believes true reconciliation can only happen when people understand the history of the land they live on.

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“You have to know the history of this land before you can share it with anybody,”  
Neta said.

“When people learn about our history and understand who Aboriginal people are, that’s when we can really move forward together.”

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Neta said understanding was especially important in diverse communities like Cockburn.

“Many people come here and build their lives, but they may not know the story of the First Peoples of this land. Reconciliation is about learning that story and understanding each other.”

Art, she believes, plays a powerful role in that process.

“When you see the colours of the land and the water, you feel something. Colour will bring us together; that’s why I use colour.”

Her paintings often reflect the waterways, landscapes and seasonal changes of Nyungar Country, using colour and pattern to tell stories of place and belonging.

“My heart paints a story into the six seasons,”  
Neta said.

“That knowledge was passed down to me by my Elders, especially my mum and the other women.”

Neta has witnessed enormous change during her lifetime. As a young girl, she remembers standing outside Government House with her grandfather.

“As a little girl, about six or seven, I remember looking through the gates of Government House,” she said.

“We weren’t allowed to touch those gates, just look through them. My grandfather picking me up and putting me on his shoulders as we had to be out of the township by a certain time.”

Today, she returns to the same place in a very different role.

“Now I go there and sit with the Governor as an adviser,” she said.

“Being able to do this and use artwork to bring people together – that fulfils my heart.”

For young Aboriginal people, she hopes her artwork carries an important message.

“Never turn away from education,” she said.

“Know who you are and be proud of your identity.”

Identity, she believes, gives young people strength and direction.

“Who you are, your identity, is what brings you forward. Understanding who you are and where you come from gives you your vision for life.”

Looking ahead, Neta hopes future generations will see this moment as a time when people chose to move forward together.

“I hope they see that change happened,” she said.

“That we walked together.”

Photo:  
Nyungar Elder  
Neta Knapp.



# ‘Coastcare Craig’ is Quintessentially Cockburn

**It took four decades for Craig Wilson to crystalise into words something he had always known: Without nature, people don’t exist.**

For the past seven years, the long-term Cockburn resident has spent hundreds of volunteer hours rehabilitating coastal vegetation as coordinator of Cockburn Coastcare.

While caring for nature is a personal crusade, Craig has brought the community along with him, recruiting thousands of fellow vollies to improve dune health at beautiful Coogee Beach.

“Last year we had 100 people each at two planting sessions, people who want to be involved in nurturing nature in their own backyard.”

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“I think it stems from a general concern about climate change and I have more and more people asking me what they can do to help,”  
Craig said.

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Photo: Craig Wilson at Coogee Beach.

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“I always say do something small but be consistent, because lots of people doing something small creates a big movement of people doing the right thing for their local environment,”

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The former Perth NRM Coastal and Marine Program Manager retired in 2019 and literally the next day rolled over his knowledge and passion into the volunteer coast-care role.

He was recognised with a Coastal Champion Special Commendation at the Western Australian Coastal Awards for Excellence in late 2025 – he is undeniably Quintessentially Cockburn!

“When I look back at my love of the coastal environment, it all comes down to mum and our trips to the beach when I was young.

“And she was always doing something for the community, it wasn’t labelled as volunteering back then, it was just what she did. I think I picked up her duty to serve her community by osmosis,” Craig said.

When he’s not looking after his big garden by the ocean, Craig spends time in his home nursery propagating native coastal plants.

He and his wife also monitor the Osprey pole at Coogee Beach where three fledglings have been successfully reared for the first time since its installation by the City of Cockburn 14 years ago.

The pair also enjoy regular walks along the Coogee Beach coastal heath where a previous project monitoring wildlife camera footage revealed an abundant population of quenda.

**To find out more about local coastal planting days or to read more Quintessentially Cockburn stories, visit the City’s website.**



# Are you prepared for storm season?

**Severe thunderstorms are among the most frequent and costly natural hazards in WA, regularly producing damaging winds exceeding 90 km/h – strong enough to bring down trees, damage roofs and cause flash flooding.**

In recent years, multiple severe thunderstorm events have been recorded each season across the Perth metropolitan area.

Storms can strike at any time of year. While some pass quickly, others can leave significant damage behind. The good news? A few simple steps now can make a big difference later.

Trim overhanging branches; clear gutters and downpipes; and check roofs, carports and patios for loose fittings. Secure outdoor furniture and trampolines so they don't become dangerous projectiles in strong winds.

Be ready to act if needed. Pack an emergency kit with a battery-operated radio, torch, spare batteries and a first-aid kit. Create a household emergency plan – and include your pets – so everyone knows what to do.



For up-to-date warnings, download the Emergency WA app to stay informed.



## Recycling myths busted!

**Think you know where these common items belong? Some recycling myths still catch people out. Here are five quick facts to help keep the right waste in the right place.**

### **Myth** Takeaway coffee cups can be recycled

Single-use coffee cups aren't recyclable because of their lining. Even though they look like paper, they go straight into the general waste bin.

**Pro tip**, bring a reusable cup for your next coffee.

### **Myth** Soft plastics can go in the recycling bin

Try the scrunch test. If the plastic stays scrunched, it's a soft plastic and should go in the general waste bin.

### **Myth** Greasy pizza boxes can be recycled

Only clean cardboard belongs in the yellow recycling bin. Grease and leftover food contaminate the recycling process, so greasy pizza boxes go in the general waste bin.

### **Myth** Aerosol cans can go in one of your kerbside bins

Aerosols don't belong in any kerbside bin. Instead, take them to a hazardous waste drop-off point, like at Cockburn Libraries, Cockburn ARC or The Wetlands Centre Cockburn.

### **Myth** Food scraps belong in the green waste bin

Cockburn's green waste bin is for garden organics only. Food scraps should go in the general waste bin.

**Pro tip**, consider starting a worm farm at home – rebates and workshops are available.



# Planting for a greener Cockburn

**As winter rain settles in and the Nyungar season of Makuru brings the year's most reliable rainfall, planting season begins in Cockburn.**

Trees are more than landscape features. They provide food and shelter for native wildlife, absorb carbon dioxide and help tackle climate change. They cool our suburbs naturally by creating shade and releasing water vapour, with homes in leafy areas up to eight degrees cooler in summer. Research also shows access to trees and green space supports improved mental and physical wellbeing.

## **What is the City doing?**

Each year, around 50,000 native seedlings are planted in our reserves, revegetating approximately 2.5 hectares of space. Most are grown from local seed stock to strengthen biodiversity and habitat value.

Across our streetscapes, we plant about 1,250 advanced street trees and 1,000 shrubs annually. A diverse mix of species builds resilience against pests and diseases while contributing to long-term canopy growth.

We're also strengthening ecological corridors along roads, rail lines and easements to better connect wetlands and bushland, supporting wildlife movement and healthier ecosystems.



## **How can you get involved?**

Residential land makes up a significant portion of Cockburn, so growing canopy at home is vital.

Residents can request a free street tree for their verge, with the City covering planting, pruning and watering for the first three years. Applications reopen 1 August 2026.

Sustainability grants of up to \$4,000 are also available year-round to support schools, community groups, small businesses and collective households delivering local environmental projects.

You can join one of our free community planting days in the middle of the year.

The State Government also offers a \$150 Treebate for planting native trees on private land, accessible on the ServiceWA app.

## Grow your garden with native plants

### Want to create a waterwise, wildlife-friendly garden?

The City's Native Plant Subsidy helps residents purchase up to 20 native seedlings at a reduced price from APACE Nursery. These locally suited plants require less water, provide habitat for birds and pollinators, and help cool your home naturally.

The program opens in May 2026. Stock is limited each year, so mark your calendar and get in early.



Scan for more

# Winter festival warms up Cockburn

**As the Nyungar season of Makuru brings cool winds and rain, our City will come alive with a celebration of theatre, music, workshops, artist residencies, family arts experiences and more.**

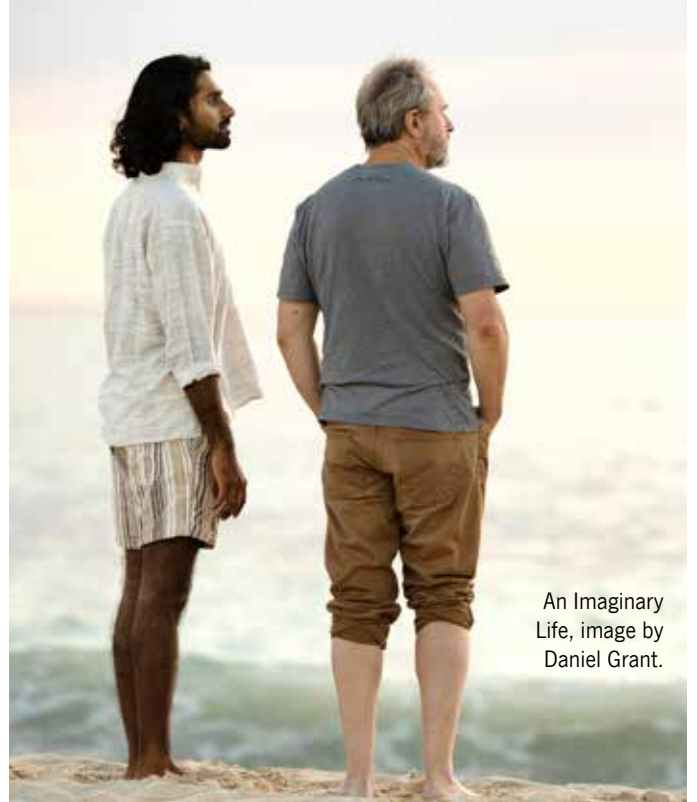
Makuru Festival, now in its second year, invites you to step inside, warm up, and immerse yourself in a vibrant program of performances, hands-on experiences and unforgettable moments. All festival events (excluding World Music Café) are now free to attend, and you can book online.

Rug up, gather your people, and join us for a month of arts in Cockburn.

What to expect this June:

- Music from Australian Baroque, Sunday Afternoon Music curated by local legend Billie Rogers, and World Music Café presented by Kaleidoscope Music
- Award-winning theatre including *An Imaginary Life* adapted and performed by Humphrey Bower, alongside ARCO Jnr/Snr and Improv RPG
- A full weekend of family arts fun, with workshops and performances for all ages
- Special presentations from resident festival artists Sensorium and Bluejoy Theatre.

[www.cockburn.wa.gov.au/MakuruFest](http://www.cockburn.wa.gov.au/MakuruFest)



An Imaginary Life, image by Daniel Grant.



Billie Rogers, image by Tashi Hall.

## Councillor Corner

**Central Ward Councillor Cr Philip Eva discusses the importance of our multicultural community and his own journey to get here.**



“The City of Cockburn is truly a fantastic multicultural community. At each citizenship ceremony, we usually welcome more than 30 new Australian citizens – and with every one of them comes a unique story, a journey filled with courage, hope and determination.

I know that because I am one of them.

I’m an immigrant myself. I met my wife on the waterfront in Cornwall, England, while I was working on the docks. Not long after, I packed up my dreams and travelled to Australia to build a new life.

We worked wherever opportunity took us – in the family shop in Broken Hill, collecting seeds in the desert, picking capsicums in Queensland. For a year we lived in our car. We camped in the snow in Tasmania. We travelled far and wide across this incredible country, chasing work, adventure and a future.

Like so many others who stand proudly at those citizenship ceremonies, our journey wasn’t always easy – but it was ours.

And it’s those journeys that make Cockburn the rich, diverse and welcoming community it is today.

Every new citizen adds another chapter to Australia’s story – and that’s something truly worth celebrating.”

# Differential rates and draft capital works budget

**We've got some new projects coming up on Comment on Cockburn, our community engagement website. Have your say on what matters to you and help us deliver outcomes that reflect the values and needs of our community.**

Community submissions will soon be open on the City's differential rates and draft capital works budget. Local governments collect rates from properties in their area to help fund services and

facilities, such as public parks, roads, community sporting venues and events that benefit residents, homeowners, businesses and visitors.

The draft capital works budget details what the City has committed to spend money on in the 2026-27 financial year.



Scan for more



## Business grant helps fund pioneering tech

**When marine engineer Scott Wovodich watched surveyors risk their lives climbing wooden ladders up 300-metre cargo ships in rough seas, he knew there had to be a better way.**

That dangerous work sparked an idea that became Over 3 Oceans and its game-changing technology, OLi Systems – an automated device that measures a ship's weight without putting anyone at risk.

"I had a surveyor on my shoulder and I had to count him off the ladder," the Coolbellup resident and marine engineer said.

"The ladder disappeared above our heads. I was like, that's it; there has to be a safer way to do this."

In 2023, Scott received a \$5,000 matched grant from the City of Cockburn in the innovation and major

projects category, allowing him to upgrade from basic components to industry-tested maritime equipment.

The grant allowed Scott to prove his concept worked. Now, Scott is preparing to test the full system in Western Australian ports by 2027.

"The City's grant process was super easy and straightforward," he said.

The City's Business Grants Program is now open, offering up to \$100,000 in funding across professional training and development, digital technology and cybersecurity, and innovation and major projects categories.

Visit [www.cockburn.wa.gov.au/BusinessGrants](http://www.cockburn.wa.gov.au/BusinessGrants) to learn more and apply today.

Photo: OLi Systems – an automated device that measures a ship's weight.



# What's On in Cockburn

Winter is coming, but that's no excuse to hide indoors! Join our line-up of exciting community events across the City.

Mark your diaries or visit our website for more information [www.cockburn.wa.gov.au/Events](http://www.cockburn.wa.gov.au/Events)



Free

## National Reconciliation Week

27 May-3 June

Activities across the City. The theme for National Reconciliation Week 2026 is "All In", a call for all Australians to commit wholeheartedly to reconciliation every single day. Free events.



Ticketed

## Nyungar language classes with Dylan Collard

**Saturdays from 23 May to 27 June, 10-11am**  
Spearwood Library, Spearwood.  
Suitable for ages 15 and over. \$25 for 5 sessions.  
Book online. Ticketed event.



Ticketed

## Gillian O'Shaughnessy 'Salt City Runaway' in conversation with Susan Midalia

**Wednesday 27 May, 6-7.30pm**

Success Library, Success.

\$5. Book online. Books available for purchase.

Ticketed event.



Free

## Young Writers' Club

**Thursdays (during school term), 4.30-6pm**

Success Library, Success.

Suitable for ages 13-17. Book online. Free event.

## Subscribe to Soundings online

The City's email newsletter features timely information about our services delivered to your inbox every month. Like our website, it's a reliable way to know what's happening in Cockburn. Subscribe here: [www.cockburn.wa.gov.au/Newsletters](http://www.cockburn.wa.gov.au/Newsletters)





Free

### Wills, Super and EPA/EPG

**Thursday 14 May, 9.30-11am**  
Cockburn Seniors Centre, Spearwood.  
Presented by Four Lions Legal. Bookings essential, phone 08 9411 3877 or email [csc@cockburn.wa.gov.au](mailto:csc@cockburn.wa.gov.au)  
Free event.



Free and ticketed

### Makuru Arts Festival

**5-27 June**  
Various locations around the City.  
Ticket price and times vary. Book online. Free and ticketed events.



Free

### Healthy Hearing

**Thursday 11 June, 9.30-10.30am**  
Cockburn Seniors Centre, Spearwood.  
Presented by Lions Hearing Clinic – includes free hearing check. Bookings essential, email [csc@cockburn.wa.gov.au](mailto:csc@cockburn.wa.gov.au) or phone 08 9411 3877.  
Free event.



Ticketed

### Worm Farming Workshop

**Saturday 13 June, 11-12.30pm**  
Beeliar Community Centre, Beeliar.  
\$5, book online. Ticketed event.



Free

### Aged Care and the Home Care Package

**Thursday 9 July, 9.30-10.30am**  
Cockburn Seniors Centre, Spearwood. Presented by MercyCare. Bookings essential, email [csc@cockburn.wa.gov.au](mailto:csc@cockburn.wa.gov.au) or phone 08 9411 3877.  
Free event.



Free

### July School Holidays

**4-19 July**  
A range of free to low-cost activities provided by Cockburn Libraries, Youth Centre and Cockburn ARC.  
Free events.



# MAKURU ARTS FESTIVAL

**June 2026**

A month of art in Cockburn.

Theatre, music, workshops, artist residencies, family arts experiences and more.

For the full program visit  
[www.cockburn.wa.gov.au/MakuruFest](http://www.cockburn.wa.gov.au/MakuruFest)



Scan to book