

Speech by Mayor Logan K. Howlett, JP
Flourishing on Country:
Strengthening Culture and Connections
The Wetlands Centre Cockburn
Monday 21 September 2026

Good morning everyone.

I thank Aunty Marie Taylor for her Welcome to Country, and acknowledge that we gather today on Beeliar Boodjar, the traditional lands of the Nyungar people, who have cared for this Country for countless generations.

I also warmly welcome our distinguished guests, including:

- Dr Jennifer Pearson, Convenor, Australian Association for Environmental Education (WA Chapter);
- Professor David Zandvliet, UNESCO Chair in Bio-cultural Diversity and Education;
- Keith Bradby OAM from Gondwana Link;
- Corey Bridge from Ngaparrtji Ngaparrtji [Nar parr chee, Nar parr chee] Two-way Science;
- and all delegates, educators, researchers, environmental practitioners and community leaders joining us today including Melody, a Year 6 Student.

It is a pleasure to welcome you to Cockburn and, in particular, to The Wetlands Centre.

When people visit Cockburn, they often notice our coastline, our wetlands and our bushland reserves.

But what makes these places special is not simply the landscape itself.

It is the connection people have to them.

When people feel connected to a place, they are more likely to care for it, learn from it and ultimately become its custodians.

As a City, we are fortunate to have a community that embraces that responsibility.

Every year, volunteers help restore and care for our natural environment through revegetation projects and conservation programs.

Our community also supports initiatives such as Turtle Watch, helping to protect the endangered Yaakan, or South-Western Snake-Necked Turtle, which has become an important symbol of environmental stewardship across Cockburn.

These efforts remind us that caring for Country is not something delivered by local government alone.

It is something achieved through partnership.

Partnership between local government, community organisations, schools, volunteers, Traditional Owners and everyday residents.

And that is why education is so important.

Programs like Little Green Steps WA, Turtle Watch and the initiatives delivered by the organisations represented here today, help to empower communities like ours to care for their natural environment.

Today's conference brings together people from many disciplines, united by a common purpose.

Strengthening our connection to Country and to each other.

On behalf of the City of Cockburn, I thank the Australian Association for Environmental Education WA Chapter for bringing this important event to our community.

I hope you enjoy your time here in Cockburn.

And I hope the conversations throughout the day lead to new ideas and new partnerships.

Thank you, enjoy the conference, and welcome to Cockburn.