

Speech by Mayor Logan K Howlett, JP

Unveiling of Humphreys Park, Coolbellup

on 11 December 2016

Good morning ladies and gentlemen, girls and boys.

As we gather here today under the shade of the natural bushland to acknowledge and reflect upon the contributions the late Laurie Humphreys, JP made to the Cockburn community over many years I ask each of you to close your eyes and listen quietly for a minute to the natural beauty that surrounds us today.

Thank you.

I acknowledge the Wadjuk People of the Nyungar Nation on whose land we are meeting and I pay respect to their Elders both past and present.

The richness of our natural banksia woodlands and wetlands is one aspect that Laurie held close to his heart – it is fitting that Humphreys Park reflects that natural beauty and perhaps the ruggedness of Laurie's life.

I acknowledge:

- Frankie Atkinson, Laurie's Partner for many years;
- Laurie's family and friends;

- Councillor Bart Houwen;
- Councillor Stephen Pratt and his wife Elena;
- Councillor Steve Portelli;
- My wife Patricia;

One and all.

Being here today amongst Laurie's family and friends is a great honour for my wife Patricia and me.

Long will we remember the conversations about local, state and federal government issues, solving the problems of the world, reflecting on times past and seeking ways to improve the lot of the ordinary man in a complex and demanding world.

In fact, seeking ways to improve the lot of the ordinary man was one of Laurie's strengths.

His experience as a child migrant certainly helped shaped his life and all that he did as a consequence.

His willingness to lead the charge for redress for child migrants saw many people receive guidance, direction and support as their journey of discovery unfolded.

As many of you know, Laurie's photograph is proudly displayed in the Laurie Humphreys Room in Tuart Place, Fremantle.

On every occasion I visit Tuart Place, it is heartening to hear first-hand the personal stories of those people Laurie had helped.

In fact, one could say he is revered by those attending Tuart Place as is his brother Terry, who offers the Terry Humphreys Award each year.

Good on you Terry.

As many of us will know, Laurie was in his element:

- whether it was driving a truck;
- his days in the Union movement;
- cruising on some of the most majestic ships plying the ocean waves;
- visiting the capital cities of the world or exploring the villages in the countryside;
- being dressed as Santa in Myers as he brought joy and excitement to thousands of children;
- sitting as a Justice of the Peace; or
- in the Council Chamber helping to shape a then flourishing market garden, flower garden, vineyard and orchard landscape into a new world of increased residential, commercial and retail offerings.

Laurie's long and distinguished local government career with the City of Cockburn, the South West Metropolitan Region and the Western Australian Local Government Association saw his drive, enthusiasm and passion for getting things done shine like a light in the night sky.

As people walk, cycle or drive past the sign I will be unveiling shortly, long may they reflect on the name Humphreys:

- for he was a man of the people;
- a man that put the community first;
- a man who immersed himself in family and friends;
- a man who left a legacy that we should all strive to understand, value and perpetuate on our own journey through life.

In closing, I take this opportunity to thank the City's staff for preparing the Park and for helping to bring this significant occasion to fruition (Anton Lees, Andy Jarman, Sandra Edgar and Nadia Ucich.

Earlier this week, as the 'Ovation of the Seas', the largest cruise ship to sail into Australian waters entered Fremantle Harbour I thought; that's a clear sign that Laurie has been at work – in fact, he was back in town.

Pulling together the arrival of the 'Ovation of the Seas' and the unveiling of Humphreys Park was surely another great feat. Well done Laurie – still in control, standing on the deck in his tuxedo – ready to engage with the locals and tourists alike.

Ladies and gentlemen, girls and boys.

Laurie has left a legacy to his family and the community:

- It is one of a love for life;
- Of adventure;

- Of risk taking;
- standing up for what is right and just;
- delivering on promises;
- respect and understanding for those less able to represent themselves; and
- a passion for getting things done.

God bless you Laurie– may you continue to rest in peace and look down with a smile as your children and their families make their way through life and the Cockburn community continues to grow.

Today it is a great honour for me to be unveiling the sign that will forever more identify a place in Cockburn's history with one of its most prominent citizen – the Late Laurie Humphreys JP.

Best summed up with the title Laurie chose for his book:

“A Chip of What Block, a Child Migrant's Tale”

Thank you.