



# Media Release

20 February 2020

## **Cockburn's unique Aboriginal Cultural & Visitors Centre plan reaches new funding milestone**

Plans for a unique Aboriginal Cultural & Visitors Centre in the City of Cockburn are on track following Council agreement to apply for a \$1.5m Lotterywest grant to help finance the \$6.5m project adjacent to Bibra Lake.

The City's Aboriginal Reference Group and the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community see the centre's development as a way to showcase the area's rich Nyungar history and living culture of stories, music, dance, language and art.

City of Cockburn Strategy & Civic Support Manager Gail Bowman said the area around Bibra Lake, or Walliabup as it is known on Whadjuk Boodja (Country), was as significant to the Nyungar people as Kings Park.

"Evidence of a 55,000-year-old Aboriginal site in the area, is just one element of its natural cultural, environmental and heritage value," Ms Bowman said.

"The centre, whose building design is inspired by the area's native Southwestern snake-necked turtle, will be unique in metropolitan Perth with projected annual visitors around 20,000.

"A feasibility study identified Aboriginal community members, school students, residents, businesses seeking cultural awareness training, and local, intra and interstate and overseas visitors will be attracted to the centre.

"The centre's aim is to provide a meeting place for members of the local Nyungar community, to offer a range of cultural events and activities, promote Cockburn as a tourist destination providing authentic Aboriginal cultural experiences and as a visitor centre supporting the region's tourism industry."

The centre was identified as part of the City's first Reconciliation Action Plan in 2011 and \$100,000 allocated in the 2018-19 budget enabled completion of preliminary designs, site studies and community consultation for the proposal.



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An allocation of \$2m will be considered in the City's 2020-21 budget and a further \$4.4m in 2021-22, inclusive of a \$1.5m Lotterywest grant, with completion planned for mid-2022 at Progress Drive near Bibra Lake Regional Playground.

"The City's coastal appeal, large tracts of natural vegetation, a chain of wetlands of international significance, and its abundance of indigenous and non-Indigenous historic sites, will allow the centre to create significant opportunities for tourism to develop and prosper, creating future employment and economic benefits," Ms Bowman said.

Some of the centre's facilities will include:

- Cultural and historical knowledge sharing area with interactive audio visual and static displays,
- Visitors information area and retail shop,
- Meeting rooms including a children's crèche/activity area,
- Aboriginal Community meeting and activity spaces,
- Activity room suitable for performances and exhibitions,
- Artist-in-residence creative space and workshop areas,
- Outdoor undercover areas, fire pits, bush garden and cultural bush walk trails, and
- Café with alfresco dining area.

For more information on this project, visit the City's community comment hub, Comment on Cockburn: <https://comment.cockburn.wa.gov.au/ACVC>

*Comment on Cockburn is where you can have your say on a range of projects and important issues in your City. Visit **comment.cockburn.wa.gov.au** to get involved with decision-making in your neighbourhood.*

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