

Speech by Mayor Logan K Howlett, JP

YouthReach South Forum

NAIDOC Week 2018

Theme – ‘Because of Her We Can’

Cockburn Youth Centre

Thursday 5 July, 2018

Kia Wonju Wonju, Beeliar Boodja

Hello and welcome to the land of the Beeliar People.

I thank Nyungar Elder Marie Taylor for her ‘Welcome to Country’. Marie you also paint an amazing picture of the dreamtime – one can close their eyes and just listen to your story telling and how each person is connected to Mother Earth. Thank you so much for joining us today.

I acknowledge the Wadjuk People of the Nyungar Nation, the traditional custodians of the land we have gathered on today and I pay respect to their Elders both past and present and extend that respect to Indigenous Australians who are with us today.

There continues to be so much for us to learn from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People who have been custodians of this great land for over 60,000 years – the longest surviving culture in the world.

I acknowledge:

- Deputy Mayor Lee-Anne Smith, OAM;
- Marie Taylor, Nyungar Elder;
- Other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and people;
- Ms Sally Anne Gamble, Co-Chair, Aboriginal Reference Group;
- Other members of the Aboriginal Reference Group;

- Members of service groups and organisations;
- Mr Stephen Cain, Chief Executive Officer, City of Cockburn, Members of the Executive Team and other members of staff;
- Ladies and gentlemen, girls and boys.

The theme for NAIDOC this year is '**Because of Her we can**'; honouring the huge contribution made by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women throughout history and currently in our community.

Over many thousands of years Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women have carried the stories, songs, art, languages and knowledge that have kept their culture alive.

They are the Elders; great grandmothers; grandmothers, mothers, aunties, cousins, sisters and daughters who have kept families going strong, and their children healthy and happy.

They are the leaders, politicians, activists, world-changers, doctors, lawyers, teachers, chefs, writers, artists, volunteers, actors, singers, journalists, media personalities, academics, sporting icons and Olympic and World Champions and the list goes on.

They work in all levels of government, in the not-for-profit sector, schools, and running their own businesses.

Sadly, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women have often not been recognised or acknowledged for their incredibly hard work and their significant contribution to family, community and to our society.

Today is the day that we get to change that – and to say thank you for all you have done in fighting to make things right and keeping families and community strong and united.

We have some special activities here today to honour and pay our respect and gratitude to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls of all ages.

We mostly have women leading the proceedings today, stepping up to their rightful leadership role.

The City is proud to celebrate NAIDOC Week 2018 and the wonderful theme of;

‘Because of Her – We Can’!

The women in our lives play an important role in shaping and defining who we become and how we interact in the community.

From my own perspective:

My great grandmother, grandmother, mother and my wife Patricia have inspired me to always:

- do the very best that I can;
- seek to help those less fortunate;
- embrace family values;
- support the love ones around me;
- to step in when needed to offer guidance; and
- to be true and fair in all that I do.

I look to my granddaughters Caitlin and Brooke and know family values, love and respect that they are surrounded with and know they will grow up to be responsible members of their community and be positive role models for their peers.

When speaking to teenagers/young people – to get on in life; I often say:

- Firstly respect yourself;
- Respect your family and your family name;
- Respect the friends around you;
- Respect the club(s)/organisation(s) you are a member of;
- Respect those who volunteer to help in those clubs;
- Respect the community where you live or visit;
- Respect those less fortunate than you; and
- Respect life itself.

In closing, let us once again reflect on and embrace the theme for NAIDOC Week 2018

‘Because of Her – We Can’! Thank you.

Unveiling of Nyungar Artwork

This year's artwork was created by local Cockburn artist Sharyn Egan and is an acrylic painting titled Flora and Fauna.

Sharyn is a renowned local, state, national and international artist who has a passion for creating works that are highly valued and sought after.

Much of Sharyn's work is informed by her experiences in growing up at the New Norcia Mission and comments on the associated trauma, emotion and deep sense of loss and displacement amongst Aboriginal people.

Flora and Fauna is a work that reminds us that it has only been little more than 50 years since Aboriginal people were recognised as people and not flora and fauna.

Sharyn shares her love of art with those aspiring to be an artist themselves whether it be in working on a blank canvas through to craft work including jewellery, weaving, sculptures and the like.

Sharyn we are truly blessed with adding another piece of art to the City of Cockburn extensive art collection that bears your name.

Thank you so much for all that you do in our community and beyond.

We are truly blessed with your presence here today.