



# Media Release

6 August 2019

## **Cockburn community marks Hiroshima Day for 34th consecutive year**

Radonich Park in Beeliar received a boost to its long-term tree canopy as part of a commemorative planting ceremony to mark Hiroshima Day today, 6 August.

For 34 consecutive years, the City of Cockburn has held a Hiroshima Day tree-planting with school students from the Fremantle Education District and representatives from the Japanese Consulate in Perth.

Along with the attendance of the Consul-General of Japan in Perth, Mr Toru Suzuki, this year's ceremony was attended by Professor Tilman Ruff AO, appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia in 2019 for distinguished service to the global community as an advocate for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, and to medicine.

Also in attendance was former Cockburn councillor Nola Waters, who with Freeman of the City and former Cockburn Mayor, Don Miguel OAM JP, now deceased, were the driving force for the 1986 council decision to begin an annual commemoration of Hiroshima Day.

This year's ceremony began with a symbolic release of white doves by City of Cockburn Mayor Logan Howlett and Mr Suzuki before they joined school students to plant 20 Sheoak and Marri trees at the popular park near South Coogee Primary School.

Mayor Howlett said hundreds of trees planted across the City in the past 34 years by representatives of the Japanese Consulate in Perth, members of council and local students, continued to flourish.

"They symbolise the strength of our friendship with Japan and its people and reflect the nature of our growing relationship as we reach out in terms of trade, education, tourism and cultural exchange," Mayor Howlett said.

The white doves – homing pigeons from Kelmscott – flew above proceedings before turning east and back into the arms of their owner Marcel Mak, President of the Armadale-Kelmscott Pigeon Racing Club.



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Professor Ruff, Associate Professor in the University of Melbourne's Nossal Institute for Global Health, which he helped establish, gave a talk to students following the tree-planting.

He is a public health and infectious diseases physician; Co-President of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War since 2012 (IPPNW, Nobel Peace Prize 1985); and co-founder and founding international and Australian Chair of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), awarded the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize *"for its work to draw attention to the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons and for its ground-breaking efforts to achieve a treaty-based prohibition of such weapons"*.

Following the tree-planting, the City held a morning tea for the students who enjoyed a reading of *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes*, learned how to make origami peace cranes, and listened to a talk given by Professor Ruff.

Mayor Howlett is a member of the worldwide Mayors for Peace movement established in 1982 by then Mayor of Hiroshima, Takeshi Araki, to promote world peace and support the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

This year marks the 74<sup>th</sup> since the Japanese city of Hiroshima was decimated by an atomic bomb delivered by a US aircraft, ending World War II, and killing tens of thousands of people immediately, and tens of thousands in the weeks following due to radiation poisoning. The city of Nagasaki was hit three days later with a second atomic bomb.

Professor Ruff will be guest speaker at a Mayors for Peace event to launch the latest report from the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons in Australia.

He has been a prime driver of the new Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which Australia is yet to ratify.

This free event will be held at Fremantle Library, 7 Parry Street, 5-7pm on Thursday, 8 August.

Register here: <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/ican-report-launch-and-peace-constellation-tickets-65152400584>



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