

Media Release

31 October 2022

Collaborative consultation for Aboriginal Cultural and Visitors Centre receives judges' praise in Australasian public participation award

Main points:

- City's collaborative consultation for its Aboriginal Cultural and Visitors Centre has received the Judge's Encouragement Award at the International Association for Public Participation Australasia (IAP2) Core Value Awards for 2022
- The City designed a bespoke consultation in collaboration with the Cockburn Aboriginal Reference Group and local Beeliar Boodjar Elders during finalisation of the proposed centre's design and location
- The awards recognise excellence in community engagement and public participation.

The City of Cockburn's collaborative consultation for its highly anticipated Aboriginal Cultural and Visitors Centre has received the Judge's Encouragement Award at the International Association for Public Participation Australasia (IAP2) Core Value Awards for 2022.

The City designed a bespoke consultation in collaboration with the Cockburn Aboriginal Reference Group and local Beeliar Boodjar Elders during finalisation of the proposed centre's design and location.

The City was one of 18 national finalists in the core value awards announced at the IAP2 Australasia Conference in Melbourne on 27 October. The awards recognise excellence in community engagement and public participation.

The judges commented that it was great to see an example of First Nations people providing input to the development of a building that would showcase their culture to the entire community – an example of starting out with a set idea and adapting/changing based on engagement.

City of Cockburn Acting CEO Victoria Green said the consultation process was vital to achieving robust engagement using non-traditional methods.

"This ensured the sentiment of our Aboriginal community was captured to authentically inform the project which has been endorsed by Cockburn council," Ms Green said.



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Attracting about 20,000 visitors annually, the ACVC will generate employment and small business opportunities for Aboriginal people, creating dedicated roles to ensure particular activities can be delivered by Aboriginal people.

While the project has experienced delays due to current market conditions, construction on the western side of Walliabup-Bibra Lake is due to commence early 2023 with completion estimated mid-2024.

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

The centre itself will resemble the shape of the local Southwestern snake-necked turtle (*Chelodina oblonga* - prev. *C. colliei*) – known as Yakaan or Booyi in the local Nyungar language – which inhabits Walliabup-Bibra Lake.

Thanks to the concerted efforts of the City, Murdoch University and volunteer citizen scientists as part of the Turtle Tracker program, the near-threatened turtle is experiencing a resurgence at the lake.

The centre is the culmination of many years of design work, gathering funds and consulting with the community, including during the recent restrictive COVID-19 isolation periods.

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