



Media Release

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City continues to offer free Noongar language lessons in 2021

A woman who calls her love of the Noongar language a passion will continue presenting free classes to locals and visitors for the City of Cockburn this May and June.

Previous classes were held on a weeknight, however, the next series will be held on Saturdays between 1-2pm. The five week series will run from 15 May-12 June at Spearwood Library.

The classes are designed to encourage more people to learn Noongar, and with less than 400 fluent speakers left, it's more important than ever to keep the ancient language alive.

And things are looking more positive than ever.

The City began providing the free classes in 2019, led by respected expert, Whadjuk Noongar woman Sharon Gregory, who has also compiled the Noongar Language Dictionary.

"I've been teaching the language for 19 years now but since the International Year of Indigenous Languages in 2019, I noticed the general interest really stepped up," Sharon said.

"At the moment I am delivering nine classes a week around Perth plus helping organisations big and small with translation and writing services.

"It wasn't until I was an adult working as an Aboriginal education officer in 2000 that it really started to pick up and I started to teach myself.

"I started a language course in 2002 and three years later I started teaching it to others. I'm still on my learning journey."

In Cockburn last year, classes began in August when up to 15 people attended, despite



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COVID-19 restrictions.

Participants are mainly adults of varying ages from different backgrounds, including the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse community. Several participants are return students, as Sharon caters to both beginners and people with prior knowledge of Noongar language.

One of last year's participants had this to say about their experiences: "Thank you for offering these free classes. Cost does not prohibit participation. Fantastic to see reconciliation actions from a local government."

The May-June series is nearly fully booked but more will be on offer in August, so stay updated at the Cockburn Libraries [website](#).

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