

Welcome Speech by His Worship the Mayor Logan K. Howlett, JP

Business News Breakfast, Grand Ballroom, Crown Perth

Tuesday, 18 March 2025

Good morning everyone.

It is my great pleasure to welcome you all here today, and in particular, to extend a warm welcome to our distinguished guest, Senator the Honourable Penny Wong, Minister for Foreign Affairs.

As we gather this morning, we do so at a time of great opportunity for our state and our nation.

The AUKUS partnership represents a transformative moment for Australia—one that will not only enhance our security but also drive economic growth.

Locally, we understand the importance of these opportunities.

With significant investment flowing into advanced manufacturing, defence capability, and technology development, we must ensure that our local industries are ready to participate and thrive.

This is not just about shipbuilding or defence contracts—it is about creating lasting, high-skilled jobs, fostering innovation, and developing the infrastructure that will sustain this growth for decades to come.

It is about training and equipping our workforce with the skills needed for the future, ensuring that small and medium enterprises can be part of the supply chain, and making strategic investments in transport, logistics, and digital connectivity to support this transformation.

We recognise that this is a collective effort.

Local, state, and federal governments, industry leaders, and community stakeholders must work together to ensure that the benefits of these investments are maximised.

I believe that we are already doing that.

At the City of Cockburn, we are working closely with local businesses to equip them with the tools and strategies to explore bilateral trade and investment opportunities in South-East Asia.

Over the last three years have built meaningful relationships and are beginning to see tangible outcomes.

It is my privilege to introduce our keynote speaker today. Arguably one of Australia's most powerful Parliamentarians.

Penny Wong was born in the Malaysian state of Sabah.

Her family moved to Australia in 1976, when she was eight years old, and settled in Adelaide.

She studied law and arts at the University of Adelaide and was elected to the Senate for the Australian Labor Party in 2001 and has been re-elected four times.

With the election of the Albanese Government in 2022, Senator Wong was appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Minister Wong is the first woman to hold the roles of Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, and Leader of the Government in the Senate.

In March last year became the longest-serving female cabinet minister in Australian History.

Minister, we look forward to hearing your insights today and to continuing the collaboration that will see our region play a vital role in Australia's defence and economic future.

Thank you.