

Speech by Mayor Logan K Howlett, City of Cockburn

The Act-Belong-Commit

'This is Me' Photography Exhibition Launch

Cockburn Gateway Shopping City of Cockburn

30 March 2017

Kaya, Wanju Wanju Beeliar Boodjar

(Hello, Welcome to the land of the Beeliar people)

I am delighted to be here tonight to officially launch the Act – Belong – Commit 'This is Me' Photography Exhibition.

This is a photography exhibition celebrating National Youth Week and presents positive images of young people, as taken by them.

The exhibition is also aimed at building the capacity of young people and to increase their sense of ownership in the project and the images representing who they are.

I acknowledge the Wadjuk People of the Nyungar Nation, Custodians of the Land we are gathered on tonight and I pay respect to their Elders both past and present.

I extend that respect to Indigenous Australians who may be with us tonight.

I acknowledge:

- Councillor Lyndsey Sweetman;
- Andrew Wilkinson and Casey Ray, representing the Cockburn Gateway Shopping City;
- City of Cockburn staff:
 - Gail Bowman, Manager Community Development;
 - Michelle Champion, Youth Services Manager;
 - Ms Gemma McDonald, Youth Development Officer, Youth Services;

- Representatives from the Cockburn Youth Advisory Collective;
- Students involved in exhibiting their work, their parents, grandparents and carers;
- Ladies and gentlemen, girls and boys.

The Act – Belong - Commit ‘This is Me’ Photography Exhibition’ has proudly been sponsored by Healthway in order to promote the Act-Belong-Commit message.’

Act-Belong-Commit is a mental health promotion campaign that encourages individuals to take action to protect and promote their own mental wellbeing.

The A-B-C guidelines for positive mental health provide a simple approach that we can adopt to become more mentally healthy:

act: keep mentally, physically, socially and spiritually active: take a walk, say g'day, read a book, do a crossword, dance, play cards, stop for a chat...

belong: join a book club, take a cooking class, be more involved in groups you are already a member of, go along to community events...

commit: take up a cause, help a neighbour, learn something new, take on a challenge, volunteer....

Being active, having a sense of belonging and having a purpose in life all contribute to happiness and good mental health.

Act – Belong – Commit ‘This is Me’ Photography Exhibition came in response to Gemma McDonald, Youth Development Officer, Youth Services reading the negative comments we primarily receive on social media about young people and the youth centre. Gemma was inspired by similar projects in the cities of Melbourne and Kwinana.

Quoting Gemma McDonald:

“I wanted to begin the process of changing perceptions in the community.

I felt the best way was to bring young people together and then display photographs of them to as larger public audience as possible.

Participants aged 12 – 21 years came together over two days to learn manual camera skills, lighting, composition, and portraiture.

They were then paired up and took photos of each other which are now the exhibition on display before us at the Cockburn Gateway Shopping City.

This is the first time the event has been run and will likely be a one-off project.

To promote positive images of young people to the community, build capacity of young people and increase their sense of ownership in the project and the images representing who they are.”

Congratulations Gemma and to all those who took up the challenge of engaging in the project and bringing forth the photographs being exhibited tonight – you have all excelled in so many different ways.

In closing, the City acknowledges Healthway for their funding of an amazing range of community events that all contain messages that are relevant to communities across the State of Western Australia.

Organisations such as Healthway and LotteryWest continue to support communities to turn their dreams into reality – Healthway’s support of tonight’s event is another great example together with other sponsors of the Act-Belong-Commit project in Chevron and Curtin University.

I am pleased to now launch the Act – Belong – Commit ‘This is Me’ Photography Exhibition.

Thank you.