

Speech by Mayor Logan K Howlett JP
Launch of Wetlands Precinct Re-Development
Hope Road, Bibra Lake
Saturday, 28 August 2021

Kaya, Wonju.

Hello and welcome to the launch of the Wetlands Precinct Re-Development – a location of significant importance to all and in particular, the Aboriginal community:

- given it is surrounded by many sacred sites;
- it is located within the Beeliar Regional Park; and
- it is one that attracts thousands of visitors each year.

I thank Marie Taylor for her inspiring ‘Welcome to Country’ that brings alive the significance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, culture and traditions that have been handed down through dream time stories that capture our imagination each and every time we hear them.

The rich tapestry of the Australian landscape, seas and water ways, the sky and the flora and fauna are representative of the longest continuing living culture on Mother Earth and the caring relationship that has been demonstrated by the First Nation People for so long.

Marie thank you once again for sharing your knowledge with us, for the important role you play in our community and beyond; and for your enduring friendship.

I acknowledge the Whadjup people of the Nyungar nation, the traditional custodians of the land on which we have gathered and I pay respect to their Elders past, present and emerging and extend my respect to Indigenous Australians with us today.

I acknowledge the many people who have gathered today for this very special event including:

- Mr Josh Wilson, MP, Federal Member for Fremantle;
- The Honourable Ms Amber-Jade Sanderson MLA, Minister for Environment; Climate Action; Commerce and the Member for Morley;
- Mr Yaz Mubarakai, MLA, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance; Lands; Sport and Recreation; Citizenship and Multicultural Interests; and the Member for Jandakot;
- Mr David Scaife MLA, the Member for Cockburn;
- The Honourable Melissa Parke – Patron WA Wildlife;
- Nyungar Elder Marie Taylor;
- Nyungar Elder Brett Collard;
- Timmy Kelly and The Boys;
- My wife Patricia;
- Deputy Mayor Lara Kirkwood;

- Councillor Philip Eva, JP;
- Councillor Chontelle Stone;
- Councillor Michael Separovich;
- Councillor Phoebe Corke;
- Mr Tony Brun, Chief Executive Officer, City of Cockburn, other members of the Executive and staff;
- Professor Philip Jennings AM, Emeritus Professor Murdoch University and former long-time Chair of the Cockburn Wetlands Centre Board;
- Ms Elaine Walsh, representing Lotterywest;
- Mr Michael Coote, Principal Wetlands Co-ordinator, Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions;
- Mr Tom Perrigo, Wetlands Centre Chair and other Board Members:
 - Dr Fiona Cook
 - Dr Jonathan Whale
 - Mr Gavin Waugh
 - Ms Gina Pickering
 - Mr Karl Haynes
 - Mr Bart Houwen
 - Ms Barbara Hostalek

Wetlands Centre Staff:

- Ms Denise Crosbie

- Ms Danielle Tyrlls
- Sharon Meredith;
- Mr Rex Sallur; and the volunteer group;

- Mr Bob Dunn, WA Wildlife Chair; and other Board Members
 - Anne Bellamy;
 - Jonathon Porter;
 - Sue Henderson; and

- WA Wildlife Representatives
 - Ms Diane Munrowd, WA Wildlife CEO;

 - Mr Dean Huxley, WA Wildlife, Director of Operations; and other staff & volunteers;

- Ms Fiona Shannon, Scouts WA -Regional Chief Commissioner South;

- Representatives from the Bibra Lake Scout Group
 - Anthony McNuff;

 - Marie Gibson; and

 - Gavin Satie;

- Ms Sharon Rudderham, Bendigo Bank;

- Ms Naomi McCabe, Project Architect, Site Architecture Studio;

- Representatives from BE Projects
 - Mr Troy King, Construction Manager;
 - Mr Sean Hayes, Site Manager; and
 - Mr Jordan Leeson, Contracts Administrator.
- Mr Jeff Gidman, NS Projects;
- Members of the media;
- Ladies and gentleman, one and all;

Our wetlands and bushland are a rare and valuable resource and we are fortunate to have several of these wetland and bushland chains within Cockburn.

They form an important habitat for native fauna and flora being home to many species, including some protected and near-threatened animals such as the critically endangered Carnaby's Black Cockatoo and near threatened South-western snake-necked turtle.

You might have noticed the paths on this site have been designed in the shape of a turtle through the landscape art of Sharyn Egan, a renowned artist in our community.

As we know, these locations, in particular, are of great cultural significance to local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

It is important for the City to protect this beautiful natural resource for future generations.

We think one of the best ways to achieve this, is by empowering local groups and organisations who are passionate and active in education and conservation.

Each of the three partner organisations on this site;

- WA Wildlife;
- the Wetlands Centre; and
- The Bibra Lake Scout Group

have provided essential services to our community, our wildlife and our environment for over 30 years.

I thank them and their tireless staff and volunteers for their priceless contribution to our community.

The City has invested \$6 million into redeveloping this site into a state-of-the-art wildlife, conservation and environmental education hub with fit-for-purpose facilities including:

- A new WA Wildlife hospital and rehabilitation facility;
- Renovations and extensions to the Wetlands Centre including a new education room, artificial wetlands and nursery;

- A new scout shed with a dedicated Rovers den;
Along with extra parking, improved traffic and public access, landscaped walkways and outdoor classrooms;
And a range of cutting edge sustainability features.

The City also provides over \$90k in funding to WA Wildlife and The Wetlands Centre every year – along with the investment of time and program support from City officers;

- This redevelopment has been enhanced by generous Lotterywest grants of more than \$2.2m.
- There are still a few finishing touches to be made – and these contributions will help complete those works;
At the heart of this project is the spirit of collaboration.
- Collaboration between:
 - community organisations and groups;
 - collaboration between local and State Government; and
 - collaboration between our community with all of the above.

It is my great pleasure to officially launch this precinct today.

WA Wildlife, the Wetlands Centre and the Bibra Lake Scout Group have already done so much for our community.

And I for one cannot wait to see what they will accomplish in the future.

I thank everyone involved in this project and the officers whose tireless work made it possible.

With particular thanks to Anton Lees, Peter McCullagh, Chris Beaton, Vicky Hartill and Rafeena Boyle from the City.

A big thanks also to the architects, builders, project management consultants and others who have worked so hard to bring the vision alive.

I invite you all to stay for some morning tea after the formalities conclude and to participate in the tours and activities that the three partner organisations have prepared.

Today's launch is a great opportunity to see for yourself the important work that they all do.

Please follow me to the Ceremonial Tree Planting of a Doowart-Tuart adjacent to the Turtle Pathway and sculptural eggs Public Artwork designed by Nyungar artist Sharyn Egan.

The tree, once established, can grow to anywhere between 10 - 40 metres tall.

It will truly be a symbol of our community, its resilience and capacity to stand tall and deliver for the well-being of all who live and visit this great place.

Thank You.