



# Media Release

10 October 2019

## Gluten-free quackers at City of Cockburn lakes

New signs discouraging duck feeding were installed at three lakes in the City of Cockburn late September.

City of Cockburn Environmental Education Officer Rafeena Boyle said bird-feeding at lakes and wetlands was an ongoing issue and many people were not aware it was harmful to the birds and their environment.

“We’ve had multiple community members request that we put signage at lakes and wetlands around Cockburn and with communication with our Parks team we decided on the three lakes chosen as places to try out the new signs,” she said.

The Aubin Grove Community Association also called for signage specifically at Blue Boy Lake.

The City of Cockburn chose slogans similar to those used by the City of Mandurah to discourage bird feeding, including ‘We’re Gluten Free’ and ‘Our Ducks Are Low-Carb’.

While the City of Cockburn has run the ‘Feed a Bird? How absurd!’ campaign for several years, it was time to add something different.

“The signs were originally developed by the City of Mandurah with Key2creative, and rather than reinvent a great idea we partnered with them to continue the campaign into Cockburn,” Ms Boyle said.

Updated with Cockburn graphics, the signs explain to residents that ducks, like humans, love to eat things that are not really good for them.

Ms Boyle said feeding native animals was the wildlife equivalent of junk food.

“Processed foods like bread, mince, sugar syrup, honey and seed mix can be detrimental to their survival as it is an inadequate diet for wild birds to survive on.

“Birds can become dependent on human feeding and can concentrate in high numbers.

“This reliance can lead to aggressive behaviour, overpopulation, delays in migration patterns, and a reduction in their ability to forage for themselves.”



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## Fact file

- Uneaten, decaying bread and food can lead to algal blooms and aquatic weeds.
- Botulism and other bird diseases can spread between wetlands.
- Excess nutrients in the water and overpopulation decrease the water's quality.
- A reduction in dissolved oxygen in the water can lead to fish kills and other fauna deaths.
- Feeding birds puts animal and plant diversity at risk.

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