

**Speech by Mayor Logan K Howlett, JP**  
**The International Mother Language Day**  
**Success Library**  
**Wednesday 19 February 2025**

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Kaya Wonju Wonju

Hello and Welcome

Welcome to The International Mother Language Day celebratory event.

I acknowledge the Whadjuk people of the Noongar Nation, the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we meet tonight, and I pay my respects to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to First Nations people here with us.

I acknowledge the presence of:

- Councillor Carol Zhang;
- Ning Yan, President Cockburn Chinese Community Association;
- Matt Willson, Chair, Multicultural Reference Group and other Members;
- Liz Vuchocho, Cultural Diversity Officer;
- Deb Rigby, Adult Services Coordinator;
- My wife Patricia;
- Members of the community, one and all.

International Mother Language Day is celebrated each year on 21<sup>st</sup> of February to raise awareness of language, cultural diversity, and multilingualism around the world.

It reflects our commitment to being welcoming, culturally vibrant and the best place to live.

It is also about how we honour the beauty and diversity of languages, the lifeblood of our cultures and identities.

In 1952 the Language Movement in Bangladesh, saw brave individuals sacrificing their lives for the right to speak their mother tongue.

Their courage and determination resonated far beyond their time, inspiring global efforts to preserve and celebrate linguistic diversity.

This day achieved global significance through the recognition by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1999.

Here in our community, we are privileged to witness this richness firsthand.

Each language spoken here, each cultural event represents a story, a heritage, and a unique way of seeing the world.

Events like today serve as a powerful reminder that linguistic and cultural diversity are not just things to be tolerated but celebrated and cherished.

Communities across the world now act as beacons of cultural pride and inclusivity, enriching cities, towns, villages and the like with traditions, art, and hospitality.

It is this commitment to keeping the legacy of International Mother Language Day alive highlighting the importance of protecting all languages and cultures.

As we celebrate tonight, let us reflect on the significance of fostering understanding and unity through language.

Let us recommit ourselves to building a world where every language is valued, every voice is heard, and every culture is respected.

Thank you for inviting Patricia and I to be part of this meaningful celebration.

In closing I want to thank you for the role each of you have played in making this inaugural event possible.

Your efforts showcase the values that make Cockburn such a wonderful place to live and let's continue to build a community where everyone feels a sense of belonging.

Please join me to sample all the wonderful dishes that represent the diverse cultures in this room.

Thank you and enjoy the rest of the event.