

Speech by Mayor Logan K Howlett, JP, City of Cockburn  
on the occasion of the  
6<sup>th</sup> Cultural Day celebrations of the  
Lakeland Senior High School held on  
Friday 25 September 2015

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Good Morning

I thank Mr Laurie Longworth, Principal, Lakeland Senior High School and the School community itself for their kind invitation to be here today.

As always it is a pleasure to join in to celebrate the diverse and multi-cultural society that we live in and even more so on the occasion of the School's 6<sup>th</sup> annual Cultural Da.

As we move from the Djilba Season to the Kambarang season and enjoy all that spring has to offer it is a time to reflect on the cultural diversity of our great nation, the richness of the land we stand on, the people we meet each day and importantly how we interact and respect the cultural diversity we are immersed in, albeit it is a landscape that is forever changing.

I acknowledge the Noongar people who are the Traditional Custodians of the Land on which we have gathered today.

I pay respect to the Elders both past and present of the Noongar Nation and extend that respect to Indigenous Australians who are present here today.

I acknowledge the Elders of the Torres Strait Islander Peoples who are here today and other special guests who are here today.

For we all walk on Sacred Ground.

We need to understand, appreciate and respect the culture, customs and heritage that we have been born into and how we can bring forth those learnings into the community where we live today.

A quote from Merle Narkle-Goodwin, a local Nyungar artist refers:

“I am always aware that thousands of my people have passed through the land from countless generations.

I feel their presence, their spirit, whenever I go bush to revive my creativity”.

Last evening my wife Pat & I attended the 2015 MercyCare Oration given by Gill Hicks, who is known globally as a survivor of the 2005 London terrorist bombings.

She suffered severe and permanent injuries, losing both her legs from below the knee.

Standing only feet away from the suicide bomber on the Kings Cross train, Gill was the last person to be rescued from the wreckage.

In the 10 years since the tragic day, Gill has been determined to make her life count and has devoted herself to advocating for peace.

Speaking immediately after the 'Welcome to Country' by Barry McGuire last evening, Gill conveyed an amazing message to Barry.

Aside from thanking him for the 'Welcome to Country' Gill said that he had brought her into contact with the 'ground' once again, ten years on from having lost her legs and what we all take for granted; the chance to touch the sand, grass, water or the floors in our homes with our feet - he had given her a place, an opportunity to touch sand, grass, water or the floors in her home in a different way – his 'Welcome to Country' had enlightened her to continue to think about the challenges that confronted her each and every day and how a positive attitude can and will prevail.

Gill went on to say that her life is filled with positive thoughts about how she can continue to make a difference in the community where she lives.

She spoke about:

- Reaching out whenever there was a need;
- Listening & hearing what was being said around her;
- Respecting herself and others;
- Sharing life's journey;
- Comforting others in need;
- Being tolerant of others;

- Never giving up;
- Always doing the best you can; and
- Loving the world that surrounds us all.

In fact those same value sets and challenges face us all in one way or another.

The multicultural world we live in today provides us all with the opportunity to take on board the thoughts of Gill Hicks, her interpretation of the 'Welcomer to Country' by Barry McGuire and how even when affected by tragedy, whether it be personal or shared with others how we can all emerge to continue on – how we can adjust – how we can always reach out to others; for we all stand on Sacred Ground.

Mention was made of the flags that are before us today reflecting the countries where students who attend the School have come from.

The City of Cockburn flies the Australian flag, The Cockburn flag, the Aboriginal flag and the Torres Strait Islander Peoples flag 24/7.

In any given years hundreds of people become Australian Citizens in our City. They represent over 45 countries around the world and reflect the diversity & multi culturalism that makes Cockburn the great City that it is.

In 2017 my family, on my Father's side, will have been in Australia for 200 years. I am proud to be a descendant

of a convict. In fact three Howlett brothers were transported to Australia following their sentencing in the Magistrates Court in Cambridge, England. One of those brothers married a women convict on the same ship and from there the Howlett family has grown to what it is today spread out in most States but predominantly still in New South Wales, the place where they first landed in 1817.

As the school term comes to an end I extend the best wishes of the City to the students, teachers and staff for a safe and enjoyable break.

Thank you.