

Good evening ladies and gentlemen

I am delighted to be here this evening on this very auspicious occasion - the official opening of the Melville Cockburn Chamber of Commerce (MCCC) Premises located in the Cockburn Integrated Health Facility.

As we know the MCCC is a not for profit organisation supporting small businesses within the boundaries of Cities of Melville and Cockburn. It is interesting to note that there are approximately 20,000 SME's in Melville and Cockburn – a number that continues to grow.

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

I acknowledge:

- Mr Yaz Mubarakai, MLA, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance; Lands; Sport and Recreation; Citizenship and Multicultural Interests; and the Member for Jandakot;
- My wife Patricia;
- Elected members from the City of Cockburn
 - Deputy Mayor Lara Kirkwood;
 - Councillor Chontelle Stone;
 - Councillor Michael Separovich;

Elected members from the City of Melville

- Councillor Duncan Macphail; and
- Councillor Katy Mair;
- Mr Tony Romano, President of the MCCC and board members here tonight;
- Ms Monique Williams, Executive Officer MCCC and other staff members;
- Mr Tony Brun, Chief Executive Officer City of Cockburn and other members of staff
- Ms Sandra Kahle, Business Engagement officer, City of Cockburn;

- Ms Joanna Arbel, Communications Co-ordinator, City of Melville;
- Sponsors and Members of MCCC;
- Ladies and gentlemen, one and all.

We have seen the MCCC grow in stature and membership over many years based on the direction of the board who are all volunteers and the members of staff led by Monique Williams.

The Cities of Melville and Cockburn are major supporters of the MCCC along with a list of local businesses many of whom have also become sponsors.

The new premises will provide additional opportunities for growth and new ventures supporting the small- medium business sector, in fact it will be a business hub.

I have personally attended many of the MCCC Business Networking events over the years, seeing them develop and become more diversified, and of course, always a valuable networking opportunity.

At a time when the entire community is faced with the challenges of COVID - 19 it is not surprising that the small - medium business sector ostensibly represented by the Chamber have battled on many fronts to keep their head above water, while others have thrived in the circumstances.

The Chamber has and continues to provide a diversity of membership, opportunities for networking, sharing of knowledge, risk appetite and in general goodwill of the kind rarely found outside of a collegiate body.

It has been amazing to see leaders and members within the Chamber and how they have 'welded' all those who have been long term members together with more recent members into a powerful and commendable force.

In closing, thank you the continuing good work being done by the Chamber, your strengthening role in the districts of Melville and Cockburn, and importantly the services you offer to your members - it is truly remarkable.

You may have heard this quote from Larry Page - if we were motivated by money, we would have sold the company a long time ago and ended up on a beach.

Having said that, I officially declare open the Melville Cockburn Chamber of Commerce Premises and extend our best wishes for the future.

Stay safe and keep up the good work.

Thank you.