

Speech by Mayor Logan K Howlett, JP

City of Cockburn

Inaugural Multicultural Reference Group Meeting

Wednesday, 22 March 2023

Kaya Wonju (Hello and Welcome)

Welcome to the City of Cockburn Inaugural Multicultural Reference Group Meeting. Tonight, is an excellent opportunity for everyone to get to know each other in a somewhat relaxed atmosphere.

I acknowledge the Whadjup people of the Nyungar Nation the traditional custodian of the land on which we are gathered today and I pay my respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

I extend that respect to first nation people who are with us tonight.

I acknowledge the presence of:

- Councillor Phoebe Corke;
- Councillor Tarun Dewan;
- Simone Sieber, Community Development Lead;
- Liz Vuchocho, Cultural Diversity Officer; and
- Multicultural Reference Group Members.

What an exciting time as we acknowledge and recognize each and every member of our diverse and rich multicultural community who have put their hand up to become part of the reference group.

As we continue to celebrate Harmony Week the City works to ensure events are held across our community to celebrate the occasion.

The City's community development team (Kari, Barbara, Simone and Liz) have worked tirelessly to bring the Multicultural Reference Group to fruition.

Please join with me in thanking them.

Yesterday – 21st March – was the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, and is part of Harmony Week, a celebration of

multiculturalism in Australia.

The message of Harmony Week celebrations is 'everyone belongs'.

This message of respect and belonging can be lived by each of us, every day, not just during Harmony Week.

Cultural diversity is one of Australia's greatest strengths.

This year marks a special time to reflect on our vibrant community, as we celebrate fifty years of multiculturalism.

Fifty years ago this year, the Hon Al Grassby AM, then Minister for Immigration, advanced the nation by establishing a policy of active, inclusive multiculturalism, which now sees Australia called home by migrants from more than 200 different countries.

Today, more than half of all Australians were either born overseas or have a parent who was born overseas.

At each of our citizenship ceremony we reflect on the diversity of those conferees who have applied for Australian Citizenship.

Music, song, dance, food, language and other cultural aspects of each person are to be treasured by us all.

I am particularly pleased to see several of our cultural groups managing language and customs school enabling their children and others to maintain those aspects of what is so special to retain and enable communication with family and friends from their home countries.

In closing, congratulations to each and every one of you who have stepped up to represent your communities.

I, along with Crs Corke and Dewan look forward to tonight's discussions and networking opportunities and to being an integral part of the reference group.

Enjoy the evening and again thanks to our community development team and each of you for being here tonight.

Thank you.