



1-8 JULY 2012

SPIRIT OF THE
TENT EMBASSY:
40 YEARS ON

**National Aboriginal and Islanders
Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC)
Flag Raising Ceremony 2012
Speech by
Mayor Logan K Howlett, JP
Monday 2 July 2012**

Good Morning.

I extend to each and every one of you a very warm welcome to the City of Cockburn on a lovely winter's day as we come together to celebrate NAIDOC Week and the many opportunities that we will have to share in the activities that are planned in our City.

I acknowledge the traditional owners of this land that we stand on today, the Noongar people.

I pay respect to the elders both past and present of the Noongar nation and extend that respect too all indigenous Australians who are present here today.

I welcome and acknowledge:

- The Reverend Sealín Garlett, the Joint Chair of the City of Cockburn Aboriginal Reference Group and other members of the Group;
- Samantha Mourish - Aboriginal Community Development Officer, Barbara Freeman, Family Services Manager and Councillor Val Oliver who are the support members of the Aboriginal Reference Group;
- Torres Strait and Islander Elders here today;
- Our local Reconciliation Group Members;
- Our Friends of Kwoborup (Jean Willis Centre);
- Mr Peter Tinley AM MLC, Member for Willagee;
- Mr Stephen Cain, Chief Executive Officer, members of the Executive Team and other members of staff of the City of Cockburn;
- Ladies and Gentlemen, girls and boys.

The theme for NAIDOC Week 2012 is:

‘Spirit of the Tent Embassy: 40 years on’.

This theme is reflected in the 2012 National NAIDOC Poster created by Amanda Joy Tronc and rightly named ‘Look at us now.’

It defines the hard fought battle of people of the day who stood in front of Parliament House (the Old Parliament House today) led by the four men who founded the Tent Embassy;

- Billy Craigie;
- Bert Williams;
- Michael Anderson; and
- Tony Coorey.

They dared to challenge – this year’s theme is about celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy and acknowledging the key contributors to its long history.

It celebrates the champions who lived to renew the spirit of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through the establishment of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy in 1972. Forty years ago, the embassy became a powerful symbol of unity.

Its founders instilled pride, advanced equality and educated the country on the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The National NAIDOC Poster is still on its way; however I’ll just ask you to close your eyes for a moment as I read out the various aspects of the message the poster portrays:

- The woman graduating and holding her degree shows our right to an education.
- The football star represents our sporting achievements.
- The nurse reflects a positive attitude towards health and the qualifications earned through hard work and study.
- The man in his work clothes shows our right to earn a wage, progress and be successful.
- The family owning their home shows our right to buy or rent and live in a home.
- The nine circles throughout the painting show communities and togetherness.
- The two white hands represent identity.
- The background colours represent the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags to reflect NAIDOC week
- The artwork shows that while history is behind us our culture is a part of our people, not dwindling but getting stronger the more our mob succeed and path the way for the future generations.

What a powerful message.

Ladies and gentlemen, girls and boys:

NAIDOC Week is an important time for all Australians as we acknowledge and celebrate our country's rich indigenous heritage and culture.

It is a time to recognise the significant contribution of indigenous people to modern Australia and the journey that we are all taking to make a better Australia.

Throughout the week and the year itself, we have increasing opportunities to absorb our Indigenous culture through the expression of music, song and dance, by our interactions in the community and of listening to stories passed down through the generations.

Importantly this symbolizes the journey forward and how we as a nation build on our successes and lay the foundations for our children and grandchildren and those that will follow them.

The Elected Members and staff of our City look forward to working collaboratively with the Aboriginal Reference Group and other Indigenous community members as we continue our journey down the path of implementing our 'Reconciliation Action Plan' and other initiatives.

While words are important it is the humility, compassion and sincerity accompanying our actions that deliver the real results and lead to a better tomorrow.

In closing, I thank Barbara Freeman, Samantha Mourish and other staff for their planning and organising of the flag raising ceremony and the entertainment and hospitality we will be enjoying shortly.

Let us all work together to facilitate the 2012 NAIDOC Week theme:

'Spirit of the Tent Embassy: 40 years on'

Ladies and Gentlemen, Girls and Boys, It is with great pleasure that I declare the City of Cockburn's NAIDOC week celebrations officially open.

Thank you for being here today to share in this occasion.

Unveiling of Indigenous Artist Painting

Good morning and welcome to this viewing of Aboriginal art that the City of Cockburn has acquired in recent years and to see the unveiling of another acquisition.

It is a collection that is growing with importance and one that truly reflects and showcases the artistic talents of a number of Indigenous artists in our community.

If you were present in 2009 you will have seen me unveiling a painting by up and coming artist Justin Slater.

In 2010 the City acquired, 'Yarning' by artist Mark Radloff.

In 2011 the City acquired, Beeliar Kep Boodja by artist Sharyn Egan.

Today I am delighted to unveil a painting titled 'Dance Ground' by Noel Morrison, a respected Noongar Elder in our community and wider afield.

He is also in great demand as a guest speaker, tour guide and is renowned for his 'Welcome to Country' presentations.

Noel has been painting for most of his life producing magnificent reflections of bushland settings and the City is proud to include this painting of Noel's in its collection.

Noel's signature sign off of Kyar relates to his tribal name. I'll ask Noel to come forward and join with me in the unveiling.

Ladies and gentlemen, girls and boys, I have great pleasure to join with Noel in unveiling 'Dance Ground'.

I'm certain you'll agree that it is a great piece of work and that it complements the other paintings on display today.

Please take your time to view the other paintings and the other artwork by the Kwoborup Group and the 'My Time' Group and then join us in the Function Room.

Thank you.