

**CARNARVON POLICE AND COMMUNITY YOUTH CENTRE
GWOONWARDU MIA GASCOYNE ABORIGINAL HERITAGE AND CULTURAL CENTRE**

Statement

HON PETER FOSTER (Mining and Pastoral) [6.22 pm]: Last Thursday, I travelled to Carnarvon in my electorate to accompany the Premier, the Minister for Police and Hon Kyle McGinn at two events—the official opening of the Carnarvon Police and Community Youth Centre and the announcement of a funding boost to Gwoonwardu Mia Gascoyne Aboriginal Heritage and Cultural Centre.

Carnarvon PCYC is located on the site of the former Carnarvon high school and has undergone a major \$1 million redevelopment to expand its capacity to better meet the needs of the young people in Carnarvon and surrounds and to encourage greater participation with its services. The facility includes a new gym, which has already attracted over 200 new members; refurbished change rooms and bathrooms; a newly constructed automatic workshop and commercial kitchen, in which it is hoped that certificate I courses will be offered in the future; new activity areas, including classrooms for study, a meeting room and reception area; replacement floor finishes, painting, new windows, security screens and blinds; upgraded security systems; and air conditioning, which I note is greatly appreciated by the users as the previous PCYC facility did not have adequate air conditioning.

The funding commitment was announced in April 2019 and highlights our government's support for programs aimed at reducing juvenile offending and improving safety across the community. This project, which is now delivered, will allow Carnarvon PCYC to enhance and grow its range of programs, which are aimed at positively engaging with young people in the local community.

We were joined at the event by the Commissioner of Police, Chris Dawson; the chair of the PCYC board, Geoff Stooke; the president of the Shire of Carnarvon, Eddie Smith; the principal of Carnarvon Community College, Ryan Govan; and Auntie Kath Ryan, who welcomed us to country with her grandsons. It was great to see some of the user groups at the events, and the kids were very excited and engaged with the PCYC staff. I would also like to congratulate the local manager, Bree Maher, for all her amazing work and advocacy towards this project. At this event, the Premier announced \$18 million in the 2021–22 state budget for police and community youth centres to further enhance their services and programs across WA, honouring our 2021 election commitment to PCYCs.

Following this event, we went to Gwoonwardu Mia Gascoyne Aboriginal Heritage and Cultural Centre and were taken on a tour by the centre manager, Kenneth Phillips, and the operations manager, Antoinette Roe, to share in the centre's successes. The centre is home to a cafe, tourist information centre, gallery and shop, emerging artists centre, outdoor performance space, and gardens that are based on the region's plants and how they are used by local Aboriginal people. It is also home to the *Burlganyja Wanggaya: Old People Talking—Listen, Learn and Respect* exhibition, which is a multi-award-winning interactive exhibit uniting and reflecting upon the culture and stories of the five Aboriginal language groups of the region: Yinggarda, Bayungu, Malgana, Thadgari and Thalanyji. This exhibit is popular with locals and tourists alike. It is helping to keep members of the community stay connected to culture and is supporting job creation for members of the community.

The cultural centre originally opened in 2005 but was closed in 2015 due to management concerns. Thanks to a \$2.5 million funding commitment in the 2019–20 state budget, the centre has been allowed to reopen and trade again. This funding was delivered in partnership with the Gascoyne Development Commission and the local Aboriginal community to again put the centre on a path to sustainability. While at the centre, the Premier announced that the government will invest a further \$3.5 million in Gwoonwardu Mia Gascoyne Aboriginal Heritage and Cultural Centre to enable it to continue its role as a valuable multipurpose community resource and tourism asset into the future. This new funding will see the development of a new *Yarning Seat* exhibit, which will capture the oral histories of the five main Aboriginal language groups of the Gascoyne, and the creation of a central gallery space for artists-in-residence and to support education and school programs.

The McGowan government, through the Gascoyne Development Commission and with traditional owners, has brought the centre back to life to nurture Aboriginal pride, business development and tourism opportunities for the Carnarvon and wider Gascoyne community. In partnership with the Western Australian Museum, the centre will incubate Aboriginal tourism, arts and cultural enterprises.

I want to acknowledge the support and work of the Minister for Regional Development in ensuring that the centre has reopened and is thriving again. I would also like to give a shout-out to Phillip Braun and the team at Mar E Sol Cafe Bistro on Boat Harbour Road in Carnarvon for the fantastic lunch we enjoyed on our day in Carnarvon. Phil, who took over the business earlier this year, said to me that they have been flat chat as Western Australians have been wandering out yonder and exploring Carnarvon and the Gascoyne region.

It was great to be in Carnarvon with the Premier, the Minister for Police and Hon Kyle McGinn for these two special occasions and to have the opportunity to highlight some of our government's investments in the Gascoyne region. Thank you.