Collie Chamber of Commerce & Industry Inc

MEDIA RELEASE
19 November 2026

Collie Celebrates International Men's Day with Community Event Focused on Resilience, Leadership and Connection

The Collie community came together on Thursday, 19 November, to celebrate International Men's Day, embracing this year's theme, The Future Is Everyone, and recognising the important role men and boys play in building a stronger, healthier and more inclusive community.

Held at the Collie Football Club, Collie's inaugural International Men's Day event brought together more than 70 attendees, including local businesses, community organisations, sporting clubs, students from Collie Senior High School and community members. The event provided an opportunity to connect, share experiences and celebrate the positive contributions of men and boys across the region.

The event was officially opened by Shire President Cr Ian Miffling, who welcomed attendees and acknowledged the importance of bringing the community together to recognise and celebrate International Men's Day. The program was expertly facilitated by MC Matthew Beahan from the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, who guided the event and speaker presentations throughout the day.

Attendees heard from three inspiring guest speakers, each sharing their unique perspectives and experiences on resilience, leadership, community involvement and personal growth.

Liam Shepherd from WA South West Plan Managers opened the speaker program with a powerful and deeply personal account of resilience following a car accident that left him paralysed from the chest down. Sharing his journey of overcoming adversity, Liam spoke about accessibility, inclusion and the importance of perspective, strong support networks and finding a way forward when faced with life's challenges.

Ash Stewart from Henderson Hardware followed, sharing his experiences as a local business owner and reflecting on the challenges and rewards of running a business in Collie. His message highlighted the importance of building relationships, supporting local businesses and people, and contributing to the community we are proud to call home.

The final guest speaker was keynote speaker Chance Bateman from the West Coast Eagles. A former AFL premiership player and Indigenous leader, Chance shared reflections from his journey in elite sport, including the challenges of navigating personal loss early in his career. He spoke openly about the importance of resilience, finding the right path, surrounding yourself with positive people and recognising the value of having strong support networks along the way.

Drawing on his experiences both on and off the football field, Chance highlighted the importance of leadership, identity, family, culture and personal growth. He also shared insights into his current role as Indigenous Player Development Manager at the West Coast Eagles, where he supports AFL and AFLW players through mentoring, wellbeing, cultural connection and development beyond football.

His message reinforced that success is not just about what we achieve, but also about the people who support us, the choices we make and the opportunities we create for others.

Following the speaker presentations, attendees enjoyed lunch and had the opportunity to network, connect with local organisations and businesses, and take part in door prizes. The event concluded with an engaging panel discussion, providing a further opportunity for conversation, reflection and sharing perspectives on the challenges and opportunities faced today.

Together, the three speakers and panel discussion created a valuable opportunity for people of different generations and backgrounds to connect, learn from one another and reinforce the message that no one needs to face life's challenges alone.

Shire President Cr Ian Miffling from the Shire of Collie said:
"The Shire commends the Collie Chamber of Commerce & Industry for their great initiative in bringing men of Collie together to listen to the personal stories of achievements from three wonderful guest speakers. The event provided a great opportunity for men to meet, listen, discuss and reflect on their personal life journeys."

Sasasha Shepherd, Chairperson of the Collie Chamber of Commerce & Industry, said:
"As this was our first International Men's Day event in Collie, we were thrilled with the turnout, with more than 70 people in the room. It was a fantastic start and a wonderful reflection of the community's willingness to come together, connect and support the day.

On a personal note, with one of our speakers being my son, it was particularly special to hear the conversations and see the community come together around such an important topic. International Men's Day provides an opportunity to recognise the challenges men and boys can face, celebrate their contributions and highlight the importance of community wellbeing, support networks and creating opportunities for meaningful conversations.

I am incredibly grateful to our speakers, sponsors, supporting organisations, local businesses and everyone who attended. It takes a community to bring something like this together, and the support we received was fantastic."

Matthew Beahan from the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations said:
"It was fantastic to see the Collie community come together for International Men's Day to have important conversations about men's mental health, wellbeing and resilience. What really stood out was the engagement from Collie Senior High School students, who listened intently and seemed to take a lot away from the speakers' experiences. Hopefully, the messages shared today will stay with them and encourage more open conversations about mental health and supporting one another."

Bec Stewart, VET Coordinator, Collie Senior High School Said:
"The guest speakers delivered powerful and relatable messages that our students genuinely connected with. The importance of surrounding yourself with positive influences and seeking support when needed strongly resonated with the group. Events like this help strengthen the values that make the Collie community so supportive and connected. A huge thank you to the organisers and the ANZAC Tour students and parents for the fantastic catering and a well-run event."

Liam Shepherd from WA South West Plan Managers said:
'It was an honour to be asked to share my own story or resilience, the support around me as a man in a small knit community, and how I overcame such diversity that young men may face in their lifetime on the first International Men's Day event held in Collie. I am hopeful the community will keep this tradition, and other people are able to support the future generation of Collie's men."

Ash Stewart from Henderson Hardware said:
"It was a pleasure to be involved in such a great initiative. Credit to Tara and the CCCI for organising the event. Chance and Liams stories were inspiring and hopefully together we have made a difference to some of the young men in the room"

Chance Bateman, West Coast Eagles said:
"The theme 'The Future Is Everyone' says it all. Building a healthier, stronger and more inclusive community isn't something we can do alone. It takes all of us. Thank you to everyone who attended, supported and helped bring this event to life."

Tara van Beuningen, CEO of Collie Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said:
"Events like International Men's Day demonstrate the strength of our community and what can be achieved when local businesses, organisations and individuals come together with a shared purpose.

It was fantastic to see more than 70 people attend our first International Men's Day event in Collie, bringing together local businesses, community groups and students to hear different perspectives and share experiences. Having opportunities for different generations to connect, learn from one another and have meaningful conversations is incredibly important.

The theme 'The Future Is Everyone' is a great reminder that building a strong and thriving community is something we all contribute to. By supporting one another, recognising the contributions of men and boys, and creating opportunities for connection, we help build a more inclusive and resilient Collie.

Thank you to everyone who supported the event, particularly our speakers, sponsors and local businesses. Their generosity and willingness to get involved are what make community initiatives like this possible."

Acknowledgement of Sponsors and Supporters
The Collie Chamber of Commerce & Industry extends its sincere thanks to the sponsors and supporters whose generosity and commitment helped make Collie's first International Men's Day event possible.

Special thanks to the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, Collie Eagles Football Club, Shire of Collie, South West Fire, South West Personnel and Everything Under the Sun.

We are incredibly grateful for their support and for the important role they play in backing local initiatives, strengthening community connections and creating opportunities for people across the Collie region.

The success of this inaugural event is a wonderful example of what can be achieved when a community comes together with a shared purpose.

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