

Rockhampton is a tropical winter getaway



A delightful part of Rockhampton. The beautiful Riverside Park in Rockhampton, on the banks of the Fitzroy River.

DON'T just dream about a tropical winter in sunny Central Queensland – register now to be inspired and challenged at the Sister Cities Australia (SCA) 2010 National Conference – “Real. Relevant and Rewarding” to be held in Rockhampton Region from 11 to 14 July 2010. You are invited to explore how to make your sister city relationships even more real, relevant and rewarding for your communities, while enjoying warm winter days at Capricorn Resort Yeppoon. With 20 kilometres of private beach frontage,

the resort is idyllically located to take maximum advantage of the Capricorn Coast. All rooms have a private balcony or terrace offering stunning views of the lush subtropical gardens, the lagoon swimming pool and the ocean. Please make your accommoda-

tion bookings and conference registration on the conference website at <http://sistercities.rockhampton.qld.gov.au> Then experience the enviable outdoor lifestyle and great hospitality that the Rockhampton Region offers and see why it is one of the most liveable communities in the world. From the city, to the beach and the bush the region has something for everyone.

Further information about this lovely part of Australia, including a calendar of events, is available on the council's website at www.rockhamptonregion.qld.gov.au The region offers an exciting range of free and low cost attractions for you to enjoy during your visit, including pristine beach-

es along the Capricorn Coast as well as the Yeppoon Main Beach, voted as Keep Australia Beautiful's “Queensland's Cleanest Beach 2009”, many parks and gardens, including the internationally recognised Botanic and Japanese Gardens, Rockhampton Art Gallery, Rockhampton Zoo, Murray Lagoon Wetlands, Mount Archer Lookout, Fitzroy River Parkland and Nature Walk, and Byfield National Park.

Rockhampton's 140 year old heritage-listed botanic gardens are regarded as among the best in regional Australia and host the tranquil Japanese Gardens designed by Japanese landscape architect, Kenzo Ogata as a gift from Japanese Sister City

Ibusuki.

Our most loved brothers, Cassie and Ockie the Chimpanzees are a must to see at the Rockhampton Zoo.

For a trip back in time, visit the interactive township of the Rockhampton Heritage Village or the Archer Park Rail Museum, take a mine tour in the historic mining town of Mount Morgan, visit the Dreamtime Cultural Centre, that showcases the history, cultural and traditional skills of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

Register now for the Sister Cities Australia 2010 National Conference in July, on 0419 736 000, and experience the warmth of the Rockhampton Region.

Rockhampton and Ibusuki celebrate 30 years of friendship

PINK Floyd's song, “Another Brick in the Wall”, George Lucas' classic movie, “Star Wars V: The Empire Strikes Back” and the Rockhampton Region's Sister City relationship with Ibusuki in Japan all started in 1980.

Back when Malcolm Fraser was Australia's prime minister.

Rockhampton Regional Council mayor Brad Carter said he was excited to host the Sister Cities Australia National Conference, to showcase the Rockhampton Region to the rest of Australia, and add to the 30th anniversary celebrations of the region's sister city relationship with Ibusuki in Japan.

Cr Carter said Rockhampton this year celebrated 30 years of embracing opportunities for cultural and educational exchange with our Japanese relatives in our sister city of Ibusuki.

“Friendships like this build trust and respect over the years, which builds economic, business and cultural development opportunities for our community. I encourage you to register for this conference to examine your own sister city relationships,” he said.

The Sister Cities Australia 2010 National Conference will attract delegates from countries including the USA, Japan, China, South Korea and New Zealand. One of Rockhampton's successful sister city programs, the Sister City Snapshots Photo Competition is held each year, and this year's winning entries will be exhibited on site at the conference. Sister City Snapshots is a photo competition where residents pro-

vide snapshots that showcase their Central Queensland lifestyle to relatives in their Japanese sister city.

The theme for this year is Sister City Snapshots this year is “Celebrate!” and all photographs entered must not only showcase the great Rockhampton Region lifestyle, but also how we celebrate. The photos are exhibited both in the Rockhampton Region and in Ibusuki and on both councils' websites.

One of most appealing things about the Rockhampton Region's beautiful Capricorn Coast, just 30 minutes from Rockhampton, is the laid back, sand-between-your-toes friendliness of this coastal community.

You will see that you just can't get enough of a good thing, when you take the time to enjoy the pristine beaches and relaxed lifestyle of the Capricorn Coast, especially during a tropical winter.

Yeppoon, the major seaside town of the Capricorn Coast offers a relaxed casual atmosphere.

There is something to suit everyone's tastes with its variety of entertainment, sporting facilities, restaura-

rants, bistros, quaint cafes, licensed clubs, hotels, and an array of outdoor attractions. Or take a day trip to Emu Park and stop in at the Rosslyn Bay and Keppel Bay Marinas.

This is the perfect place to enjoy a coffee while gazing out over the luxury yachts and boats in the marina's turquoise water.

Emu Park is a quaint fishing village, a 20 minute drive from Yeppoon, and home to the famous ‘Singing Ship’ - a soaring white sculpture that ‘sings in the wind’.

Other attractions on the Capricorn Coast include the award-winning Capricorn Caves, Cooberrie Park where you can cuddle a koala, hold a snake and hand feed friendly

kangaroos, Capricorn Coast Trail Rides for an adventure on horseback, Causeway Lake Boat Hire to explore the diverse and beautiful area, the largest collection of Peter Brock cars and memorabilia

in the country, Koorana Crocodile Farm, Nob Creek Pottery, and for the thrill seekers, you can learn to Surf on Farnborough Beach or Tandem Skydive with Skydive Capricorn Coast.



Footprints of the homo sapien along the beautiful Capricorn Coast where you will find plenty of adventure.

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President's message

SINCE my last report in the Sister Cities News we, your executive, have been fairly busy working on a number of issues.

Following on from our very successful 2009 Conference in Tamworth it has been all systems go to be in readiness for the 2010 event in Rockhampton, or as they keep reminding us, Rock Vegas.

During a visit and meetings in February the program was ratified and I can assure you the array of speakers and topics will be very relevant to all those who attend. The organising committee has done a wonderful job in pulling everything together and is offering a great event in a delightful location for a very affordable price. Once again the youth program is packed full of exciting leadership and team building challenges for every delegate and I urge you to give your communities youth the opportunity to explore and grow within themselves. Whilst speaking of youth. How exciting for Belinda Williams to be offered the opportunity to speak and represent the youth of Australia at this year's Sister Cities New Zealand (SCNZ) conference.

Many would remember Belinda as a former youth delegate and a team leader in Tamworth.

We wish her well and I am looking forward to her presentation as this year for the first time in over a decade, I as your president, will be attending the conference to represent Sister Cities Australia (SCA).

Really looking forward to meeting up with some of our past visitors and returning the commitment SCNZ has given to Sister Cities Australia for many years.

Membership is still of some concern to us as we seem to be basically holding our own where we would all like to see an increase.

A personal membership certainly shows your individual commitment to Sister Cities and it is still only \$55 a year.

As you are all possibly aware by now, our secretary for the past 10, Margaret Evans, has decided to hang up her typewriter ribbon at the 2010 conference.

Her term doesn't actually expire until 2011, however, Marg has decided to jump ship early so that a new incumbent has some time to settle in prior to the workload associated with an election year.

I know that all the executive and members would wish me to thank Marg for her time and effort over this time and wish her well in whatever she may take on in the future.

Thanks Marg.

Following on from that the executive decided that no decision would be made on a replacement until after the Rockhampton conference.

Finally I wish to comment on the national awards.

The criteria and number of sections has been streamlined and made much easier for entries to be prepared. This year I am happy to report that there has been an increase in entries and I hope this trend continues.

These awards are a great way to showcase to your community and the broader sister cities community what your particular city has achieved.

I look forward to sharing time with you all in Rockhampton.

Yours in Sister Cities
Bill,
president SCA.

International partnerships

SISTER Cities Australia is contacted from time to time by members in relation to approaches being made to them to establish links with cities in various countries.

Should a member be contacted by any person, association, organisation, group or other entity claiming to be associated or linked in any way with Sister Cities Australia it is strongly recommended that they contact the national secretary to establish the bona fides of such a claim to avoid issues that may later be regretted.

The only international partnerships and affiliations currently recognised by Sister Cities Australia are:-
China- Chinese Peoples Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC)

Japan - Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR)

Korea - Korean Local Authority for International Relations (KLAFIR)

New Zealand - Sister Cities New Zealand (SCNZ).

United States America - Sister Cities International (SCI).

Secretary's message

I AM saddened to say that this will be my last secretary's column in the Sister Cities News, however, pleased that I have been able to contribute to the extent in which the organisation has moved in the past 10 years.

Yes, it's been 10 years since I was first elected as secretary, which was in Adelaide in 2000.

During this time I have been able to contribute to what our members have seen as a professional and important body within the sister cities movement.

Although the elections are not until 2011, I have decided to step down now allowing the current executive to seek an alternative person for the position.

I have developed a procedures document to make it easier for the new person to take on the role.

Although this position has been on a voluntary basis, I have been given the opportunity to use skills that I have not been able to use in my current employment.

Opportunities included, speaking at a Sister Cities International conference in Dallas, Texas, presenting at Sister Cities New Zealand's annual conference on two occasions, facilitating sessions at our own annual conferences, being part of a delegation to China on two occasions, speaking at various sister city meetings and openings and meeting so many wonderful and like minded people within the movement.

I guess the most thrilling and exciting opportunity was when I was nominated and accepted to carry the Commonwealth Games baton in my very home town of Altona. This was because of my local and national voluntary work within sister cities. What an honour and privilege and something to talk about with my grandchildren in years to come.

I must acknowledge my council, Hobsons Bay for allowing me the time and resources to be able to carry out this role most times within my normal working day.

I would also like to thank Glenn O'Sullivan my director who has not only allowed me to perform this role but encouraged me along the way.

So a special thanks to Hobsons Bay and Glenn for their support. I would also like to acknowledge the current and past executive members for their support and hope they continue to move the organisation forward in the best interest of sister cities. I will be attending our annual conference in Rockhampton in July this year and hope to meet with most of you then. I have enjoyed my time as secretary and will continue to support sister cities through my local sister city committee and within the State of Victoria.

Marg Evans.

Marrickville support for Madeira

MARRICKVILLE Council has allocated money, and will support fundraising efforts for the flood affected Portugese island of Madeira.

Marrickville mayor Sam Iskandar said the island, and in particular the capital city of Funchal, was badly damaged by floods and landslides during late February.

He said at least 42 people perished and more than 250 were injured in the disaster. Many people were left homeless and key infrastructure such as roads, bridges, communications and public buildings damaged.

Marrickville Council has enjoyed an active sister city relationship with Funchal since 1996. The Madeiran community in Marrickville is very active with the Madeira Club and folklore groups involved in community activities, especially the annual Bairro Português Food and Wine Fair. This year's fair hosted António Fernandes da Silva Braga, Secretary of State of the Portuguese Communities in the XVIII Constitutional Government, along with his Chief of Staff Dr Pedro Oliveira and his legal adviser Dr Carla Freire.

Cr Iskandar said with Marrickville's strong Portugese presence, it was obvious that the Marrickville council should have a sister city in Portugal.

"I was deeply saddened to hear of the devastating floods and mudslides on Madeira.

"We have a substantial number of Portuguese people living in the Marrickville local government area, particularly in Petersham, and many of them had an agonising wait for news from loved ones.

"I have written to the mayor of Funchal Miguel Albuquerque, and the president of Madeira's regional government Alberto Joao Jardim, and offered our sincere condolences and profound sympathy.

"The Bairro Português Food and Wine Fair is important to the people of Marrickville because it brings us together to celebrate the cultural traditions of a significant part of our community.

"The fair sets a wonderful example of fostering cultural tolerance and harmony, especially to our young people who should be proud of their cultural backgrounds.

"This year the fair took on an even greater significance because of its contribution to the appeal," Councillor Iskandar said.

Regional meeting for southeast Melbourne groups

SISTER City groups from Melbourne's south east held a successful regional meeting that maintained momentum after last year's national conference at Tamworth.

The meeting was hosted by the City of Casey and held at Cranbourne.

Delegates represented the Casey Global Friendships Advisory Committee, Latrobe City Council, City of Greater Dandenong, Frankston City Council, and the Frankston-Susono Friendship Association.

Casey Manager Community Strengthening Janette Green said the Sister Cities Australia national conference was often the only opportunity to meet with

colleagues and discuss issues relating to sister city programs.

"This regional meeting provided a further wonderful opportunity for participants to network, talk about current sister city issues and share ideas to further inspire our sister city activities," Ms Green said.

The meeting dealt with four key topics of mutual interest, using technologies to strengthen sister city relationships, cultural exchange, home hosting, engaging youth in sister city programs, and gaining greater community involvement in sister city activities and community committees.

Latrobe City Council, international relations officer Jie Liu, shared her experiences from a recent visit to sister cities in Takasago, Japan and Taizhou, China.

Jie was part of a delegation to further strengthen sister city relationships, develop cultural and business ties, and to plan for an indigenous garden in Taizhou.

A further meeting is planned for next month where the concept of establishing sister city relationships within Australia will be discussed, along with potential economic benefits of sister city relationships, and the future of overseas exchanges in the current global financial crisis.



From left Dandenong councillor Angela Long, Casey Global Friendships support officer Kristin Sweeney, Latrobe City Council, international relations officer, Jie Liu, Casey team leader community support Lisa Speirs, Casey Global Friendships Advisory Committee delegates Michele Halsall, Kay Vrieze, and Judith Heeps, Frankston-Susono Friendship Association delegate, Chris Hodgins.

Port Stephens and Tateyama pals

DURING November 2009, a delegation from Port Stephens, New South Wales (NSW) travelled to Tateyama, in Honshu, Japan for the signing of a sister cities agreement.

This was a milestone for the very successful 10 year friendship cities relationship agreement signed in 1999. Regular visits

between the two cities resulting in many strong personal friendships and a growing understanding of the similarities and differences within the two communities.

Both are small coastal regions with a strong emphasis on tourism.

Port Stephens mayor Bruce MacKenzie headed the dele-

gation, including the general manager, councillors and members of the Port Stephens Sister Cities Committee.

Members enjoyed an extensive cultural program of history, music and dance.

The warm hospitality of the people of Tateyama made this a memorable visit.

Tateyama mayor Kenichi

Kanamaru, in February 2010, led a similar delegation from his city to Port Stephens for an affirmation signing ceremony of the agreement.

At the request of the Tateyama delegation the members enjoyed the natural beauty of the area and visited several businesses, including the Port Waratah Coal Services at Kooragang Island, one of the world's largest coal handling operations.

These activities highlighted the sharing of ideas and expertise of our local government leaders while strengthening friendship bonds. Signing this agreement fulfilled the dream of two men, Hideo Suzuki and John Bartlett.

They participated in the 1999 friendship cities signing and each in his own community worked to develop the friendship bond between Tateyama and Port Stephens.

Sadly both men died in the proceeding year.

They had, however, the satisfaction of knowing that planning had begun for the signing.

While in Japan a Port Stephens delegation visited the grave of Suzuki-San and in Port Stephens the Tateyama delegation visited the grave of John Bartlett.

The spirit of both men permeated the official ceremonies and the laughter of friendship during shared food and activities in Tateyama and Port Stephens.

The signing ceremony has strengthened the bond that had been developing between Tateyama and Port Stephens. Evaluation of the achievements over 10 years has renewed the desire to nurture and expand the program.

Mackay Matsuura student drawing exchange

STUDENTS living in Mackay, Australia and Matsuura in Japan will be able to showcase their artwork by using a drawing exchange established last year by the two sister cities. Students were asked that their drawings and watercolours convey impressions of their immediate environment and offer an insight into their lives.

Matsuura drawings were exhibited at Mackay Regional Council's art gallery, Artspace Mackay, during the Christmas school holidays.

Artspace Mackay staff ran holiday workshops in conjunction with the exhibition and this provided opportunity for Mackay students to view the pictures and create artwork of their own.

In exchange for the works on display at Artspace Mackay, students from Mercy College, Mackay, were invited to create drawings of where they lived for exhibition in Matsuura.

More than 40 students submitted drawings, representing life experiences in Mackay, from farm life, going to the beach, flora and fauna,

New sister city group for Mackay

MACKAY has formed a community sister cities committee in addition to the formal council advisory committee.

Mackay Regional Council Mackay Matsuura Sister City Advisory Committee suggested the move and asked residents with previous contact to sister city events to be involved.

Meetings were arranged after a strong response.

The aim of forming this committee was to provide a forum for discussion and suggestions for itineraries for student and adult tour groups from Matsuura.

The group will be involved in planning informal community welcome functions to help increase community awareness of the sister city relationship.

President of the new committee becomes a member of the council advisory committee to create a link between the two groups.

The new community committee is enthusiastically planning to welcome a group of 30 adult visitors from Matsuura later this year.



Signing the agreement on Wednesday 2 November at Tateyama. From left: Chairman of Port Stephens Sister Cities Committee chairman Ted Tindall, Port Stephens mayor Bruce MacKenzie, Tateyama mayor Kenichi Kanamaru, Tateyama International Exchange Society president, Kenichi Miyazaki.



Members of the Tateyama delegation visit the grave of John Bartlett on Birubi Point.

Japanese war diary returned to family

By Leigh McClintock

I LIVE in North Sydney and received a polite note from the City Council, sent to all ratepayers, to say the council had asked the State Government to approve a rate rise of more than 13 per cent.

Costs were up, fees from development approvals were down.

The State Government said no, so the next note from the council told me I would have to mow my own nature strip, put up with potholes in the roads and generally revise down my ideas of what local government services should be.

I don't think North Sydney is unique. All over the country local government struggles to manage financially.

The Independent Inquiry into the Financial Sustainability of New South Wales (NSW) Local Government in 2006 asked whether or not councils were sustainable and answered no.

Under the circumstances it is hardly surprising that many councils find it hard to give high priority to their sister city relationships.

Australia has hundreds of sister city, state, and port relationships with more than 100 with counterparts in Japan.

It is not hard to find examples where the sisters have grown apart and rea-

sons why initial enthusiasm flags.

The "champions" of a relationship move on.

One sister may develop much faster than the other.

Local government amalgamations introduce confusing competition.

Ratepayers and local media are always ready to pounce on any "wasteful" expenditure - anything that can't demonstrate a quick and clearly quantifiable pay-off.

And yet, at their best sister city relationships can produce wonderful results, as I was reminded last month. The story concerns the wartime diary of Maruyama Tsuzuku, and I would like to share it with you.

Mr Maruyama was a sailor in the Japanese navy.

No one knows what happened to him, but he probably died in the Battle of Buna, in the New Guinea arena, near the end of 1942.

He had kept a diary, which was found by an Australian serviceman and decades later found its way to the Australian Army Artillery Museum on Sydney Harbour's North Head.

By that time, nobody knew who had written it.

The diary was noticed by a Japanese visitor to the museum, who suggested

that it be translated, and its provenance determined.

The Royal Australia Artillery Historic Company (RAAHC) took it down the hill to Manly City Council.

It was translated and its author identified.

His family in Japan was found, and the diary returned.

The first part of the handover took place at Manly Council Chambers on 5 August.

I was honoured to be invited.

The event made page 6 of the Sydney Morning Herald and was featured in the news bulletins that night of at least two commercial television channels.

Is the return of a diary a matter of national importance? Probably not.

It doesn't measure up to, say, a new trade agreement.

But at the personal level, it was clear everybody involved felt that something really worthwhile had been achieved.

And quite possibly the sort of goodwill created is just what's needed to sustain the right mood for our national leaders to keep investing political capital in closer ties.

But the Maruyama diary story could happen only because of Manly's sister city relationships.

The Japanese visitor who set off the whole process was part of a student exchange group visiting Manly from Odawara, with which Manly has a "friendship city" relationship.

The reason the RAAHC took the diary to the Council was because the Manly community knows that the City's ties with Japan are the real thing.

My congratulations to Mayor Jean Hay, Cr Alan Le Surf, chairperson of Manly's Sister Cities Committee, and Sister Cities Co-ordinator, Elaine Kent. Australia Japan Society is proud to have the City of Manly as a member. Several of the smaller societies essentially build their activities around their home town Japanese sister city relationships.

The rest of us would do well to think about whether we too can increase our own effectiveness by contributing to the sister city relationships.



Manly City Council sister cities coordinator Elaine Kent, Australia Japan Society president Leigh McClintock, secretary Ian Stewart, and Manly City council Sister Cities Committee chairperson Cr Alan Le Surf.

Devonport star festival drew children

LAST year Devonport Sister Cities Association held a Star (Tanabata) festival in conjunction with its sister city Minamata in Japan.

The festival involved 300 children from each city who sent art work between their countries.

Association president Alida Beattie said the festival

involved 600 families, five Australian and 11 Japanese schools.

"The works were displayed in the Devonport Library and the prize winners were given pride of place during the last week of the festival.

"This also involved extended families and promoted our sister cities work to more people," she said.

The Japanese festival celebrates the meeting of lovers

Orihime and Hikoboshi.

They are in ancient legend represented by two stars Vega and Altair.

The festival is ancient and marks the passage of the two stars through their cycle as they come into alignment.

They tell the story of the lovers who were separated for a year and could meet only on one day when the stars were close together.



From left: Devonport Sister Cities Association secretary Joan Andrews, newsletter editor Bill Washington, and president Alida Beattie.

Sister City treasures are priceless

DEVONPORT Sister Cities Association has a fine collection of artifacts and treasures received during 20 years of friendship with sister city Minamata, in Japan.

Association president Alida Beattie said some of the items were extremely valuable and one prized wedding dress had a replacement value of more than \$15,000. A section of the collec-

tion has been on display at the Devonport Entertainment Centre. Alida said some of the items were given to Devonport during the early association with Isahaya in Japan, but mostly from the citizens of Minamata.

"The gifts have been catalogued and while some may not be all that valuable from a materialistic aspect they are special in other

ways," she said.

Four careers and local government students from Reece High School helped Devonport council staff and sister cities association members create the asset register. The association newsletter said the gifts portrayed aspects of every day life in Japan and of the rich Japanese culture that developed over centuries.

Mackay Matsuura milestone seals a tradition

WHEN 35 Mackay region residents anticipated their arrival in the City of Matsuura, Japan on Friday 27 November 2009, they did not know what to expect other than the usual fantastic hospitality of their sister city partners.

However, this visit led by Mackay mayor Col Meng and committee chair Cr Dave Perkins, was set to be more special due to the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the sister city relationship.

On arrival, guests were treated to an interesting bus trip from Fukuoka in Japan's south west to Matsuura, which included a visit to Takashima Island, famous in Japanese history.

Two massive Mongol forces were decimated on the island by typhoons, in 1274 and 1281, saving Japan from certain invasion.

The typhoons were named "divine winds" for which the Japanese word is Kamikaze.

During the five day stay in Matsuura, the visitors were treated to a diverse range of cultural experiences including home hosted dinners and an official dinner.

Taiko drumming and performers playing the seven Lucky Gods entertained the crowd. There was also the traditional smashing of sake kegs using large mallets - when on this particular occasion Cr Meng was a bit late with his mallet and was covered in Sake.

The formal part of the visit involved an exchange of gifts when Cr Meng presented a beautiful Mackay crafted copper-etched plaque to Matsuura mayor Ikuhiro Tomohiro. Cr Perkins presented chair of the Matsuura International Friendship Association, Hiroyuki Takahashi, with a plaque crafted from unique Mackay cedar, showing the names of mayors and committee chairs of each city for the past 20 years.

In return, the people of Matsuura staged a magnificent ceremony in front of the Matsuura City administration building at which two monuments were unveiled - showing the logos of the Matsuura and Mackay regional councils.

While in Matsuura, Cr Meng and Cr Perkins had a formal meeting with the general managers of two large power stations in Matsuura that supply power to three of Japan's main islands.

The meeting was to encourage the power stations to use more coal from the Mackay region's Hay Point Dalrymple Bay facilities.

The Mackay-Matsuura bond is very special to the people in the Mackay region and this particular meeting is part of a plan to continue the fantastic cultural relationship between the two cities as well as developing an economic relationship to form between the two regions.

Mackay citizens visit Matsuura every two years and for this 20 year anniversary visit, Mackay had three former Mackay residents who went on the first trip in 1989, Mark Leyland, Hilda McLean, Bill Molloy.

Mr Leyland now works in Brisbane, Ms McLean had acted as interpreter on previous visits and lives in Brisbane, and retired former councillor, Bill Molloy returned to Matsuura for the 9th time.

Another group of Matsuura citizens will visit Mackay in July 2010 to continue the biennial tradition.

Youth exchanges - the life blood of sister cities



Students surround the official party seated. From left: Mrs Leonie Butler, Cr Rob Butler, Perth Lord Mayor Lisa Scaffidi, Deputy Lord Mayor John Tognolini, student escort Tomoyo Oda, Consul General of Japan Torao Sato, Mrs Keiko Sato. Students are seated either end of the party. Behind are visiting and host students.

PERTH welcomed 12 students from Kagoshima's Immaculate Heart College in Japan for exchange with Perth schools. The visitors were in Perth from Sunday 14 February to Friday 12 March 2010. Immaculate Heart College has worked in the exchange program with Perth for 20 years. Perth schools, Ursula Frayne Catholic College, Lumen Christi College, St Brigid's College, St Norbert's College, and Iona Presentation College were also involved in the exchange program. Students stayed with host families from the schools they attended, participated in classes, and saw the sights of Perth. Perth Lord Mayor Lisa Scaffidi, Deputy Lord Mayor John Tognolini, and Cr Rob Butler, on Monday 8 March, hosted the students and their escorting teacher, Tomoyo Oda, at Council House for a morning tea reception. They were accompanied by host students and families, language teachers, and principals of the schools. Consul-General of Japan, Torao Sato, and Mrs Keiko Sato attended the reception. Immaculate Heart Students entertained guests with a well known pop song and a traditional Japanese dance.

Sydney and Portsmouth enjoy strong historical bonds

SYDNEY Portsmouth Sister City Committee holds an anniversary cocktail party at the Sydney Town Hall on or about 13 May each year to recognise the departure of the First Fleet from Portsmouth, England on 13 May 1787. The Sydney-Portsmouth sister city relationship, formed just over 25 years ago, recognises these strong historical ties. Guest speakers at the functions have been people such as former Governor General of Australia, Major General

Michael Jeffrey, Governor of New South Wales Professor Marie Bashir, leading historians, and curators. Their addresses highlighted the trials and tribulations of the people in the First Fleet and the history of early European settlement. This year the event will be held on Friday 14 May and the committee is delighted that the Sydney Town Hall, which has been closed for 23 months for a \$40 million upgrade, will again be the venue.

Sydney and Nagoya to mark 30 years of friendship

SYDNEY and Nagoya, Japan, will hold interrelating activities to celebrate the 30th anniversary of their sister city relationship. The Sydney - Nagoya Sister City Committee is working closely with the International Relations Division of Nagoya City Council to plan these festivities. Their anniversary events will include unveiling the refurbished Nagoya Gardens in Hyde Park, and a photographic exhibition in Parliament House, Sydney. The exhibition will show wildlife photographs taken in Taronga Zoo, Sydney and Nagoya Higashiyama Zoo, Japan. The zoos have a highly valued sister relationship. Delegations from Nagoya are expected in Sydney later this year and members of the Sydney - Nagoya Sister City Committee plan to attend the Nagoya Festival and sister city celebrations in Nagoya in October. Chair of the Sydney-Nagoya

Sister City Committee, Jenni Shipp, said the anniversary celebrations marked a milestone in the relationship and would reinforce and extend the warm feelings of friendship each city had for the other.

Vasto delegation firms Perth ties

PERTH and the Italian city of Vasto reinforced their strong bonds during a visit by a 26 member Vastese delegation from Wednesday 20 to Wednesday 27 January 2010. Vasto mayor Luciano Lapenna led the group which included senior civic officials and representatives of community groups and emigrant associations. Perth Lord Mayor Lisa Scaffidi hosted an official reception for

the visitors at the Perth Town Hall. They were also guests at the Australia Day citizenship ceremony and celebrations and participated in tourism and trade workshops. Cr Scaffidi said the visit marked the 20th anniversary of the sister city relationship and reciprocated a City of Perth visit to Vasto which she led in July last year.

"In recognition of this most significant anniversary, a plaque was unveiled at Council House," Cr Scaffidi said. She said sister city relationships were widely acknowledged as being positive elements in a city's diversity and identity, particularly when they reflected historical influences that shaped a city. "In the case of Vasto, there are very strong historical links based initially on Post-War immigration and the subsequent development of a strong Vastese community here in Perth. "People with Vasto links are now prominent in the Perth business community and there are businesses, such as the Vastese bakery in North Perth, which help maintain cultural influences. "There is also a very active Vasto Club and an Abruzzese Emigrant Association in Perth. "For its part, Vasto holds Perth in very high regard and there are regular visits involving people from the two cities, in particular students. "Although our cities are in different hemispheres, this trip emphasises our continuing strong and meaningful links. "There is a passionate desire within our Vastese community that second, third and future generations remain aware of their ancestral and cultural origins," the Lord Mayor said. Acting Italian Consul in Perth, Giorgio Pitolli, said the relationship was signed 20 years ago. "The sistership agreement between Perth and Vasto was the result of a need on both sides to establish and maintain a special link for collaboration in the economic, social and cultural fields, of the two partners with a particular sector of the Italian community in Western Australia. "A worthy example is the ongoing student exchange to and from Vasto," he said.



Lord Mayors Lisa Scaffidi and Vasto mayor Luciano Lapenna with a plaque unveiled to mark the visit.

Vasto on the Italian coast

VASTO is a coastal city, in the picturesque Abruzzo Region, on the Adriatic Sea in southern central Italy. It is a beach resort with industries such as glass, ceramics, brickmaking, candlemaking, and wine production. The town was known as Histonium in ancient times, has a 13th century castle, and the cathedral has a façade and portal dating from the same period. The sister city agreement between Perth and Vasto was signed on 18 December 1989, and founded on a desire to develop strong social and cultural partnerships, taking into account the high rate of immigration to Western Australia. Lord Mayors of both cities, on 24 March 2004, officially opened Lake Vasto on the Swan River foreshore at the eastern entry to Perth, and on 13 January 2008 a monument to Italian immigrants funded by the Abruzzese Emigrant Association, was erected adjacent to Lake Vasto.

Almost 20,000 people of Vastese descent live in Perth, including second and third generations. They are active in all spheres of city life. Western Australia has 96,000 people of Italian ancestry, amounting to four per cent. During July 2009 Perth Lord Mayor, Lisa Scaffidi, accompanied by three councillors and representatives of Perth's Abruzzese community made the first official visit to Vasto in 10 years to mark the 20th anniversary of the Sister City relationship. Several cultural exchanges and civic visits between the two cities, including regular student exchange visits, have also been held. President of the Abruzzese Emigrant Association of Australia Albert Di Lallo said Perth welcomed many Vastesi, particularly during the post-war period in the 1950s and 60s. "It has become their home and the future of their families," he said.

Teachers are important link in Toowoomba exchanges

A lesson in love for Eric



TOOWOOMBA teacher Eric Maslen went to Japan to teach English, but received a lesson in love himself.

He went as part of the Toowoomba Regional Council (TRC) Assistant English Teacher (AET) exchange program with sister city Takatsuki, and the adventure of his life began.

"When I first came to Takatsuki on the sister city program, life in Japan was all I thought it to be and more.

"I had great work colleagues and friends, the Takatsuki International Association introduced us to some fun and interesting Japanese activities, and both my work and social life was fulfilling," Eric said.

However, a new and most pleasant surprise awaited him.

After going to Okanmuri School's Open Day, something every AET participates in, Eric headed into Takatsuki.

It was here he met Ikumi Oono.

"At first, we were just friends meeting sporadically, however, over time we became much closer, and I am very happy to say that we are now married.

"When I first came to Japan, I knew I was bound for many new experiences, however, never in my wildest dreams would I have thought that getting married would be one of them. I consider myself very lucky," Eric said. Eric and Ikumi were married in Toowoomba on Saturday 20 March 2010 at St James Church followed by a reception at Gipps Restaurant. The couple shared the day with 11 guests from Takatsuki who arrived for a big weekend of celebrations, shopping and taking in the sights. Toowoomba mayor Peter Taylor and councillors officially welcomed the group at a mayoral reception in City Hall on Friday 19 March.

Toowoomba Regional Council is responsible for recruiting the AETs on behalf of the Takatsuki City Council where they help prepare lessons and lead language based activities and projects.

Further information is available from TRC International Secretariat Jane Morey on 07 4688 6747.

My last Sister Cities News

BECAUSE I have resigned my membership of Sister Cities Australia I expect this to be my last production of Sister Cities News. I wish to thank contributors for their support. I intend, however, to retain my interest in sister cities at local level. Jim Mynard, Editor.

QUINTON Maddern is the first to admit he has only the very basics of the Japanese language covered, nonetheless, he's ready to jump in the deep end and try his hand as an Assistant English Teacher (AET) in Takatsuki.

The quietly spoken Crows Nest man has a special twinkle in his eye as he talks of the adventures that await when he travels to Japan this month to take up his new position.

Quintin will be joined by fellow AETs Vivien Doneley, Jessica McDonald and Rebecca McCartney.

"We'll be in Japan for a year.

"It will be a considerable culture shock for us, but that's the whole reason for doing this.

"It is a wonderful opportunity to experience another country and be a part of the environment," Quintin said.

Quintin said the new AETs undertook Japanese language and cultural lessons as part of their induction and were also given the opportunity to meet past AETs to

hear about their experiences.

The four participants have been selected as part of the 2010

mayor Peter Taylor and councillors at City Hall.

"I know these young people will make

experience they have received, both personal and professional, cannot be understated.

Taylor said.

Cr Taylor said the young teachers would also be able to see the beauty of Japan and become immersed in the rich culture of the country through sightseeing and local festivals.

They will join another team of four already working in Takatsuki - Eric Maslen, Adam Pigozzo, Nathan Campbell and Louise Kelly - who have extended their contracts.

And another team heads off

intake into the international program and will work in schools helping prepare lessons, as well as leading language based activities and projects.

The group recently met with Toowoomba

great ambassadors and continue our strong sister city relationship with Takatsuki.

"Since the AET concept first started, we have had 54 people fly the flag for the region and the expe-

"Job opportunities, life-long friendships and even a couple of marriages have resulted from the program, so I'd encourage anyone to put their hand up and be a part of this great concept," Cr



Toowoomba Regional Council mayor Peter Taylor wishes Vivien Doneley, Jessica McDonald, Rebecca McCartney and Quintin Maddern the very best for their upcoming trip to Japan as Assistant English Teachers.

Sydney in harmony with San Francisco

SYDNEY has dedicated San Francisco Place at Harmony Park in Surry Hills to recognize the City of San Francisco, launch Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras 2010, and to celebrate the historic relationship between the two cities.

Sydney Deputy Lord Mayor Philip Black said correspondence from San Francisco to Sydney seeking support against homo-

phobia resulted in Sydney's first gay pride activities in 1978.

Cr Black said the initiative led to the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras now in its 33rd year.

Deputy director of San Francisco International Airport, Kandace Bender, who was in Sydney to represent San Francisco mayor Gavin Newsom said San Francisco was proud of the

relationship with Sydney and the role San Francisco played in the development of Sydney's Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras.

"A commitment to gay rights is a distinct part of San Francisco's identity as a whole and there is hardly a street in our city where a rainbow flag isn't flying," Kandace said.

The San Francisco Sydney relationship is more than

40 years old and the longest standing sister city relationship for Sydney.

More than iconic bridges and harbours, both cities aim to foster a legacy of acceptance throughout the world.

"San Francisco celebrates 40 years of pride this year and Sydney celebrates 40 years since the birth of the gay community here," said Ms Bender.

"The City of Sydney is Australia's only Global City and our international links are part of that positioning.

"We believe that we must act globally and use our international partnerships to share information and ideas - this is included in the City of Sydney vision, Sustainable Sydney 2030.

"San Francisco Place is positioned at the northeast corner of Harmony Park, which was named to reflect the locale's diverse communities," she said.

The park is located one street away from Oxford Street - Sydney's original GLBT neighbourhood - bordered by Goulburn, Brisbane and Hunt streets.



Deputy Lord Mayor and member of Sydney's Sister City Committees Phillip Black, at left, (right) Consul-General of USA Mrs Judith Fergin, Lord Mayor of Sydney, Clover Moore MP, centre, with comedian Bob Downe and friends.

Marg retires after decade of service

LONG serving Sister Cities Australia president Kevin Hill said Margaret Evans served the national executive for 10 years as a highly professional secretary and also enjoyed her life with a little bit of fun.

Margaret was first elected to the then Australian Sister Cities Association (ASCA) national executive at the Adelaide conference in 2000 after serving as secretary of the Hobsons Bay International Friendship Association for 10 years. Margaret's work as a dedicated volunteer to the movement, led to her being chosen to carry the baton in the 2000 Commonwealth Games baton relay, an experience she described as one of the proudest days of her life.

Kevin said that when Margaret was elected secretary in Adelaide it was not only a new millennium for the world, but the start of a new era for sister cities in Australia. "Margaret brought tremendous skills to the position and it was all voluntary. Her energy and drive was electric and helped engender a new enthusiasm in the executive.

"She was like a breath of fresh air and reduced my workload enormously. Margaret was a real gem with her ability to type the minutes directly on to her laptop as the meeting progressed and still totally participate in discussion and debate with insight and understanding of the items before us. She was a great asset to me as president and to the executive," he said. Margaret's involvement in the sister city movement started in 1989 when she was appointed secretary of the Hobsons Bay International Friendship Association. The then Altona council, where Margaret was employed, established the committee to coordinate and maintain sister city activities between the City of Anjo, Japan, and what is now the City of Hobsons Bay Council. Her role as secretary included maintaining the committee and coordinating the student exchange and cultural exchange

Highly professional but always a little bit of fun.

programs. During 2001 she chaperoned four students to the City of Anjo as part of the annual student exchange program between Hobsons Bay and Anjo. She said her two week stay in Anjo was complemented by being part of homestay accommodation, experiencing first hand the customs and culture of life in Japan, and being part of a typical Japanese family. While her work was always well noted by the strong Hobsons Bay International Friendship Association and the council it was doubly recognised when it led to her

dent exchange between the then City of Altona and Anjo.

Her work at the City of Altona led to her offering administrative support to the new committee.

Her children, Scott now aged 31, and Michelle now 35, both took part in the student exchange program to form an even stronger tie to Anjo.

Sister Cities Australia life member and founder of the Sister Cities Australia youth movement, Jennie Lee, said she was grateful for the practical support and encouragement she received from Margaret over many years.

"When I think about Marg Evans and her involvement in sister cities I think of energy, fun, laughter and boot scooting, or at least bush dancing.

"The young people enjoyed her energy and the genuine interest and friendship she developed with them.

"Later I worked closely with Marg on the executive committee and in her role as secretary she was a driving force to the changing and development of the executive to better serve members.

"Marg increased communication with members by developing electronic minutes, and newsletters, as well as ensuring professional and timely correspondence to all inquiries.

"She has been an outstanding ambassador for the sister city movement and her work and input to the organisation and the executive will be a great loss of professional energy," Jennie said.

Kevin said Margaret saved hours of meeting time because every business paper was put together with experience and skill with the items laid out in an easy to follow agenda.

being chosen to carry the baton in the Commonwealth Games relay.

"What a wonderful experience and privilege to be part of that memorable event.

"It is something I will brag about for years," she said.

Having a home town person in the run along Hobsons Bay's Civic Parade also created great community interest and Marg received many cheers from friends and relatives as she went on her special journey to be part of the important world wide activity.

Like her, the baton had travelled through many countries, spreading goodwill among different nationalities and cultures.

Margaret is widely travelled, speaks two languages fluently, and gets by with others.

Margaret first became involved in sister cities during 1987 when she was asked to homestay a Japanese student as part of the first annual stu-

"She carried out her duties with a practical and commonsense approach.

"She has a real passion for the sister city movement and its goals of world peace through friendship and cultural harmony," he said.

He said there was another side to Margaret - the PA.

"She is loved by all and has a genuine passion for people.

"It is her ability to relate to people and embrace them with compassion and friendship that has won her so many friends and admirers throughout the worldwide sister city movement.

"At the national conferences she was a rock and nothing went past her.

"At the same time she enjoys life and always has fun with her good natured mood embraced by all around her.

"My wife Cheryl and I are proud to count Margaret as a great friend, she was

an important part of our life for many years and our friendship is ongoing. "Her retirement is going to be a tremendous loss to the organization and the Sister City community as a whole," he said.



Marg, centre, on the Great Wall of China with Chinese Peoples Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries representatives, Zi Ye, and Yan Ling Liu, right.



A business meeting in Shanghai with vice chairman of Shanghai Foreign Affairs Office Wu Jinlan, centre, and Sister Cities Australia vice president Jan Teasedale, right.



World Peace is the ultimate aim. Sister Cities. International ambassador Nancy Huppert, right, presented the SCI World Peace Flag to Australian Sister Cities during the 2002 conference at Bendigo. From left: Sandra McCormick, Margaret Evans, and then national president Kevin Hill.



Bottom left: Fun at the 2001 Bunbury conference theme dinner - Marg, left, and Mary Jean Eisenhower, granddaughter of President Eisenhower who founded the sister cities movement.



Above. Relaxing at the 2009 Tamworth conference. From left: Hobsons Bay delegate Jeff Phillips, Marg, and national executive member Ray Kelly.

Rockhampton to inspire and challenge at a real, relevant, and rewarding conference

Keynote speakers to inspire and challenge

KEYNOTE speakers will examine Australia's sister city involvements, and respond to the questions of whether relationships and programs are real, relevant and rewarding for our communities in 2010 and beyond.

Delegates can expect to be challenged, inspired and entertained. Vice chancellor and president of CQUniversity Australia, Professor Scott Bowman, will discuss engagement with your community. Queensland Governor Penelope Wensley, will explain International relations and dealing with Committees. How to

do it will be a strong theme at the conference and delegates will hear from a Tourism Queensland communications director on "how to market your message"; Sunshine Coast Business Woman of the Year 2009 and author of "The Onion Lady" Kim Edwards, "succeeding with cross-cultural communication"; one of Australia's most successful Paralympic swimmers, Karni Liddell, "Get motivated to overcome obstacles"; and general manager of the Rockhampton Morning Bulletin, Simon Irwin, on "Working with the Media."



Above right: The tranquil Japanese Garden at the Rockhampton Botanic Gardens.

Below: Picturesque Stoney Creek in the Byfield National Park.



Yeppoon Main Beach - winner of the 2009 Keep Australia Beautiful - Queensland Cleanest Beach Award. Below: Enjoy a tropical winter at Capricorn Resort, Yeppoon. Child safe pool.



More adult and youth interaction

THIS year the conference team at has changed the format slightly so the adult and youth delegates are together for the first half of every day.

This will allow us all to benefit from the quality keynote speakers lined up each morning.

We will all gain a richer experience being challenged together, and we

can move forward with our sister city programs to also make them even more real, relevant and rewarding to the young people in our communities.

Easy access to Rockhampton

ACCESS to Rockhampton Region is easy. Rockhampton's redeveloped award winning airport is exceptionally well

serviced with multiple flights to and from Brisbane daily, direct flights from Townsville, Sydney, and Melbourne. Connections on to other ports around Australia and internationally are readily available.

Airlines flying into Rockhampton include Qantaslink, Virgin Blue, Tiger Airways, and Jetstar.

Details about the conference are available from kirsty.stewart@rcc.qld.gov.au
0419 736 000

Youth website workshops

YOUTH delegates will be involved in hands-on workshops to design and build an interactive website that can be used to promote sister cities programs and to provide a forum for ideas, comment, and questions.

This involvement will provide youth delegates with a tangible outcome from the conference program.

The youth delegates will proudly present their website suggestions to the conference on Wednesday morning and contribute to Sister Cities Australia in a very real and relevant way. Major sponsor, CQUniversity, will provide expertise and advice for the project and other workshops for the youth delegates.

Big brother style feedback

DELEGATES at the Sister Cities Australia 2010 National Conference in the Rockhampton Region will have ample opportunity to be involved and provide feedback. There will be a "Big Brother" style diary room at the conference.

Delegates are invited to go in at any time throughout the conference, sit in the "Big Brother" chair, and share their thoughts and suggestions on the conference, of SCA, or their own sister city programs.

This will be a sharing of insights on how we can all make our sister city programs more real, relevant, and rewarding for 2010 and beyond.

Rockhampton by night.

Hollywood theme for gala dinner

THE Rockhampton national conference and awards gala dinner will have a Hollywood theme with entertainment by one of Australia's most impressive comedy magicians, Matt Hollywood and, local band Nebraska Red.

The night will be kept alive with magic, laughter, music, and the presentations to the Sister Cities Australia National Award winners.

Organisers have promised this will be a night to remember. You are assured of a fabulous time at this Hollywood-themed gala dinner so don't forget to pack your Hollywood-inspired 'red carpet' outfits.

