

Devonport to Darwin



Parliament House Darwin

By Jim Mynard

DARWIN will host the 2007 Australian Sister Cities conference from Sunday 30 September to Wednesday 3 October.

The conference celebrates the 25th anniversary of sister cities in Australia and the 25th anniversary of Darwin's first sister city relationship, signed with Kalamata, Greece on 23 April 1982.

This will be Darwin's third conference after 1990 and 1999. Darwin City Council will present the theme 'Making the Connection' and this follows on and fits well with the Darwin Tourism Authority's now famous theme 'Destination Darwin'.

All looks well for a trip to the "Top End".

The Darwin organising committee said delegates could expect an innovative program including panel discussions on hot topics, sharing sister cities experiences and achievements and interactive workshop sessions.

"Delegates can also look forward to first class accommodation options and balmy weather. "True Territory hospitality and fine

produce will be available for sample."

Darwin City Council this year also celebrates its 50th anniversary.

Darwin Youth Advisory Group member Adam Pulford said the youth program would be packed full of exciting activities that young people would enjoy, with a theme 'Tune into Your World'.

"Youth delegates have been promised interaction with young people from around Australia.

"The program involves youth in creating ideas, understandings and attitudes, while incorporating sister cities principles."

He said the youth conference would be truly for youth by youth and would be developed and facilitated by the young people of Darwin through the Darwin City Council's youth advisory group.

Contact for the conference is Darwin City Council, Harry Chane Avenue, Darwin, Northern Territory, 0800.

Phone 08 8930 0300 or email at dcc@darwin.nt.gov.au.

Or go to: www.ascadarwin2007.com.

'Connecting with Darwin'

KLAFIR and ASCA sign understanding

THE Korea Local Authorities Foundation for International Relations (KLAFIR) and the Australian Sister Cities Association (ASCA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding

during the Devonport, Tasmania conference on Monday 13 November 2006.

The two share the common goal of fostering effective exchanges between sister

cities.

They acknowledge the importance of cooperation and the exchange of information to improve organisational effectiveness of that work.



Sister Cities Association president Cr Kevin Hill, and Korea Local Authorities Foundation for International Relations president Sang-ho Lee sign the Memorandum of Understanding.

President's message

WELCOME once again to Sister Cities News and thanks to those of you who have sent in great information and pictures about your city's sister city programs and exchanges. Without your input it would be impossible for editor Jim Mynard to produce the paper in the interesting newsy form that so many people around the world now enjoy.

This year's 25th anniversary Conference in Darwin is shaping up to be one of the best yet with a strong community committee combining with Aldermen and council officers to produce an interesting and informative event. It will also give us all the opportunity to showcase our relationships and programs.

Also as another first for ASCA, CLAIR will be conducting its Forum at a half-day session held in conjunction with our conference helping to save double travel costs for participants who usually attend both.

Voting delegates will also be discussing the proposal to change our name to Sister Cities Australia as we head towards the next 25 years. I personally invite you to put in a big effort to join us in Darwin and facilitate and encourage young people from your city to participate at the conference's youth program.

The Darwin conference will also be the last one for me as your president - I have informed the board that I will be retiring after 20 years as an executive member and 19 years as President.

It will be a sad day for Cheryl and I but I know there are good people in the sister city movement in Australia and the organisation is strong and growing stronger each year.

I won't be giving up Sister Cities, as many of you know, I was appointed to the Honorary Board of Sister Cities International last year.

There will be one other retirement from the board in Darwin so I urge our members if you believe you have the skills needed to help steer our organisation into the future please consider standing for election to the executive.

You will find that it is a very exciting, interesting and also humbling experience.

I take this opportunity to thank the executive members; as always they continue to carry out their appointed tasks with enthusiasm, dedication and commitment.

As you all know, the entire board is voluntary; they receive no pay and we have no paid staff.

They all have challenging careers; businesses and some are

now retired. All overseas travel is at the member's own expense.

Have you considered entering the national awards?

Last year The National Awards committee received 38 submissions from 16 cities over 12 categories.

This of course shows that the member councils and their sister city committees are creating exciting new programs and people to people exchanges that are innovative and rewarding to their community as a whole.

You should enter your program; just visit the ASCA web site for further information.

The many volunteers on sister city committees, in the main supported by their councils, are the driving force behind a wide range of programs and exchanges which make up the awards. Congratulations to all who participated.

Sister City Day on Thursday 5 July is growing in strength with many members celebrating in unique and interesting ways from a gathering of ladies from Melbourne councils for an afternoon tea and library displays of past exchanges and gifts to programs and exchanges across Australia.

I urge you to make a commitment now that your city will celebrate Sister City Day this year.

It is important we showcase our sister city programs to spread the positive news to combat the negatives as well as keeping our communities involved and informed.

I take this opportunity to congratulate and thank Devonport mayor Lynn Laycock, the Devonport City Council and the conference committee.

They did a great job and delivered a very successful conference with all who attended gaining new insights and enjoying the event.

Finally I would like to thank my wife Cheryl for her help throughout the year and as always she has been a tremendous hostess and ambassador for our organisation.



Cr Kevin Hill

Secretary's message

2007 is a time for celebrating with the 25th anniversary of the Australian Sister Cities Association, Darwin City Council being 50 years old and also Darwin's 25th anniversary of the signing of their first sister city agreement in 1982.

You are invited to be part of these celebrations by attending this year's ASCA conference which will be held in Darwin from Sunday 30 September to Wednesday 3 October 2007.

The theme for the conference is 'Making the Connection' so why not make your connection by attending the conference and 'connecting' with others.

As part of this year's program, ASCA's new Strategic Plan will be discussed and delegates will be invited to participate in the workshop to contribute to its content and assist in moving the organisation forward. For those who may not be aware, the inaugural Sister Cities Day took place in Cairns on 5 July 1996 and recognition of the day can be celebrated in various ways and if it is not possible to organise an event on that particular day, councils or committees can organise something during that week. So, start thinking about an event or celebration your council or committee could organise to recognise your own special sister city relationship. Member councils interested in conducting a future ASCA conference are invited to submit their application by August this year. The successful application is announced on the first day of the conference. If you are interested and would like to know more details please contact me

mevans@hobsonsabay.vic.gov.au



Margaret Evans

Executive committee

National president

Cr Kevin Hill
9 Solomon Court
GREENACRE, NSW 2190

Home: 02 9642 3700
Mobile: 04 0213 0000
Fax: 02 9642 2649
khill@optusnet.com.au

National vice-president

Jan Teasdale
PO Box 968
CLOVERDALE WA 6985

Home ph/fax: 08 9470 2664
Mobile: 04 0744 2136
jetdale@inet.net.au

National secretary

Margaret Evans
Box 368
ALTONA VIC 3018

Home: 03 9398 5443
Business: 03 9932 1043
Mobile: 04 1989 8357
Fax: 03 9932 1039
mevans@hobsonsabay.vic.gov.au

National treasurer

Caisley Graham
Box 142
NEW LAMPTON NSW 2305

Home: 02 4957 1041
Mobile: 04 1257 1041
caisley.graham@bigpond.com

Committee members

Cr Raymond Kelly
PO Box 14
COOROY QLD 4563

Home: Ph/Fax: 07 5447 7314
Business: 07 5447 6308
kellyray@optusnet.com.au

Mark Brady

City of Frankston
Cnr Young and Davey Streets,
FRANKSTON VIC 3199

Business: 03 9784 1811
Mobile: 04 1911 6863
mark.brady@frankston.vic.gov.au

Ald Bill Wilson

Box 1237
DEVONPORT TAS 7310

Home: 03 6424 5026
Business 03 6424 4499
bill@insuranceadvisory.biz

Editorial

THE sister cities movement is being challenged to take the campaign of the Japanese whaling issue to our sister city counterparts.

Our policy is that we don't enter into debate on this with our Japanese sister cities and neither should we.

Sister cities people to people programs are about building up friendship and understanding and breaking down barriers, usually caused by governments, between nations especially those with vastly differing cultures and rarely should we become involved in the politics of Government foreign affairs.

Sister city members across Australia have worked hard for many years to build this goodwill between our people and they have become well trained and successful at doing that. They do not have the expertise in negotiating such a sensitive issue as this and much harm could be done if they weaken under this challenge and try.

We note that people who now see us as an excellent channel through which to take this matter up with our Japanese friends have never been around when we have needed funding and support to pursue our cultural ties.

Both levels of senior government have not seen our work worthy enough to support us financially on a regular basis.

Instead, because ratepayer money is used, we have been constantly called on to explain official trips overseas where much of our good work is done.

Watch for our secretary's newsletter

NATIONAL secretary Margaret Evans complements news in the Sister Cities News with a newsletter from the executive meetings.

This keeps members up to date with what is happening in the think tank area.

Some people have said they did not receive the newsletter, but it's just a case of giving Marg your email address and 'hey presto' it will pop up on your screen.

Marg is at mevans@hobsonsabay.vic.gov.au

The newsletter contains pieces of interesting information from the executive and is a way of keeping in touch.

Wollondilly and Viljandi a proud match

WOLLONDILLY is proud to have formed a new sister city relationship with the Estonian region of Viljandi in the south.

Estonia is in northern Europe and 45,000 square kilometres, compared to Tasmania at 67,800.

Wollondilly Shire Council general manager Les McMahon in July 2005 attended the 60th anniversary of the Estonian Village at Thirlmere.

While at the anniversary celebrations Mr McMahon spoke to Estonia's consul general in Australia.

"My wife and I were planning a family holiday to Scandinavia at the time and began to talk about visiting Estonia to see the

country that had had such an input into our shire from the other side of the world.

"This quickly turned into a sister city discussion.

"We looked at several Australian councils with sister cities, and what struck us was the fact that there was rarely a solid link between the two areas at all.

"But we already have a concrete shared background and strong community relations to build our sister relationship upon.

Sister cities can help both parties in terms of educational and cultural exchanges, historic links and economic links.

"The council intends to use the relationship to develop

cultural and economic co-operative agreements.

"The process of finding and inviting a suitable area in Estonia to become a sister city took a year.

"We wanted a place that had a similar geographical feel to it as Wollondilly, and were searching the country for the right town.

"The consul general, who had remained involved, suggested Viljandi as she had personal ties there.

"While Viljandi has sister city relationships with other towns around the world, they are yet to form one in Australia.

"They were happy to be invited."

Mr McMahon visited with local officials and presented them with a plaque commemorating the proposed sister city relationship.

His trip was self funded and the council has worked with The Oaks Historical Society, the Estonian Relief Committee and the Thirlmere Estonian Society to lay the foundations for the proposal.

"We look forward to an exchange of people and ideas between the two countries," Mr McMahon said.



Conference costs and community members

Dear Editor,

I WRITE to enlist your support for community members of the sister city committees across Australia.

My committee at Wyong, New South Wales, is formed mainly of community members and they asked me to raise the issue of conference costs while I was at the AGM in Devonport.

This I did without much success. I am an elected representative and my council pays for me to attend the conference, but my community members would like the ASCA executive to review the charges for the conference.

These are people who cannot afford the high and exorbitant fees, but would love to attend the conference.

Let the councils still pay the set fee, but allow community members pay \$100 a day for the conference.

This fee would not include social events. But, if community delegates chose to attend these events they would pay the same as the set fee outlined in the program for all delegates.

Community members attending would need a letter of endorsement from their sister city committee.

My reasons for the suggestions are that people have been priced out of the ASCA conference market because they cannot afford the fees. Lower fees would increase the opportunity for community committee members to be involved in the conference to further their knowledge and understanding.

They would be able to exchange ideas at a higher level and speak with other sister city delegates.

The community members are usually the workers of all sister city committees.

Councillors are elected every four years and are not necessarily elected back to that committee so do not retain the interest in the committee like community members.

Councillors and council officers move on and I question how much of their knowledge is passed on to committees?

Community members are the backbone of the sister city movement so need all the encouragement we can give them.

Our own president Cr Kevin Hill said that the community was the driving force of the sister city programs.

The community members by allowing them to attend the conference would also increase the attendance numbers to the conference.

Cr Robyn Stewart,
Wyong Shire Council,
New South Wales.

I'm in the running

Dear Editor,

I READ in the most recent 'Sister Cities News' that long-standing President, Cr. Kevin Hill, is not seeking re-election at the 2007 AGM.

Kevin has been an outstanding ASCA president and spokesperson for the organisation and the Australian and International 'sister city' movement is much better off as a result of Kevin's excellent leadership, interest and expertise in local government and international relationships. I take this opportunity to announce that I am intending to stand for election to the ASCA executive at the 2007 AGM in Darwin.

My council, the City of Casey, recently endorsed my decision to nominate for an ASCA

executive position. Whilst I will not be seeking an office-bearer role, I look forward to working with the executive.

In 1993, I was first elected as a councillor for the Shire of Cranbourne and following council amalgamations in Victoria, was elected as the City of Casey's first mayor in 1997.

I have a long history of support and participation in sister city activities.

I have attended a number of 'national' conferences. I have visited each of Casey's 'sister' and 'friendship' cities and was instrumental in the establishment of our relationships with 'Ioannina' in Greece and the 'Ermera District' in East Timor, having visited both for the signing of our 'Memorandums of Understanding'.

I am particularly pleased with my involvement in our East Timor relationship - our local community has embraced the cause and many thousands of dollars have been raised to rebuild several pre-schools in our district at a cost of nearly US\$20,000 each. I have initiated resolutions in council to donate sewing machines and laptops for use in our district and supported the sponsorship of Ermera district officials to come to Casey to undertake training. I was very proud to be able to visit East Timor in 2004 at my own expense to inspect the many successful projects that have been initiated and funded by Casey City Council and the Casey community.

In 2004, I accompanied nearly 100 young Casey athletes to our USA 'sister city' Springfield, Ohio for the inaugural 'James B. Connolly Games' and have supported the two reciprocal visits of 'Springfield' athletes to Casey for the 'Edwin Flack Games', the most recent being in 2006.

I stand in order to continue the good work of the ASCA executive and to further the promotion of the ideals of the Australian and International 'sister city' movements.

As a secondary school teacher with more than 26 years experience, I will also take a special interest in youth issues and youth involvement including our own ASCA youth program.

Cr Wayne Smith,
City of Casey,
Victoria.

ASCA executive nominations

Nominations for the ASCA Executive will be received this year and as part of the Annual General Meeting, elections will be conducted and successful candidates announced at the meeting.

The position is for a two year period and only ASCA members are eligible to nominate.

Nomination forms will be mailed out in July to all members and the completed forms need to be sent to the Returning Officer in Darwin by Wednesday 22 August (details are included on the form). Candidates will be given an opportunity of a three minute presentation at the AGM before members vote.

Nomination forms must be accompanied by a head and shoulders photograph (suitable for reproduction) plus a brief biography of the nominee of up to but not exceeding 200 words. The photograph and bio of each nominee will be inserted into each of the delegates' satchels as well as being reproduced in the Sister Cities News.

If you have the time to devote, are prepared to be a worker and possess skills to promote and develop the aims and objectives of the Association you may wish to consider nominating. Although these are all voluntary positions, the future progress and survival of the organisation depends solely on the commitment, dedication and the work undertaken by the executive.

For further information and a copy of the roles and responsibility statement please contact Margaret Evans, Secretary on mevans@hobsonsby.vic.gov.au.

Sharing the spirit made

High standard maintained for national conferences

DEVONPORT, Latrobe, Noosa, and back we go - the national conferences have been setting a high standard and have provided enormous networking and confidence building for people working hard at maintaining ties all over the world.

Delegates at Devonport clearly enjoyed meeting and discussing their respective sister city activities.

In the centre of things: Hobsons Bay, delegate Wendy Nancarrow, left, and Latrobe, delegate Jenny Van den Ham. Clockwise Tasmania deputy premier Steven Kons, Mersey MP Norma Jamieson, Braddon MP Mark Baker, and ASCA president Cr Kevin Hill. Devonport youth host Tim McLaren, and Latrobe delegate Yuki Pool. ASCA president Cr Kevin Hill presents Warringah delegate Coralie Hicks with the Cultural Exchange Award trophy. Guest speaker Vern Cazaly, Tasmania Department of Economic Development, and Lynette Cazaly. Marion City, delegate Gayle Roberts-Kennedy, ASCA secretary Margaret Evans, Roebourne delegate Cr Sharon Vertigan, and Cr Deborah Hamblin, City of Rockingham. Sister Cities global envoy Nancy Huppert stepped in as guest speaker for a nearby Lions Club conference. And from Belmont: ASCA Awards Committee chair Jan Teasdale, and youth delegate Mitch Goddard with the Commerce/Industry award trophies awarded to their city, Belmont.

Top level welcome

TASMANIA deputy premier and Attorney General Steven Kons welcomed guests and delegates to the 2006 Australian Sister Cities Association conference in Devonport.

Mr Kons was accompanied at the conference by Braddon MP Mark Baker, and Mersey MP Norma Jamieson.

He said the conference coincided with the 30th anniversary of the Treaty of Cooperation between Australia and Japan.

"This makes the conference a truly international event and international events are important to Tasmania," he said.

Mr Kons said Tasmania was experiencing a population increase because of a confidence in the State's economy.

"Increased investment in Tasmania is the result and I thank Devonport for hosting this conference," he said.



Devonport a top show



Oval: Devonport mayor Lynn Laycock, Sister Cities International global envoy Nancy Huppert, and conference chairman Ald Bill Wilson.

Then clockwise. Top left: Conference chairman Ald Bill Wilson with Devonport committee members Ryu Utsimi, and Ai Utsimi, who conducted a stall during the conference. From left: Marilyn Van Wegen, of Noosa, Margaret Westbury, Wollongong, Emma Russell and Chloe Parker, Devonport High School Catering Service, and Elizabeth Clark, Launceston. Bert Ainge, Lisa Speirs, and Delia Murray, Casey. A proud Yuki Poole displays the winning stand from Latrobe. Chris Hodgins, Christy Ramage, and Fuyuko Sanada, Frankston receive the award for a Single Project from ASCA president Cr Kevin Hill. Damien

Samuel, Emma Simonsen, and Leo Kelly of Blacktown were proud to receive the New Affiliation Award for their friends at Liverpool Plains. From left: Sister Cities New Zealand guest delegate Bill Wood, Roujeh Mizher, Casey, and CLAIRE assistant director Shuichi Kanabuchi. ASCA president Cr Kevin Hill presents the Overall Program Award to Manly delegate Elaine Kent. Tahnie Roberts, Elizabeth Fensom, and Tim James, were happy to collect the Youth Achievers Program Award for Sutherland. Last year's conference team from Latrobe. Jenny Van Den Ham, Peter Quigley, Grantley Switzer, and ASCA executive member Mark Brady. Annette Rockliff, left, and conference coordinator Trish Alford kept the show running.



Gosford prepares the way

GOSFORD City Council (GCC) sent a delegation to the 2006 Australian Sister Cities Association national conference in Devonport Tasmania to participate in the conference and present the council's conference bid to host the conference in 2008.

The conference will take place from Sunday 27 July to Wednesday 30 July using the theme 'Sense of Place'.

This will celebrate and educate us about different cultures around the world. Members of the 2008 conference steering committee are chairperson, Gosford manager of customer services and communications John Moulard, vice president of the Country Local Government New South Wales, Australia, and Gosford Sister City Association chairman, councillor Robert Bell, Central

Coast Tourism chief executive Horst Endrulat, and Gosford communications coordinator Tina Davies.

The committee is busy planning for this event and will be working closely with the Gosford Sister City Association, community and cultural groups, and tourism providers in developing the exciting and interactive conference program.

Tina said the committee was delighted to have won the bid to host the 2008 sister cities conference.

"We will keep you updated through Sister Cities News and we look forward to seeing as many Sister Cities News readers at our conference in 2008 as possible."

"We will also see you in Darwin later this year."

Further information is available from Tina on 02 4325 8958 or tina.davies@gosford.nsw.gov.au

Gosford Youth ambassadors to lead committee

SINCE attending the Devonport Australian Sister Cities Association conference, Gosford Sister City Committee members have continued their relationship with its two young ambassadors, Matthew Phelps and Boston Larke.

They will be the precursors of a youth sub committee of Gosford Sister City Association.

Gosford City Council recently had a staff exchange with two staff members from Edogawa City Council.

This was a great experience for the staff members who also enjoyed homestay with two sister city families, enjoying a ferry trip to Palm Beach, walking and horse riding.

They visited many facilities owned by Gosford Council, from libraries and art facilities to the water and recycling services.

They enjoyed meeting Gosford Council staff members, sharing their working experiences and celebrating one of their birthdays with an Australian style birthday party.

Committee secretary Margaret Hardy said that during July and August 2007 Gosford would again host 20 students from the Edogawa Youth Wing who would attend school at Narara Valley High School.

"We are proud of the many young people who have come to Gosford on this scheme, as the friendships that have developed between our young people will be remembered all their lives."

"We are organising a visit by a group from the Central Coast Conservatorium Youth Orchestra to Edogawa and Sendai, where they will play music with schools during September and October 2007."

"There is also a group of 28 people from the Killcare Garden Club visiting gardens in Edogawa and elsewhere throughout Japan in September."

"We are hoping many people

will visit our beautiful city in 2008 for the ASCA conference and hopefully will meet our friends in Darwin in 2007."



Tina Davies

Japanese showcase at Wollongong

RENOWNED Japanese opera singer and Kawasaki cultural envoy, Mayo Amagai, was the special guest artist at two concerts held as part of the officially endorsed 2006 Australian Japan Year of Exchange events at Wollongong.

Traditional instrumentalists from the City of Kawasaki supported Ms Amagai's magnificent performance.

Their performances provided an outstanding showcase of Japan's musical talent. The overwhelming success of the functions enhanced the awareness of the great relationship between the city and its sister city Kawasaki, in Japan.

The first concert was held at the Wollongong Entertainment Centre before an audience of more than 2000 people.

It was an integration of culture, celebrating the power of music and its ability to bring the world's people closer together.

Ms Amagai joined with the Wollongong Symphony Orchestra for its fantastical classical spectacular, performing both classical and popular works to a standing ovation.

The concert concluded with a tumultuous performance of the 1812 overture, with fireworks.

The Governor of New South Wales, Professor Marie Bashir AC, accepted an invitation to attend this performance and Wollongong mayor Alex Darling, introduced the Kawasaki visitors to the Governor following the event.

Guests also enjoyed a performance by



change, the significance of the 30th anniversary, and national commemoration of the signing of the 1976 Basic Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between Australia and Japan.

"Wollongong has had a strong relationship with Kawasaki since 1988, and as we approach our 20th year of friendship, these two concerts emphasised our commitment to sharing and exchanging a cultural bond between our two cities," Cr Darling said.

Left: Renowned Japanese opera singer Mayo Amagai.

Below: Koto player Sae Ogasawara.



traditional instrumentalists, providing a great insight into the concentration required to perform the music of shakuhachi, shamisen and koto.

On Sunday 22 October, the city enjoyed a more intimate soiree at the Illawarra Performing Arts Centre, with Ms Amagai as guest artist, supported by traditional instrumentalists, Sae Ogasawara, and traditional dance segments.

Councillor Darling commended this outstanding cultural ex-

Bundaberg embraces year of the pig

BUNDABERG Sister City Committee and representatives of the Chinese community organised an afternoon of festivities to welcome in the Chinese New Year on Sunday 18 February to herald the Year of the Pig.

This was the second consecutive year that representatives of the Chinese community and the Bundaberg committee organised an afternoon of festivities to welcome in the Chinese New Year, now the 4704th year of the Chinese calendar.

With Chinese music playing in the background, the shady surroundings of Lions Park quickly took on an orien-

tal look with lanterns, bunting and other decorations.

Colourful tents and marquees sprang up as stallholders got into the swing of things.

The 30 metre long dragon took up its position at the bottom of the stage and, after a short welcome from the Bundaberg Sister City Committee chairman Adele Freeman, Bundaberg mayor Kay McDuff gently sprinkled the dragon's eyes with water.

It breathed new life and the festivities began.

The program included the Bundaberg Youth Choir and performances by the three Lions.

However, before the Balinese Mask Dancing

took the stage, the heavens opened and over the next 30 minutes the 2000 strong audience, performers, decorations, sound equipment, stalls and displays got soaked.

Yet, people were reluctant to leave. However, with no break in sight, the chairman had to make the sad announcement to terminate the celebrations.

Plans are in hand to reschedule performances at upcoming events in the city.

The fireworks that were to be the climax of the program were used as part of the festivities associated with the commissioning of HMAS Bundaberg which was in port recently.



The 30 metre long Chinese dragon was a feature of the Bundaberg festivities for the Year of the Pig.

Minamata gifts on display



THE Devonport Sister City Association and the Devonport City Council carried out several activities in the community in the lead up to the March visit from Minamata, Devonport's Sister City in Japan.

A set of large carp streamers, together with the Japanese and Australian flag were hoisted from the old signal station mast at the Maritime Museum the week before a kite festival held at the end of February.

They were flown several times again in March, including the days that the delegation of 17 students and 13 adults were visiting.

Coinciding with the Japanese Doll Festival (Hinamatsuri) or Girls' Festival celebrated on Saturday 3 March, a set of beautiful dressed dolls on tiers of shelves was displayed for the month at the Flower Basket Florist in the central business district.

Minamata residents donated the carp streamers and Hinamatsuri dolls to the Devonport community.

Displays highlighting Minamata and Japanese culture were also mounted at the Devonport Library, council offices and Devonport Entertainment and Convention Centre.

Left. Hoisting carp streamers at the Maritime Museum in Devonport. From left: President, Maritime Museum, Bob Vellacott, president, Devonport Sister City Association, Alida Beattie, Devonport Sister City Association secretary-treasurer, Joan Andrews, and Devonport Sister City Association vice president Lillian Hay. Right. Breanna Comrie, 8, left, and Indianna Hambleton, 5, enjoy the Japanese Doll Festival at the Flower Basket Florist in Devonport.



The people you meet

SISTER Cities is all about meeting people from other places and learning about their cultures and customs.

Well, it seems there is a custom in Devonport, breakfast at Bellas.

That's handy when you have just come off the Spirit of Tasmania.

Retired Devonport solicitor Brian O'Rourke was quick to talk up his city when delegates began arriving in Devonport for the 2006 Australian Sister Cities conference. And conference chairman Alderman Bill Wilson was just as quick to introduce Brian when he was enjoying breakfast at Bellas, a

favourite watering hole.

Brian, who was born at Signet, in southern Tasmania, said he established a practice at Devonport 30 years ago and loved the place.

"I've lived in Devonport for 36 years because it's a really livable city.

"We have nice walking tracks and I like to wine and dine here."

Brian is a keen bridge player and can boast some top players around the town who provide keen competition.

"One of our members Elizabeth Thomson was the Australian individual bridge champion," he said.

Latrobe's Japanese Day is three days old

LATROBE CITY, in Victoria, has conducted its third successful Japanese Day in the Kernot Hall.

Conference goers will remember Latrobe's second Japanese Day in 2005 and the fun everyone had, plus the showcase of Japanese dancing and culture. The days have successfully promoted Latrobe's sister city relationship with Takasago in Japan.

Once again the noted Latrobe City Youth Band was a highlight at a regional activity, and combined with the St Paul's Anglican Grammar School

Traralgon Junior Campus Choir to provide excellent entertainment at the Japanese Day. The youth band recently donated a cheque for \$1050 to the Gippsland Cancer Care Centre, proceeds from a successful concert held in July last year. The concert also aimed to create awareness of the new cancer care centre. Children enjoyed learning about a wide range of Japanese cultures and skills.

It seemed by the length of the queue that the 'Okonomiyaki' pancakes were a special mouth watering treat.

Community groups were also able to use the day to hold stalls and fund raising activities.

Latrobe also used its libraries to set up effective sister city displays during sister cities month, July, with display boards about the relationships with Takasago City in Japan, and with Taizhou City in China.

Each library saw a variety of activities during Sister Cities Week and activities were coordinated with the school program and pre-school story time.

Latrobe's Catherine Reid has been working in Takasago for five months and loving it.

Watch for her diary on the web at

www.latrobe.vic.gov.au/About/International and click on AET to view 'Catherine Reid's Diary'.

Armidale and Kanuma have more visits to come

ARMIDALE Dumaresq Council has a Friendship Agreement with Kanuma City in Japan.

This leads to 20 Students and four supervisors coming to Armidale in October each year.

Last year the visit was from Tuesday 18 to Wednesday 24 October.

This is reciprocated with visits to Kanuma by Armidale residents.

Sister City coordinator Margaret Schumacher and hus-

band Rolf with Armidale physical amenities manager, Phil Brown and wife Judy have also just returned from a visit to Kanuma City.

Margaret said they were accompanied by 13 students and three staff members from Duval High School.

"This was an amazing experience.

"I have been looking after guests from Kanuma City since 2000 and this was my first trip to Japan, but not our last," she said.



Brian O'Rourke, of Devonport

Fine gesture on Parkes cars

COVENTRY, England has given two Jaguar cars to its Australian sister city, Parkes.

Parkes 'Champion Post' highlighted the wonderful gift in a front page article during February.

The Post said the vehicles would be housed in the proposed Parkes car museum.

Parkes general manager Alan McCormack announced the windfall during a council meeting.

He said the Australian Sister Cities Association recognised the Parkes Coventry agreement as the longest sister city relationship in Australia with evidence of it dating back to 1939.

"During 2000 the council was beneficiary of a generous offer from the then Museum of British Motor Transport in Coventry and the Jaguar Daimler Heritage Trust for the loan of several items for display in the Sir Henry Parkes Regional Museum.

"The Museum of British Road Transport based in Coventry, made the donation of the two Jaguar cars, a Triumph motorcycle and a penny farthing bicycle during a visit to Coventry by Parkes mayor Robert Wilson in 2000.

"The donation was an act of generosity designed to strengthen the ties that bind the communities of Parkes and Coventry.

"The original arrangement for the loan of the items was a five year term that has expired."

Mr McCormack said correspondence with the Jaguar Daimler Heritage Trust and the Coventry Transport Museum led to the loan of the penny farthing and the Triumph motorcycle being extended to 2010.

"The two Jaguar XJ40 and associated display were permanently gifted to the people of Parkes.

"This is a wonderful gesture from the Coventry Transport Museum to extend the loan of the motorcycle

and bike, and a truly fantastic act of generosity from the Jaguar Daimler Heritage Trust to donate the cars.

"The donated Jaguar XJ40s will be displayed in the soon-to-be-opened Sir Henry Parkes Museum that will incorporate the Parkes Motor Museum.

"The displays will include a statement acknowledging the gift of the Jaguar Daimler Heritage trust," Mr McCormack said.



important because it was at Devonport in 1990 that ASCA decided to run a youth program.

"All the reasons I then heard in the arguments to have a youth program, such as teaching young people leadership skills, public speaking and personal development, have manifested here in Devonport.

"They also take their new skills away to home groups."

Cr Laycock spent time at a working session and was able to hear one delegate tell of her experience on a trip to Japan. Another delegate told of his networking with people from all over Australia.

"We learnt how to develop a community program and we discussed the issue of female leadership," he said.

Devonport mayor Lynn Laycock with youth delegates Damien Samuel, of Blacktown, Mitch Goddard, Belmont, and Kelsey Walker, Devonport.

Toowoomba and Takatsuki enjoy 15 friendly years

Brisbane to host Asia summit

BRISBANE City Council will host the biennial Asia Pacific Cities Summit (APCS) in September this year.

The summit fosters city partnerships and encourages the sharing of information and ideas between local governments, technical experts and business within the region.

For the first time, APCS will be fully subsidised for 100 selected young people. Business and Cities will sponsor the AU \$1250 delegate registration fee for young people across the region. Selected delegates will be among 100 emerging young leaders who have the opportunity to participate alongside Asia Pacific's political and business leaders. Information packs and application forms can be obtained from Lucy Hall on lucy.hall@brisbane.qld.gov.au

TOOWOOMBA this year celebrated 15 years of sister city friendship with Takatsuki, Japan.

The year 2006 brought about a time of celebration as Toowoomba and Takatsuki reached 15 years of Sister City friendship.

The celebrations started with a Toowoomba council delegation of five and a friendship group of 17 vis-

iting Takatsuki in April. The group enjoyed the hospitality of Takatsuki, visited many of the sights in the area and caught up with old friends.

This was the largest group to visit Takatsuki from Toowoomba. Everyone had a really good time.

The main events were held in Toowoomba during November, with 40 Tak-

atsuki delegates and friends visiting Toowoomba to participate.

The council delegation and friendship group, led by Mayor Okumoto enjoyed sightseeing before being hosted to a council reception and dinner.

Toowoomba was honoured to also host the Takatsuki Taiko Drum Group for the second time as it had visited in 2004 for Toowoomba's Centenary celebrations.

Sunday 12 November was the main day of celebrations with the day starting with a tree planting ceremony at the Toowoomba University of Southern Queensland Japanese Gardens.

Toowoomba mayor Dianne Thorley and Takatsuki mayor Tsutomu Okumoto planted a cherry tree to mark the occasion.

Takatsuki's mayor at the time of the signing of the original agreement, Mr Emura, also assisted.

Entertainment in the park for the community included performances by the Nunukul Yuggera Aboriginal Dancers, the Takatsuki Drum Group and the RASQ Outback Riders.

The afternoon provided opportunity for many people to experience both Australian and Japanese culture.

The day concluded with a dinner concert for 140 officials, guests and friends which provided the wonderful experience of friendship, cuisine and entertainment.

Performances included the Nunukul Yuggera Aboriginal Dancers, year six and seven students from Toowoomba East State

School, a string ensemble from Toowoomba State High School, the Toowoomba Contemporary Choral Group and concluded with the amazing Takatsuki Drum Group.

The Takatsuki Ikebana Ladies prepared floral arrangements for the occasion and the Takatsuki Photographic Society provided 20 beautiful images of Japan for display.

The following day the Takatsuki Drum Group performed for 800 students at Wilsonton State Primary School and 480 students at Mater Dei Primary School.

The students were delighted by the performance and provided an overwhelming reception. Takatsuki and Toowoomba look forward to many more years of friendship.



Above: Toowoomba mayor Dianne Thorley, Takatsuki mayor Toshio Emura, at the time of signing the agreement, and Takatsuki mayor Tsutomu Okumoto enjoy friendships. Below: Dinner Concert. Toowoomba residents and members of the Takatsuki Drum Group share a toast to friendship. Right: Tree Planting Ceremony. The Takatsuki Drum beside the Cherry Tree planted to commemorate the 15th Anniversary of the Sister City friendship

