

Tamworth goes country



Everyone wants a photo taken at the Big Golden Guitar. The world renowned land mark is the most photographed icon in Tamworth. It is the big shot of the festival. The guitar is a 12 metre high statue, made of fibreglass over a steel frame, and weighs half a tonne. It has been standing at the southern gateway to Tamworth since 1988.

THE Sister Cities Australia Conference for 2009 has gone country with the event to be held in the country setting of Tamworth.

The Tamworth Sister City Committee is excited to host the conference from Sunday 19 to Wednesday 22 July 2009.

Hosting the sister city conference is a first for this small but very active committee and chairman John Green invites everyone to Tamworth for what is sure to be a new experience for delegates.

The conference will be held in the Tamworth Regional Entertainment and Conference Centre (TRECC) purpose built for hosting conferences and large events.

The venue is home to Country Music's Golden Guitar Awards held every January and will also be the venue for the New South Wales Local Government Conference in October.

Tamworth, located on the New England Highway, is almost half way between Sydney and Brisbane.

Travel to Tamworth is sure to be an ease with four Qantas flights available from Sydney to Tamworth each day.

Or hop on a coach or train service and enjoy the country scenery all the way to your sister cities conference destination. The range of transport available makes getting to Tamworth trouble-free from almost anywhere.

Boasting a fashionable yet rural and relaxed lifestyle, the Tamworth region entices visitors from all corners of the globe with accommodation facilities from five star through to unique bed and breakfasts to camping.

The region can cater to any budget and style.

A list of some of Tamworth's accommodation facilities is included on the conference registration form and bus transfers will be organised to transport delegates to and from the conference venue.

Youth members of the Tamworth Sister City Committee will design and formulate the youth conference program.

Youth delegates will be accommodated at Calrossy Anglican Girls School, one of Tamworth's prestigious private schools. Sister cities and international relationships will be the focal point for the youth program with many fun and rewarding activities in the mix.

Tamworth Regional Council welcomes inquiries regarding the conference and will be happy to provide assistance on registrations, accommodation, travel and general information.

Information is available at www.tamworth.nsw.gov.au

Or by contacting Katie Alchin on 02 6767 5712 or k.alchin@tamworth.nsw.gov.au.

Tamworth looks forward to showing you country hospitality in July.

However, remember to pack your winter woollies because while Tamworth's reception will be warm, the climate will be cold.

Famous Festival city

Tamworth is the country music capital of Australia and has been since 1973

The Tamworth Country Music Festival is Australia's biggest and longest running music event and generally runs for 10 days each January

Up to 620 musicians busk in Busker's Boulevard (that's the main street busking block) or anywhere they can find an empty bit of street.

The festival is not just a country music festival - there's country swing, blues, bluegrass, western, hillbilly, bush ballads, rockabilly, pure country, Australiana, rock, folk, even wild west forms of hip hop and reggae. You name it - someone plays it somewhere

The Country Music Awards of Australia have been held 37 times and at every festival, in town halls, tin sheds, big tents, clubs and for the last 11 years in the Tamworth Regional Entertainment and Conference Centre. The awards attract up to 5000 people.

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President's message

IT is once again a pleasure to have this opportunity to communicate with those who have an interest in Sister City activities both here and overseas.

Sister Cities Australia has recently been undertaking a 360 degree look at itself through the eyes of outsiders.

What we have found is possibly not all that different from what we within the organisation already recognised, however it does reinforce our views of strengths and weaknesses, when seen from outside.

Of course the next step is the most important and in Tamworth in July as part of the National Conference the spotlight will be turned on our plans for the next five years and beyond.

The executive has spent considerable time in looking at our future options and as president I wish to thank all members for their input with a special mention to Peter Filmer for duty above and beyond.

The past year has seen many challenges within the movement and once again there has been some problem in certain areas of the media wishing to pick up on the minority bad experiences and not balance them against the plethora of success experienced throughout the country by so many members and organisations.

The current financial situation has, in some cases, put exchanges on hold or worse still effected cancellations.

This is indeed unfortunate for part of the lifeblood of relationships is this opportunity to show and share our various lifestyles.

Let us all work to ensure that as the world recovers these exchanges will once again come to the forefront.

Sister city links provide a special bond which appears to be foreign to those who have not yet experienced the warmth and friendship that is sparked when members from differing communities bond together.

This need not be an international bonding as has been experienced for many years by numerous Australian communities sharing, learning and growing together.

I am often asked, specifically by media, as to what the economic benefits are from our relationships.

Perhaps those who ask this should take the time to read the entries in our National Awards as every year there are wonderful examples of those benefits which flow back to our communities.

Travel, accommodation, catering, transport and retail industries are all recipients of the business increase when exchanges take place.

As one who has been involved in arranging home hosting for approximately 20 people I could perhaps add that the change in attitudes when citizens are first exposed to new cultures is wealth that our communities cannot buy.

It would be remiss of me not to pass on our thoughts to those citizens of A'Quila, Italy who have suffered such tragic loss of life and property in the recent earthquakes there.

This is a close Sister City to Hobart and I know there are many who migrated to Tasmania from this region of Italy.

"The recent disastrous fires in Victoria have highlighted once again how precious to us all are the citizens of this great country.

The willingness of everyone from all over Australia and many from overseas to pull together for a common cause was wonderful to say the least.

Why can't we do this all the time and not just when disaster strikes?

To those in Victoria and also elsewhere in Australia where suffering and loss occurred please take heart that all those involved in our movement are thinking of you.

To our fellow members in these afflicted areas we look forward to working with you to repair the damage, heal the hurt, and to rebuild for the future.

This is an election year for the executive and all positions are open.

I trust there will be many nominations and that the incoming members continue on the great work that has been done previously.

I publicly acknowledge the support and dedication that has been a hallmark of my executive for the past two years and I thank them sincerely.

In closing I take this opportunity to invite you one and all to Tamworth where we will really get 'Back to Basics' with our friendships and our continuing efforts in helping bring peace to this wonderful world of ours.

Yours in Sister Cities - Bill.

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Secretary's message

DURING my time as secretary, which is coming up to nine years, I have enjoyed the role immensely.

Although quite demanding at times, I believe I have managed to lift the profile of sister cities, and been able to assist with many inquiries.

I guess with any position, the job is as good as you make it and I have tried to do just that in this position, ensuring that all inquiries, whether large or small, have been attended with the same level of professionalism.

During my appointment it has been most satisfying to work with executive members who have all made a personal commitment to improving our organisation, and as in my employment as a personal assistant, I have worked to explore and implement new and improved processes for far greater efficiency in our operations.

The duties in my role as secretary to Sister Cities Australia include, receiving and responding to numerous correspondence, mainly emails, preparing the executive agendas and minutes, the Annual General Meeting documentation, preparing and sending a members only newsletter, a secretary's column in each edition of our newspaper, international invitations to our conference, numerous phone inquiries and liaising with all levels of government, international sister city organisations, our conference hosts and members and non members.

There has also been a requirement to meet with both local and overseas visitors and to undertake various visits to represent Sister Cities Australia.

The position can, at times, be quite demanding in terms of both time and personal commitment, however, with the support of my employer, Hobsons Bay Council, I am able to more than adequately carry out the duties of both positions. My role with sister cities enables me to utilise skills I am unable to use in my council position, which gives me even more job satisfaction as a whole.

Although I have gained immense satisfaction from this position, the day will inevitably arrive when I may need to move on at which time, hopefully, someone with equal passion will come forward to continue this very important role. Should you have an interest in this please feel free to contact me to discuss our operations.

Looking forward to seeing you all in Tamworth in July.

Marg.

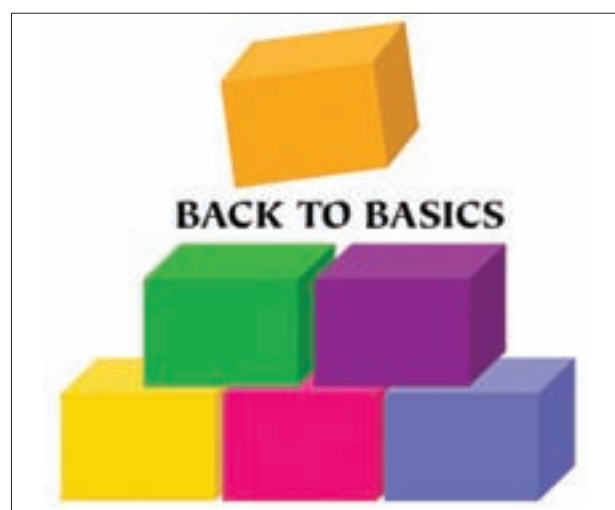
Tamworth is back to basics

TAMWORTH Sister City Committee chose the theme for the 2009 Sister Cities Australia Conference 'Back to Basics' to make the conference content meaningful and relevant.

The Back to Basics conference organisers want participants to return home to their sister city commit-

ties with new or strengthened skills. This conference is about getting back to the basics of sister cities in the hope of lowering the attendance cost.

The planning committee hopes that Tamworth will attract more first timers to the conference and also keep the interest of delegates from previous years.



Membership payments 2009 - 2010

AS most members will be aware the conference in Gosford last year confirmed the name change of the organisation to Sister Cities Australia Incorporated. When the Tax Invoices for the next period are issued in July 2009 they will carry the name Sister Cities Australia Inc. - however the banking details will remain unchanged.

Would all those involved in the payment of membership subscriptions please advise their accounts payable area of the name change to eliminate any confusions that may occur.

Treasurer, Caisley Graham.

Jan visits Japanese jewel 'Ishikawa'

MY trip was an exciting venture from the hustle of busy Tokyo, to living in a Japanese home and the companionship of the host family, to the opportunity to gain knowledge about the talented craftsmen whilst exploring this beautiful Ishikawa region of Japan.

A people to people experience.
A jewel of Japan in Ishikawa.
And a memory of a lifetime.

Twelve delegates representing most Australian states and territories and New Zealand's North and South Islands, arrived in Tokyo for the 2008 Local Government Exchange and Co-operation Seminar held from Saturday 9 to Thursday 20 November 2008. The tour group included delegates from a diverse range of local government spheres.

Some delegates had visited Japan before, others were about to experience the incredible hospitality of the Japanese people for the first time.

The opportunity to learn was a highlight of the visit.

In keeping with the policy of Sister Cities Australia all my travel and personal expenses were paid by me.

CLAIR hosted the seminar.

I arrived a day early and took this opportunity to travel via the subway system to Adachi, Sister City with

Sister Cities Australia vice president Jan Teasdale represented president Alderman Bill Wilson at the 2008 CLAIR Seminar to Tokyo during November last year.



The seminar involved delegates in the cultural history of Japan with emphasis on the prefecture of Ishikawa and a study of Japanese Local Government and Tourism.

Jan reports on a well organized schedule.

Belmont Western Australia (WA). Discussions on the impending 25th Anniversary took place at Belmont Park in Adachi.

The park is an Australian museum set up to promote the sister city relationship between the two cities.

In Tokyo, we were briefed on the role of local government in Japan, given an overview on CLAIR and provided with information on Japan's administration and finance, including the legal system.

This culminated with a visit to the magnificent Tokyo Metropolitan Government Building.

We then traveled to the Ishikawa Prefecture and were honoured to meet with Governor Tanimoto who amazed

us with his knowledge and passion for his region.

During our time in Ishikawa we were advised that a formal discussion on tourism policy would take place.

This was in keeping with the theme of this year's program, 'Tourism, Policy and Experience of Traditions'.

We will never forget superb food throughout the tour, the luxury of Kagaya Ryokan, where most of us experienced our first Onsen, meeting Lacquer Master Unryuan, visiting Kanazawa Castle Park, being escorted through Kenrokuen Gardens, including the Tea Ceremony at Shigure-tei Tea House, and many other visual experiences.

CLAIR and other friends whom we worked with each day, home host families, and other staff we met demonstrated that Ishikawa's greatest asset was its people.

To end the seminar, we were invited to give a presentation on how the prefecture might attract more Australians and New Zealanders to the region.

I hope our thoughts were of some help, and that more and more people visit to experience beautiful, traditional Ishikawa - 'The Real Japan'.

Whilst in Kanazawa, I was fortunate to have discussions with Kanazawa personnel in relation to sister cities and international travel from Australia.

Kanazawa has sister cities relationships with at least six cities world wide. One of these is with Hakusan in the Ishikawa Prefecture which has a strong sister city relationship with Penrith in NSW.

There are many resident experts and teachers in various unique crafts and

frequent classes are organized.

Upon my return to WA, our local Harvey World travel agent was very interested in hearing more about the CLAIR journey to Japan.

As a result of this a 14 day group tour of Japan is being put together featuring a visit to Ishikawa, touring and participating in Japanese unique craft classes and home stay.

Graeme Barsanti, from New Zealand and I were approached to research the possibility of an Assistant Japanese Teacher Program being set up in Australia and New Zealand with Kanazawa in Ishikawa.

This would involve Japanese teachers being trained to assist in teaching Japanese Language Classes in our schools.

Time frame would be anywhere



A beautiful kimino.

between three to six months. Expressions of interest in assisting with the establishment of this program would be greatly appreciated.

Please contact me on 0407 442 136 or jandale@inet.net.au

The 2008 CLAIR Seminar was one of the most interesting and rewarding experiences of my life, for the precise way in which the tour was conducted by CLAIR personnel, for the knowl-



Making music

edge gained, and the friendship of the seminar members.

This was a brilliant exercise in International Relations.

** Onsen is a hot springs bath.*



From left: Nikhil Ranade (Rohan), of Ishikawa Foundation for International Exchange; Tiffany Haritos, daughter of Evelyn Robinson; Bob Jarvis, City of Bayswater, Western Australia (WA); Sarah Artist, UTS Centre for Local Government, University of Technology Sydney, New South Wales (NSW); Paul Bennett, City of Dubbo, NSW; Evelyn Robinson, Department of Local Government, Housing and Sport, Northern Territory; Darren Turner, WA Local government Association; Jan Teasdale, vice president Sister Cities Australia; Gary Allis, Western Bay of Plenty District Council, New Zealand (NZ); Bill Gilmore, Department of Local Government, Sport and Recreation, Queensland (Qld); Cr Graeme Barsanti, Marlborough District Council, NZ; Tour leader, Alice Springs mayor Damien Ryan, Alice Springs Town Council, NT; and Cr Dave Perkins, Mackay Regional Council, Qld.

Sister Cities Australia president to speak at economy conference

SISTER Cities Australia president Alderman Bill Wilson has accepted an invitation to sit on a panel and to speak at the Developing the Knowledge Economy conference to be held in Melbourne during August.

The Office of Knowledge Transfer and Partnerships at the University of Melbourne and the Business Higher Education Round Table will host the conference. The purpose of this symposium is to promote the development of the knowledge economy as the preferred solution for the improvement of Australia's economic development.

This symposium will also bring together forward thinking business, community, education and government stakeholders aiming to use knowledge engagement activities otherwise known as the 'third

stream' as a way to enrich our culture and way of life.

The conference will provide a global economic outlook on the knowledge economy, international perspectives on the meaning of third stream activities, ways to develop a sustainable economy with knowledge at the centre, views on public policy and partnerships with government, a discussion concerning rural communities and the significance of third stream activities, case studies on facilitating knowledge transfer activities, sessions on successfully developing knowledge sectors through third stream activities in the current economic downturn, and workshops and brainstorming sessions on effective and innovative partnering.

People invited to the conference include those relevant to every area of the econo-

my. The conference is concerned with people who make policies and plans or who have the power to engage.

Conference producer Danielle Ryan said it sought people from education, government, business, not-for-profit organisations and the community.

"These will be people such as tertiary professionals who deal with external relationships as well as those involved with research, teaching and educational policy, businesses interested in commercialisation, corporate responsibility and developing professional skill outcomes, government bodies interested in various areas such as education, industry, employment, the economy and delivering community projects, research organisations and non government organisations that have a vested interest in engagement activi-

ties." Further information is available at www.informa.com.au



Sister Cities Australia president Ald Bill Wilson, right, and Tamworth Sister City committee president John Green, two people who have the power to engage.

City of Cockburn welcomes Sister City delegates from Mobile, Alabama

CIVIC leaders and a student band from Murphy High School in Mobile, Alabama in the United States of America, travelled to the City of Cockburn during October in recognition of the city's American sister city relationship.

Delegates met with Cockburn councillors and staff at a welcome reception and later met and rehearsed with students at Hamilton High School before performing at the annual Cockburn Rotary Spring Fair.

In preparation for their Spring Fair performance, the American student band

performed a free concert at the City's Administration building, which was attended by dozens of city staff and members of the public.

Cockburn deputy mayor Kevin Allen said the sister city relationships were invaluable as they allowed for information and ideas sharing between international councils and acknowledged Cockburn's history and cultural links. Many people are unaware that Captain James Stirling may have been the first person to visit both Mobile and Cockburn as he was involved in the conflict in Alabama in 1812, and 11 years

later was involved in establishing the Swan Settlement of Western Australia.

"I am so grateful to have the delegates from Mobile visit Cockburn and join us for the 2008 Spring Fair celebrations."

"I am certain their stay was beneficial to not only the Cockburn Council but also to the students at Hamilton High School who had the opportunity to perform with the American band and learn about their culture and to share experiences," he said.

The city, in association with Austal Ships and in recognition of the sister city relationship, commissioned a major

public artwork 'Friendship Way', by noted artists Tony and Ben Jones.

The artwork, is on the corner of Spearwood Avenue and Cockburn Road, and represents the maritime link between the councils. A smaller artwork at the eastern end of the new Spearwood Avenue extensions is themed around Mardi Gras as the City of Mobile has been the home of Mardi Gras since 1703. The City of Cockburn also has sister city relationships with the City of Split in Croatia and Yeu Yand in China and will commission a third Friendship Way identifying its Chinese sister city.

Massive funding for Sister Cities International Africa plan

SISTER Cities International (SCI) honorary board member Kevin Hill said the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation had given \$7.5million to Sister Cities International for a major program to support urban communities in Africa.

Mr Hill said the grant meant cities across the United States could work with their sister city counterparts throughout Africa to address development issues over the next three years.

He said the foundation grant represented the largest grant ever received by SCI.

SCI president and chief executive Patrick Madden said SCI had for more than 50 years built a reputation on its cross-cultural understanding while quietly delivering results in humanitarian and international development projects.

He said the Gates Foundation grant allowed SCI to scale up the impact of the sister cities model on critical development issues in Africa.

SCI's new Africa program will leverage United States (US) technical and professional expertise to address sanitation, health and water issues in urban areas of Africa.

The program supports shared learning and implementation of best practices to help African governments and community organizations acquire the tools and capabilities for successful urban planning and management.

This includes involvement and support from the private sector, non government organisations (NGO), and community-based organizations to provide sustained technical assistance and community development strategies.

To accomplish this, delegations from US cities, consisting of city experts, business professionals, educators, and community leaders, will visit and work closely with their African sister cities to develop long-term plans and strategies to implement sustainable solutions. African delegations will also attend follow up planning meetings in the US with city experts and receive training for post-implementation activities.

SCI will work closely with the Africa Global Sister Cities Foundation, a peer institution based in Accra, Ghana, to implement the program and build the African sister city network across the continent and globally.

The program will have both short-term and long-term results by building local capacity and urban management skills.

It will also help to improve delivery of sanitation, health, and water services to urban residents.

Senior program officer for special initiatives for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Melanie Walker said lessons learned in one city could be used elsewhere to improve the quality, success and cost-effectiveness of everyone's efforts, by inter-city collaboration.

Ms Walker said knowledge sharing provided long-term support for developing world cities, created sustainable solutions that empowered urban poor to improve their lives, and had the potential to expand between cities and nations around the world."

SCI is the only US based organization dedicated to creating long-term city-to-city relationships between US and communities abroad. US President Dwight D Eisenhower created the sister cities movement during a White House summit in 1956.

SCI is a leader in people-to-people exchanges with a network that boasts more than 650 US cities with more than 1900 sister city relationships in 135 countries on six continents and has 124 partnerships in 32 countries in Africa.

SCI promotes peace through mutual respect, understanding and cooperation by focusing exchanges and public programs on sustainable and economic development, youth and education, arts and culture, and humanitarian assistance. More information about SCI can be found at www.sister-cities.org.



City of Split deputy mayor Jozo Balic, City of Cockburn deputy mayor Kevin Allen, president Croatia Chamber of Commerce in Split, Zeljko Ivankovic, Jadranka Radovanic, and Cockburn councillor Carol Reeve - Fowkes.



From left: Cockburn councillor Ian Whitfield, Mobile Alabama councillor Connie Hudson, and Mobile Alabama vice president Fred Richardson Jnr at Bibra Lake.

A town worth a visit

TAMWORTH hospitality is based on city style with country heart.

You don't get the beach or the sea in Tamworth.

But you get the big backyard of New South Wales (NSW).

It's built around a city that is the regional capital for 130,000 people and a community that has plenty of things to do.

People come to shop, to do business and to seek out specialist services, to bring their kids to school, to play sport - and they just come to play.

There's plenty of nightlife and entertainment.

Tamworth has everything from quiet bars to noisy clubs and pub bars.

There is a selection of nearly 40 pubs and clubs, live music, footpath cafes, high class restaurants, club bistros and pub dining rooms.

But it's more than just a city - and more than just one place.

There's a high profile tourist track through a cluster of satellite villages and towns.

There's lots to see and do, such as botanic gardens and parks, marsupial parks, and aviaries.

Cultural trips with quaint village experiences, heritage walks and historic buildings to explore.

There's regional produce and taste trips to try, lavender farms, and wineries.

Museums that showcase the history of electricity and household appliances,

motorbikes, shearing displays, the days of early settlement, and gold panning.

Craft and arts shops, including a working woollen mill.

Or you can go sporty and jump off a cliff at Manilla - where the world's best paragliders compete year round.

There are two 18-hole championship golf courses in the city and another three sand and synthetic ones just outside.

You can walk and you can run all across the city.

Bowls, tennis, hockey, squash, footy, even croquet are played.

You can do it all and Tamworth will boast that they can always find you a horse to hop on.

Tamworth in July is cool but it's cold at night.

The days are generally sunny, but you'll need your winter woollies.

Tamworth is the headquarters for the Tamworth Regional Council, (TRC) the local government authority and the owner of the Tamworth Regional Entertainment and Conference Centre (TRECC) and the Australian Equine and Livestock Events Centre (AELEC).

Tamworth Regional Council is one of the biggest councils in inland New South Wales - it operates six libraries, one art gallery, six museums, three community centres, six public swimming pools, five sewerage treatment works, and six different water treatment schemes.

It employs 630 people across an area

three times the Sydney basin - 190 kms from end to end and 60 kms wide in the middle.

Tamworth continues to grow.

In 2004/05 Tamworth had \$155million of development activity.

In 2005/06 it was \$166million and in 2006/07 the figure was \$191million.

We had 211 million dollars worth of development and construction activity last year.

Eighteen and a half million was in subdivision value.

New dwellings and residential lots accounted for something like 70million -

while the value of rural-residential subdivision was \$8.5million, more than double from the previous year.

And TRC encourages its social health and community growth and sustainability. It actively supports its Sister City committee as one of more than 45 different committees and groups that operate under its community consultation and partnership program.

Along with its hard-working committee, it is proud to host sister city delegates and friends to Tamworth and Mayor James Treloar will be there to welcome everyone.



Tamworth's New Zealand Sister City friends are frequent visitors to the city, not just for festival events. Mayor Tracy Hicks and his wife Robyn caught up with Tamworth mayor James Treloar, right, and Festival princess Stephanie Whitbread in February this year.

Capital of country music

IT is synonymous with country music in Australia and Tamworth has hung its hat on country for over 35 years.

Yes, it is the capital of country music - and the city and its residents love the January party.

But as any Tamworthian will tell you Tamworth is a city much more than just bush hats, big buckles, or golden guitars.

There is a lot more to it than the music festival and the brand name built on country tunes.

Tamworth is a city of more than 40,000 in the urban area, with another 10,000 people living within 20 kilometres of the city centre.

There's something like four other towns and another 17 hamlets and tiny villages to see and visit within an hour's drive and within the local government boundary.

Tamworth is a modern, progressive city with a pretty easy going lifestyle and a strong economy that last year saw something like \$211million worth of approved development and construction activity. It is thriving, with a strong building industry and vibrant retail and hospitality sectors.

It was the first city in the southern hemisphere to have electric street lighting back in 1888 and has been a shining light in regional NSW ever since.

This is despite the perils of flooding, drought, and national economic and financial crises.

It might attract 50,000 visitors from all over the world and Australia in January for a hoedown party, but there's plenty to see and do the rest of the year in Tamworth.

Tamworth's hospitality is based on city style with country heart.

There is plenty of nightlife and

entertainment. Tamworth is a designated tourist destination based on events.

As one tourism local will tell you: "We know how to throw a music party but we're also big on conferences, sporting championships, and cultural and trade shows."

It is a friendly city and not just in

the minds of the locals.

It has been a winner of the Friendly Towns awards more than once over the last couple of years and last November was named the NSW winner of the overall Tidy Towns award by Keep Australia Beautiful. It has forged extensive civic, community and corporate partnerships.

Conference headquarters

TAMWORTH'S Regional Entertainment and Conference Centre (TRECC) will headquarter the Sister Cities Australia national conference.

TRECC has impeccable credentials - it hosts the red carpet Golden Guitar Awards, the Oscars of Oz

country music, each year. Another Tamworth complex winning friends and big audiences is the Capitol Theatre, the city's newest performance venue. It's a purpose-built 405-seat theatre next to movie theatres and an entertainment floor of the new Centrepoint shopping complex in the Central Business District. It opened late last year and is headlining some of the best touring and local productions you can see outside the metro markets.

Tamworth is not off the beaten track and has one of the top 10 busiest airports in regional Australia with four flights a day each way to Sydney. It's handy on the north-south driving route between Brisbane and Melbourne and an easy five hours from Sydney by road.

Tamworth handles 50,000 visitors for the festival every January.

It provides eight motels that are four - star or better with 130 rooms of four stars or more and 19 motels at three and a half or three stars.

Six B and Bs are four stars or better and 70 apartment - style rooms are available that are at least four stars, plus more than 100 bunkhouse and youth hostel beds.

Five caravan parks have spaces available.

Young people - cooee

BRING ya friends ... make new friends ... Coeee ... to the youth of Australia.

This is what it will be all about when the youth meet at the Sister Cities Australia annual conference in Tamworth from the Sunday 19 to Tuesday 21 July 2009.

Tamworth is modern Australian country.

It's not planning a fancy conference.

It will be basic, a lot of work and most importantly a lot of fun.

Tamworth's heart is where country music and horses are prominent, where they will be leaning heavily on these themes to create a memorable experience for all those who attend.

It aims to be a showcase for those who are planning to come from all places within Australia as well as visitors from overseas such as New Zealand, China, Japan and South Korea.

The plans are well in hand to involve the youth more actively in the overall conference program and have them participating in active workshops where they and the adults will learn all about how generation Y can be effectively involved in sister city programs.

If councils and communities miss sending their youth to this conference, they will have missed a golden opportunity to fortify and develop current youth leaders and future community leaders.



Tamworth Sister City committee chairman John Green with Belinda Williams, back, and Gore students during a recent Sister City visit.

Thanks to Adele Freeman



Bundaberg mayor Lorraine Pyefinch, Sister Cities Australia executive committee member Ray Kelly, and long serving Bundaberg Sister Cities chairman Adele Freeman.

BUNDABERG Sister Cities Community Committee inaugural chairman Adele Freeman was officially thanked during a Bundaberg Regional Council function for her work with the sister cities movement.

Bundaberg mayor Lorraine Pyefinch hosted the function and commended Ms Freeman for her work.

Sister Cities Australia executive member Ray Kelly travelled to Bundaberg for the event and made a special presentation to Adele.

Adele retired from the position during November last year after 10 years.

Cr Pyefinch said the function was to officially recognize and thank her for the great work she had done over the past 10 years as chairman of the Bundaberg Sister Cities Community Committee.

"In July 1998 we were very fortunate that Adele agreed to be the inaugural chairman of our sister city committee," she said.

The mayor said Adele had just retired from her position as principal of Kepnock High School and her organizational abilities, leadership skills, and flair for communication, made her an ideal choice for the new and demanding role.

"Bringing together a diverse group

of people for a common goal, thinking laterally to solve problems and make the best of every situation, and most importantly, to lead by example.

"Adele's love of travel and meeting people from all walks of life was also a major driver in the success of the Bundaberg Sister Cities Community Committee.

"On behalf of Bundaberg Regional Council, I would like to sincerely thank you for the amazing work you have done over the past 10 years to forge close ties with Nanning in China and Settsu in Japan.

"You should be very proud of everything that has been achieved.

"Some of the highlights include student exchanges involving several schools in the Bundaberg Region, many visits to and from Nanning and Settsu, establishment of the Japanese Gardens and the Chinese Pavilion at the Bundaberg Botanic Gardens, our celebration of Chinese New Year, which gets bigger and more spectacular each year, and becoming an honorary citizen of Nanning - an honor bestowed on only the closest of friends.

"Bundaberg, Settsu and Nanning are all better cities, with a greater understanding of each others unique culture, directly because of you," Cr Pyefinch said.

Traditional Tales the basis of cultural Exchange



Tammy Cooper tells about her Nooksack tribe in Deming, USA.

NATIVE American storyteller Tammy Cooper-Woodrich, from the Nooksack tribe Deming and a member of Bellingham Sister Cities Committee, visited Port Stephens for a week in March 2009.

Tammy shared traditional stories learnt from her grandmother with school

and community groups in the Port Stephens area.

Her visit is one of a series to Port Stephens as part of a literacy learning project developed by Bellingham youth services librarian Sandy Zell in 2003.

Prior to this visit, written student to student contact was established between students from Tammy's community and two schools in Port Stephens with a significant Aboriginal population.

Visits from Tammy and Sandy has helped establish a long term cultural exchange between these two groups.

Tammy introduced the trickster 'Raven', one of the well loved characters in Nooksack tales.

Port Stevens students then shared stories from the Dreaming with Tammy.

Apart from the obvious benefits of developing respect for different cultures and our own indigenous culture, Port Stephens found the program was a great way to inform the wider community of Port Stephens Sister City Committee activities.

Schools have been happy to acknowledge the role of the committee in providing these opportunities for students, via their family newsletters, making this a definite win win situation.

Back copies

I AM trying to obtain back copies of the Sister Cities News first published by former Australian Sister Cities Chairman John Byron, I believe in 1985.

Traditionally two copies a year were published.

Copies I need to complete the set are 1985, 1986, 1987, 1989 Vol. 1 and Vol. 2; 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998.

Jim Mynard.

French connection for Albany

WESTERN Australia's oldest settlement has a new French connection. Albany, established in 1826, has signed a friendship agreement with Péronne in France, famously liberated by Australian troops near the end of World War I. Albany Mayor Milton Evans visited Péronne in November 2008 to sign the agreement with Péronne Mayor Valérie Kumm.

Cr Evans said the agreement complemented Albany's prior sister city agreement with Gallipoli in Turkey.

"The first Anzac convoy left Australia's shores from the port of Albany," Cr Evans said.

"For many of the 30,000 troops, Albany was their last sight of their home nation as they left to fight in Gallipoli."

Albany signed a friendship agreement with Gallipoli in 2003, based on involvement in the Anzac story.

Cr Evans said the history of the Anzacs after Gallipoli was often neglected.

"After the evacuation of Gallipoli, Anzac troops went to fight on the Western Front, includ-

ing in the area around Péronne," she said.

"In August and September 1918, Australian troops fought the battle of Mont St Quentin, culminating in fierce fighting on September 1 which led to the liberation of Péronne in stages over the next couple of days.

"Australian soldiers won six Victoria Crosses on 1 September at the battle of Mont St Quentin.

By comparison, seven Victoria Crosses were awarded for the battle of Lone Pine at Gallipoli, but over several days.

"Signing a friendship agreement with a town that figured so prominently in the closing stages of the story of the first Anzacs was a humbling experience.

"This new agreement complements Albany's existing connection with Gallipoli," Cr Evans said.

Like many towns in the north of France, Péronne gives special honour to the memory of Australian troops.

When the town was liberated, the Australians dubbed the shell-damaged main street 'Roo de Kanga'.



Péronne Mayor Valérie Kumm and Albany Mayor Milton Evans sign the friendship agreement.

In honour of the troops' bravery and sacrifice, the towns people retained the name and added the sub-text 'We do not forget Australia'. During his visit, Cr Evans attended ceremonies marking Armistice Day and laid wreaths at war memorials. Péronne is home to the Historic de la Grande Guerre, a museum charting the history of

World War I.

Péronne officials offered Albany a collection of World War I artefacts and a photographic exhibition titled Roo de Kanga.

Cr Evans said Albany would gratefully receive the gifts, and the artefacts and exhibition would help Albany to build on the relationship between the two communities.

"Under the friendship agreement, the two communities can build relationships, inspire cultural awareness and understanding, and initiate trade and tourism opportunities," Cr Evans said.

Albany has a third sister city relationship with Tomioka in Japan, and a port affiliation with the Japanese port of Nichinan.

Anjo magic won the day

HOBSONS Bay International Friendship Association (HBIFA) won the 'Best Community Float' award in the 2009 annual Bayside Festival held at Altona, Victoria. Schools, sporting clubs and other

community groups are invited to showcase themselves by way of a stall or display, as well as join in a street parade.

This year, the theme for the parade was 'Fantasy and Magic'. HBIFA 2009 exchange students and their chaperone Sharon Hockley who will spend two weeks in Anjo Japan made some magic and because dragons played a large role in Japanese storytelling decided to build a dragon float. Leadership from Sharon, lots of initiative and energy from the students, some MDF and leftover paints and a masterpiece called 'Anjo' was created. Children from the Altona North Childcare Centre (ANCCC) made the paper scales for the dragon and all up, it took the students and Sharon nearly a month to build the float.



The winning exchange team. From left: Emma Fenech, Carmel Nicholls, Katie Tran, Declan McGavin, and chaperone Sharon Hockley. Front: Children from ANCCC Tara Phillips, Kayla Hockley, Sierra Hockley, and Bronwyn McGauley.

Japanese Festival for children



Everything was fine for the 2009 Coffs Harbour Japanese Children's Day.

MORE than 2000 people attended the Japanese Festival of Children's Day at Coffs Harbour Regional Botanic Garden on Saturday 3 May.

Coffs Harbour Council, Friends of Coffs Harbour Regional Botanic Garden, and Coffs Harbour Japan Society hosted the highly successful 2009 event.

Activities included traditional games and story telling, drumming, anime parades, origami workshops, kite flying, sushi making demonstrations, calligraphy workshops, karate display, bonsai display, manga mask workshops, food stalls, Japanese barbecue, Devonshire teas, and drinks. The Koinobori were presented to Council in 2005 by its sister city Sasebo, Japan, to enable the people of Coffs Harbour to understand the cultural significance of the 'Boys Day Festival'.

'Boys Day' has been renamed in Japan as 'Children's Day' to include all children in the festival. Sasebo this year presented the people of Coffs Harbour with an extra 20 kites to fly on the festival day bringing the number to more than 100.

In 2007 the inaugural event won a national award in the single project cate-

gory of the 2007 Sister Cities Australia National Awards.

Japanese Children's Day and Koinobori Japanese Festival of Children's Day is a national holiday in Japan.

The holiday comes from an ancient Chinese story about carp, which swam up a waterfall and turned into dragons.

The carp, or koi in Japanese, became symbols of perseverance.

The Japanese version tells of the koi swimming up the waterfall, but does not mention the dragons.

Families fly giant carp windsocks from flagpoles next to the house for about one month before the holiday and about two weeks to a month after.

The windsocks are called koinobori, carp flags.

Originally, flags with symbols of strength, such as carp and the family crest were flown on the same flagpole and a streamer called a fukinagashi was also flown.

This symbolised the whip, the busho, samurai warrior leaders carried into battle. The busho was a symbol of the samurais' authority.

Later the other symbols were dropped and only carp and sometimes the fukinagashi were used.

Wall of global friendships

CASEY Council has linked with community groups to build a Wall of Global Friendships.

The Wall is an outdoor community space designed to celebrate and acknowledge Casey's diverse cultural community and sister city relationships. It aims to recognise the contribution of different ethnic groups who have settled in Casey, and to promote international friendship, harmony and goodwill.

Inscribed plaques from different ethnic groups that have settled in Casey, and from Casey's sister cities will be featured on the wall.

The concept of an International Wall of Friendship was introduced to the City of Casey by community member Saleh Parkar through the Casey's Global Friendships Advisory Committee.

The official opening of the wall is scheduled to coincide with International Sister Cities Day on Saturday 5 July 2009.

Casey mayor Geoff Ablett said multicultural groups who now call Casey home were invited to contribute a plaque for the Wall of Global Friendships representing the people of their ethnic community.

He said it was located at the Balla Balla Community Centre in Cranbourne East and would also feature plaques from Casey's sister cities, Berwick Upon Tweed, England, Springfield, in America, and friendship city Ermera in East Timor.

"The landscape will incorporate walls bearing messages of friendship and goodwill with gardens, paths, seating and flagpoles

"The area will capture the unique cultural essence of the vibrant and diverse Casey community and provide information about Casey's sister city and friendship city links," he said.

It is hoped that multicultural communities living in Casey and Casey's sister cities will choose to donate a plaque and that

the area will become a community attraction and a place for communities to gather to celebrate multicultural ceremonies, special occasions and national events.

The concept grew from a project in Tasmania where an International Wall of Friendship was established in 1992 in conjunction with ethnic communities. Located in Hobart, the wall consists of

plaques, donated from each of the many countries whose people settled in Tasmania and have contributed to the enrichment and development of the state over the years.

It is envisaged that Casey's Wall of Global Friendships project will develop its own style to acknowledge and capture the unique cultural essence of the City of Casey community.



Wall of Global Friendships group working members Saleh Parkar and Ann Pathmasiri checking concept designs.



Turning the first sod for the Wall of Global Friendships. From left: Casey mayor Geoff Ablett, Abdul Hamid, Saleh Parkar, Cecille Wheare, Silvana Acuna, Yasina Khandwalla, and Ann Pathmasiri.



Visitors were able to enjoy lots of Japanese culture.

What's on in the capital cities?



Sydney Lord Mayor Clover Moore and Nagoya Mayor Matsubara during the 25th anniversary celebrations in Sydney in 2005.

Photo by Jenni Shipp.

Sydney and Nagoya celebrate 30 years of friendship

SYDNEY and Nagoya will in 2010 recognise and celebrate their 30 year sister city relationship.

This long standing relationship has been marked by highly worthwhile exchanges including a council staff trainee on 12 months secondment to Sydney held each year from 1986 to 2003.

The Sydney - Nagoya Sister City Committee supported the Nagoya City Council staff trainee program and has supported reciprocal visits by high school rugby union teams, primary and high school bands, dance ensembles, and participated in various fairs in Nagoya.

Committee members have for many years attended the annual Nagoya Festival and Sister City Parade at their own expense.

The committee supports the student exchange agreement between the New South Wales Department of Education and Training and the Nagoya Board of Education, and is involved in the sister zoo relationship between Taronga Zoo, Sydney, and Nagoya Higashiyama Zoo.

More recently, the committee organised production of a Japanese language brochure for visitors that depicts the history of Sydney Town Hall, assisted the Lord Mayor of Sydney with hosting and hospitality for visiting official delegations and specific individual visitors from Nagoya, and in 2004 initiated a substantial upgrade of the Nagoya Gardens in Hyde Park, Sydney.

While Nagoya will organise its own spectacular celebrations, to coincide with that city's 400 year anniversary of its founding, plans for the celebrations in Sydney in 2010 include a photographic exhibition at Parliament House, highlighting the animals of Taronga Zoo, and Nagoya Higashiyama Zoo. It is hoped the Nagoya Gardens in Hyde Park receive further enhancement.

The gardens could be the centrepiece for a festival to highlight the food, art and music of both cities that will raise awareness of the cultural differences and similarities of these sister cities and further reinforce their precious relationship.

Hobart student exchange with Yaizu in Shizuoka prefecture Japan

HOBART Council has joined with schools, business people, and the Hobart Sister City Committee to host a student exchange with sister city Yaizu from Thursday 30 July to Thursday 6 August.

Hobart Lord Mayor Alderman Rob Valentine will host the official welcome to Yaizu students in Hobart Town Hall on Friday 31 July. Hobart Sister City committee and the council are preparing a 'welcome package' for students and a 'hosting package' for host families.

Yaizu City has more than 143,370 people.

Its main economic activity is commercial fishing, followed by agriculture, primarily green tea and citrus fruit and is part of Shizuoka ken prefecture, Honshu, Japan, on the west coast of Suruga Bay.

Belmont youth

BELMONT in Perth Western Australia and Adachi City in Tokyo, Japan proudly celebrate the 25th anniversary of their Sister City Relationship this year. Success through youth with the annual student exchange program commencing 23 years ago has been the mainstay of the relationship.

Faces of the world in Melbourne

THE City of Melbourne celebrates sister city relationships with Tianjin, China, Osaka, Japan, and St Petersburg in Russia.

Melbourne and St Petersburg will celebrate their 20th sister city anniversary this year.

During February St Petersburg coordinated the 'Days of Melbourne' celebrations, which included an exhibition of an impressive and diverse range of Australian books at the Russian National Library, a well attended business roundtable hosted by the St Petersburg State University of Finance and Economics, and a cultural and education roundtable.

The highlight of the program was a joint performance by students from the Victorian College of Arts University of Melbourne and their counterparts from the St Petersburg Conservatory at the historic Academic Kapella.

The concert embraced the true spirit of sister friendship featuring

music by Melbourne composer Richard Mills and one of St Petersburg's most famous son's Dimitri Shostokovich and following a suggestion by the students was dedicated to the memory of the victims of the Victorian bushfires.

Planning is well underway for the Days of St Petersburg to be held in Melbourne later this year.

Osaka

The Osaka Twilight Festival was held in Melbourne's Treasury Gardens during February in glorious Melbourne weather.

More than 5000 people attended to experience a taste of Japan for the day.

Now in its 5th year, the Festival has become an important date in the Melbourne Japanese community calendar as it provides people the opportunity to celebrate our sister city relationship by enjoying unique culture whilst interacting with other like-minded members of the community.

This year's festival saw an increased entertainment program that had the crowd enjoying a wide range of performances including traditional drumming, dance and flute as well as Nippon - inspired blues and rock. Firmly rooted as a family festi-

val, the event affords people of all ages the chance to experience Osaka culture in the form of interactive activities such as chado, a tea demonstration, trying on a yukata, calligraphy, manga, martial arts displays and of course Osaka staples such as okonomiyaki and takoyaki.

Tianjin

The beauty and colour of Chinese culture were on display at Melbourne's Tianjin Dancing Kite Festival at Royal Park on Sunday 18 January 2009.

More than 4000 people attended and enjoyed family friendly activities including kite flying, lantern making, lion dancing, kung fu, fortune telling, traditional Chinese music, calligraphy and Chinese cuisine. They were also encouraged to make their kites, display their kites and fly their kites, and to experience China's unique and amazing culture and history right here in Melbourne.

The festival was held first in October 2000, and then in 2005 and again in 2008. This year the festival had an increased range of performances and growing participation of Melbourne communities. It has become an annual cultural celebration of Melbourne's sister city relationship with Tianjin before the traditional Chinese New Year.

