

A sunny Queensland national conference

YOU are invited to the Rockhampton region in sunny Central Queensland for the 2010 Sister Cities Australia National Conference to find out how sister city relationships are real, relevant and rewarding.

The conference theme title is 'Real, Relevant, Rewarding'. Sunday 11 July to Thursday 14 July will be a special few days in a special year for Rockhampton because 2010 is the 30th anniversary of its sister city relationship with Ibusuki, Japan. Young people will be a significant part of the celebrations because Rockhampton is set to also celebrate the relevancy of sister city relationships as host of the 2010 Sister Cities Australia National Conference and Youth Conference.

Mayor of Rockhampton Regional Council Brad Carter said young students from Ibusuki who came to the region on study tours were not even born when their city first signed the sister city agreement with Rockhampton. Cr Carter said Rockhampton regional community had enjoyed a long and fruitful relationship with its 'relatives' in Ibusuki, embracing the opportunities for cultural and educational exchanges.

"I want Sister Cities Australia members and visitors to keep from Sunday 11 July to Thursday 14 July 2010 free to enjoy the warm and sunny, tropical winter days and the cool nights of the Rockhampton region, to celebrate with us the 30th anniversary of our sister city relationship with Ibusuki.

"And to celebrate your own journey - real, relevant and rewarding in 2010," he said.

Access to Rockhampton is easy, with Qantas, Virgin Blue and Jetstar operating Brisbane to Rockhampton daily; Virgin Blue operating daily direct flights from Sydney and Townsville; and Tiger Airways operating several flights a week direct from Melbourne.

Rockhampton's sister city relationship with Ibusuki began with the signing of the first sister city agreement on Friday 21 November 1980.

Major exchanges between the two regions include construction of the Japanese Gardens in the

Rockhampton Botanic Gardens, a gift from Ibusuki to the citizens of Rockhampton, and officially opened on Thursday 17 June 1982. Tens of thousands of people have enjoyed the gardens. The Australian - style garden built in Ibusuki City and opened on Monday 18 April 1983 is a symbol of the eternal friendship between our citizens. During November 1998, Rockhampton City Council presented Ibusuki City with a statue of a Belmont Red Bull, which is on display in Rockhampton Road, Ibusuki City.

The bronze 'Sunamushi' sculpture is a reciprocal gift from Ibusuki City.

The sculpture is named, 'the bather, clad in a cotton kimono' and is on display at the Rockhampton Art Gallery.

Ibusuki underwent amalgamation in 2006 and on Thursday 3 August 2006 former mayor of Rockhampton Margaret Strelow and former Rockhampton chief executive Gary Stevenson visited Ibusuki City to re-sign the sister city relationship between the cities.

Ibusuki mayor Taharasako and chairman Shinguryo travelled here to re - sign and re - affirm the sister city relationship between their city and Rockhampton Region after the recent amalgamation to form the Rock-

hampton Regional Council. More than 100 community members attended the celebrations. A group of students from Ibusuki visits the Rockhampton Region each year for the Vacation English Study Tour. During 2008 Rockhampton council held its inaugural Sister City Snapshots Photo Competition and Exhibition and this provided a snapshot of life in the Rockhampton region that was sent to Ibusuki.

The winning photographs are still on display on the council's website at www.rockhampton-region.qld.gov.au, under 'Your Community, Our Sister City'. The winning photographs were sent to Ibusuki to be displayed at Ibusuki City Hall and on the Ibusuki City website. And in 2009, a group of Ibusuki students visited Rockhampton, home staying with students from The Cathedral College.

The second Sister City Snap-

shots Photo and Multimedia Competition was held in 2009, and involved our schools. This year's theme is 'Real Life With a Touch of Japan and all entries had to include something Japanese.'

The photos were exhibited at the Rockhampton Regional Library and on the council's website.

Photographs were sent to Ibusuki for exhibition at City Hall.



Ibusuki mayor Kaname Taharasako, left, and Rockhampton Regional Council mayor Brad Carter with Rockhampton's olive python. She has a very sweet nature and her name is Ollie.



The Capricorn Resort, Yeppoon, a four star resort and conference centre offering a range of room types, leisure and catering facilities chosen for the 2010 conference venue.

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President's message

SINCE my last report to you there have been many items of interest pass over my desk and I would ask you to take a few moments of your time to catch up with them.

Not in any order of preference but simply as they come to mind my commitments as president of Sister Cities Australia have taken me to many and varied locations and events.

In August I was able to represent the organisation, in accepting a personal invitation from Bankstown mayor Tania Mahailuk, to a civic dinner recognising the 31 years service to local government by our former leader and life member, Kevin Hill.

I had a delightful evening and was able to catch up with many long time supporters of sister cities from that city. It was a fitting tribute to a man who has given so greatly of his time and efforts in representing his ward and community. During his time there he was elected mayor on no less than seven occasions and deputy mayor once. From all of us in sister cities, Kevin, well done on a sterling effort.

Congratulations also to Cheryl who has always been the mainstay behind him and provided such dedicated support for all his interests.

While on the subject of congratulations.

A wonderful recognition award from the RSL for long time member, judge and supporter, former Wyong councillor Robyn Stewart.

This award is not handed out every day and it is great recognition of the work Robyn has been involved in with her community over many years.

Rob has been a great friend and contributor to our cause for many years and we are so thrilled for her.

As Margaret makes mention in her column we both attended a seminar in Melbourne jointly hosted by Melbourne City Council and Monash University's Professor Ross Mouer and Dr Tsutsumi from the Japanese Studies Centre.

The program was a full on day and the participants were eager to work together on various issues and aspects of sister city relations and operations.

It was very obvious that this style of gathering may really be the best way to bring together a diverse group of like minded operators, from all levels, for immediate and meaningful options for moving forward with our relationships.

Perhaps it is a point that needs to be addressed by future national conference hosts?

In this issue of Sister Cities News I am sure you will be delighted to see the large number of photos.

Some will make you smile and perhaps some you would like to burn but it is a true snapshot of us.

Speaking of Sister Cities News. What do you do with your copy? Read it, file it and forget it? This is a great tool for enlisting others to the cause.

The stories contained are real and many are extremely moving making it great to be able to share them with others.

So what is your excuse for not ensuring that your issue is read by someone new every time?

I also wish to raise the issue of membership.

I am disappointed that over the years we have not been able to entice more to join as ordinary members.

The fee is a miserable \$55 annually and to those who have been members I thank you but I would dearly love to be saying thank you to hundreds more.

Think about it!

This is your organisation and it needs you to be a member if we are ever to be taken seriously by those in any positions of power.

In closing, it would be remiss of me should I not make mention of the great conference we attended in Tamworth this July. Mayor James Treloar and his staff really pulled out all stops and delivered what I believe to have been one of the best conferences I have ever attended.

Thank you James and your wonderful community.

I hope to be back and I am proud to act as an ambassador for your lovely city.

Bill Wilson.

Secretary's message

I WAS delighted to be appointed secretary again for a further two years and will do my utmost to fulfil my obligations of the role.

The executive has some very exciting projects underway and those of you who are members would have received our membership newsletter with an update of those projects. Those of you who would like to be members, just visit our website www.sistercitiesaustralia.com and download an application form which has all the payment details included on the form.

I was delighted to be part of a Victorian forum on Friday 21 August at the Melbourne Town Hall, where several Victorian councils with Japanese sister cities came together to speak about their sister city relationships.

The forum was organised by Professors Ross Mouer and Jun Tsutsumi and although I did attend under my Hobsons Bay Council role I was able to address the delegates as secretary of Sister Cities Australia.

There is more on the forum in an article in this edition of the paper.

Two articles that you will also enjoy reading are about assistance offered to the City of L'Aquila in Italy by both the cities of Hobart in Tasmania and Perth in Western Australia.

Hobart provided considerable funds as part of the recovery assistance offered to L'Aquila and Perth's Lord Mayor also handed over a cheque to assist with its recovery and reconstruction. Perth's sister city is Vasto in Italy close to the Abruzzo region to which L'Aquila is its capital. Isn't this what sister cities is all about?

What a tremendous effort by both cities.

Thank you to all those who attended our annual conference in Tamworth this year and to those of you who would really like to meet some like minded people and discuss various aspects of sister cities, please consider attending next year's conference which will be held in Rockhampton, Queensland from Sunday 11 to Thursday 15 July 2010.

Margaret Evans.

Nice to see you John



SISTER Cities Australia past president and Sister Cities News founder, John Byron, hasn't forgotten his old ties. John, who lives in the City of Casey, went along to the official opening of the Casey Wall of Global Friendships at Cranbourne on Sister Cities Day.

International partnerships

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

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

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

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

Korea - Korean Local Authority for International Relations (KLAFFR)

New Zealand - Sister Cities New Zealand (SCNZ).

United States America - Sister Cities International (SCI).

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Logan musicians win National Youth Project

LOGAN Youth Music Exchange (LYME) participants hit a high note by winning the Australian National Youth Project Award for 2008.

Logan's Japanese sister city Hirakata invited LYME to perform at the International Friendship Cities Youth Music Concert held during September 2008 and the event provided valuable cultural and educational insights for the 35 students involved.

LYME musicians performed with the Hirakata Brass Band and traditional music groups from Hirakata's Sister Cities in China and South Korea.

An estimated 8000 to 10,000 people viewed the performances presented between Sunday 21 September and Friday 3 October 2008.

Logan customer and corporate services committee chairperson Logan councillor Lisa Bradley said the LYME concept was unique and believed to be the only one of its kind in Australia.

"Around 200 Logan youth have participated in LYME international exchanges touring Logan's sister cities of Japan, Taiwan and China.

"Logan City Council developed

its first sister cities program in 1995 and has since generated a large amount of goodwill and exchange opportunities for residents, schools, and businesses."

Cr Bradley said LYME was established in 2001 and was one of the most successful sister cities programs organised by the council.

"Logan youth have particularly benefited from these relations because they have been given the opportunity to be involved in various cultural and educational programs locally and internationally."

Cr Bradley said she was thrilled to hear musical ability and confidence of the students involved improve as a result of the tour.

"It also provided our students with an understanding of the culture and lifestyle of Japan.

"This tour is a once-in-a-lifetime venture for many of these youth," she said.

LYME student Tierney Molenaar, who plays flute 2, said the final performance in front of hundreds of people, while playing next to some of the best musicians of her age from all around the world, was overwhelming.

"Overall, I had the time of my life and returned with a new view on everything. Something I will hold for the rest of my life," she said.

"Through all the cultural experiences and seeing the kind of

talent that came from three different nationalities, I am so much more motivated to reach my potential and also confident I can do it," she said.

Conductor String Chamber Ensemble, Margo Flemming

said the students of the Hirakata 2008 concert approached the tour with responsibility, great performances and a positive attitude.

"They were fantastic ambassadors for Australia," she said.



From left: Sister Cities Australia treasurer Caisley Graham, Logan community engagement and marketing manager Mark Bignell, Sister Cities Australia president Alderman Bill Wilson, and awards chairman Jan Teasdale.

Logan builds on universal language called music

THE Logan Youth Music Exchange (LYME), established in 2001, won the Sister Cities Australia 2009 Youth Project Award for its visit to the International Friendship Cities Youth Music Concert at Hirakata City, Japan, last year.

Seven years earlier the exchange was developed when Logan made its first tour to Hirakata.

This tour was to bring the bands from Logan and Hirakata together to perform a joint concert bridging the gap

between language and culture by using music as the common ground. More visits were arranged for LYME after the success of this project.

And the Hirakata Youth Choir came to Logan to perform at the opening of the Logan Entertainment Centre in 2004. The 2008 visit also involved the 50th anniversary celebration of Hirakata Lions Club.

LYME musicians have toured Logan's sister cities in Japan, Taiwan and China, with more than 200 youth par-

ticipants involved in this international exchange.

Logan City Council has been a strong supporter of the youth music exchanges because it is a core activity in Logan City's international relations program. It is also a worthwhile program involving the youth of two sister cities in an international exchange for friendship and learning. Hirakata, a sister city of Logan since 1994, has been the host city for LYME on three occasions prior to this planned tour for

2008. The incredibly high value placed upon this exchange by the sister cities must also be recognised.

In every tour to Hirakata City, LYME has had the opportunity to perform with a school band in Hirakata that has frequently won the national award as the best band in Japan.

In the tour of China in 2007, the LYME orchestra performed under a famous Chinese conductor who was recognised as a living treasure by the Chinese National Government.

Close personal friendships from Mackay Matsuura sister city relationship

MACKAY Regional Council and the City of Matsuura in Kyushu, Japan, celebrated the 20th anniversary of their sister city relationship on Wednesday 22 July 2009.

A link up via Skype took place on the day to celebrate the special anniversary. Speeches by the mayors of each region, and by the deputy chairperson of the Matsuura Sister City Advisory Committee, highlighted the many mutual friendships that formed because of the strong relationship.

Speeches were also made by community members of the committee in Mackay and the Friendship Association in Matsuura, who have had a long association with the relationship.

Mackay and Matsuura have enjoyed many cultural exchanges and both cities share a common bond through the coal industry.

This 20 year friendship has led to more

and more residents travelling between their cities and development of many personal friendships.

Student tour groups between Matsuura and Mackay take place annually.

Mackay Regional Council offers a "scholarship" program for which years 10 and 12 students may apply for assistance toward costs of the trip.

Trips include a range of activities, visits to places of interest, and attendance at schools in the region.

Citizen tour groups take place biennially to and from the Mackay region, with all participants paying their own costs.

The next visit to Matsuura is scheduled for November this year, when more celebrations will take place to celebrate the 20th anniversary.

The mayor of Mackay Region, chair of the Sister City Advisory Committee and 34 members of the community will make up the tour group.

Mayoral introduction for Cockburn travellers

City of Cockburn mayor Logan K Howlett can provide a letter of introduction for Cockburn residents wishing to visit their sister city, Split, in Croatia.

Split is welcoming people to its summer festival if they are travelling through Europe.

Split and Cockburn

exchanged civic visits during 2008 and have formed a continuing alliance based on creating strong links between people in both communities. Part of this arrangement is promoting their respective regions as tourist destinations when residents from each area are visiting the sister city.

A special guest register was presented to the City of Split last year to record and welcome people from the City of Cockburn visiting the historic Dalmatian port while overseas.

Several Cockburn residents have already made the journey and experienced warm hospitality from Split council officers.

Haiku poetry conference for Gosford

GOSFORD Sister City Association secretary Margaret Hardy said the fourth Haiku Pacific Rim Conference was held at Gosford from Thursday 22 to Friday 25 September 2009.

Ms Hardy said Australian Haiku Society president and conference convener, Beverley George, selected Gosford for the event.

"More than 60 delegates

from Japan, New Zealand, United Kingdom, United States of America, and Australia were present.

"Delegates met at the Gosford - Edogawa Commemorative Garden on Friday 23 September to write Haiku and meet local artists who were painting in the garden.

"Artists had already enjoyed an experience of lis-

tening to Haiku and doing Sumi painting to match the Haiku with members of the Central Coast Art Society."

Ms Hardy said it was a good learning experience, with poets and artists acquiring new techniques and cultural activities. She said it was a good way to spread the aims and objectives of the sister city movement.

Coming together for the one cause



Top left. From left: Khadijah Iskandar, Marrickville, Steve Bartlett and Melita Bartlett, Tamworth, and Marrickville mayor Sam Iskandar.

Above. From left: Lindy Ellis, of Rockingham, WA, Kristin Sweeney, City of Casey, and Rockingham councillor Paul Ellis.

Top right. Mary Tran, Bankstown, left, and Sister Cities Australia vice president Jan Teasdale.

Left. From left: Sophie Smith, Devonport, Kevin Harris, Tamworth, Elyse King, Devonport, and Margaret Sippel, Tamworth.



Both first timers at a sister cities conference. Alexandra Hornby, Gosford, left, and Judith Keeps, of the Frankston Susono Friendship Association.



Members of the Tamworth Sister City Committee.
From left: Secretary Bill Forest, vice chairman Esther Halliday, chairman John Green, guest speaker Pam Fayle, Ruth Forest, and David Fayle.

Hobsons Bay International Friendship Association delegates Jeff Phillips, Prue Phillips, Lisa Prowling, and Sister Cities Australia secretary Margaret Evans.



Left: Sister Cities Australia president Alderman Bill Wilson chats with New Zealand delegate City of Gore administration manager Susan Jones.



Centre. Sister Cities Australia executive member Ray Kelly in serious conversation with Parkes delegate Mike Greenwood.
Above right: City of Casey delegate Kay Vrieze discusses a point - or two - with keynote speaker Greg Hammond.



was the right chord for Tamworth



Centre: The man whose dream came true. John Green took the conference back to basics and it worked. Top left: Delegates from Gore, New Zealand, at the Gore Gardens in the Tamworth Botanic Gardens. From left: Gore administrative manager Susan Jones, Gore councillor Nicky Davis, and Gore country Music Club president Julie Mitchell.

Above: They worked so hard to make the conference a success. Tamworth citizens service manager Karen Lichfield, left, and conference coordinator Katie Alchin.

Centre left: The CLAIR stand. From left: Takashi Yonamine, Toshihiro Tsuneishi, Ken McBride, and Caisley Graham.

Centre: Jane Morey, left, and Debra Howe, of Toowoomba.

Above: From left: Esther Roadnight, Cr Deborah Botica, and Lynette Howle, of Kalgoorlie Boulder. Far left: Devonport contingent. From left: Alida Beattie, Alderman Peter Hollister, Joan Andrews, and Alderman Bill Wilson.

Left: Tamworth mayor James Treloar, and Tamworth Sister Cities chairman John Green welcome Sister Cities Australia vice chairman Jan Teasdale to the opening reception.

Below: Youth coordinator Belinda Williams conducted a highly successful youth conference.

Connecting culture through art and the importance of being "ernest"

**By Christine Elcoate
Sunshine Coast Sister Cities**

SISTER city relationships are known to set up and foster better trade, make business and educational connections, with a touch of culture and art. Some do and some don't.

Five years ago I was given the challenge to foster an art cultural connection with our sister city, Tatebayashi which is two hours north of Tokyo in Japan. Tatebayashi is renowned for its Azalea festival and being the birthplace for the first woman astronaut to land on the Moon. The relationship was already very strong and in its ninth year, but they were looking to develop the arrangement more fully.

So hence the baton was passed and I stepped off the bus in Tatebayashi, on my own in unknown territory and culture, armed with a dictionary and arigato being the extent of my Japanese language skills.

It was then I was wishing I had taken more interest in both my daughters' Japanese homework during their student years.

Having Japanese school billets is very different to stepping onto foreign soil armed with an idea and a suitcase.

Yet having that council affiliation meant I was not alone and I found just what hospitality was Japanese style.

My learning process had begun.

I was the advance party so I could meet with artisans, before the Sunshine Coast delegation arrived a week later for official meetings.

A translator was provided for

periods of time during the days and I met visual artists, community groups, and schools. I gave talks at schools and workshops during my visit which was a real pleasure as I was learning at ground level just how their system worked for them.

A greater understanding of different approaches to little things such as recycling in the school system, down to public leaning posts at bus stops.

I was a buzz with ideas to bring home.

Initially I had overnight stays making genuine connections with artists, often working through a day with very little English.

This is where genuine friendships are made without words but a willingness to communicate.

Often just that same love of a particular medium is a form of communication.

I have studied many different art forms over my 30 years working with my own arts practice, so I was able to communicate with different artists on many levels.

I found five artists who were interested in making a cross cultural connection with our community and artists.

The added bonus was it would help all of our professional development as well as the bonus of sharing knowledge of our different cultures within our communities.

I had to advise them that I could not guarantee workshop fees for teaching but I would

give it my best shot at getting some form of funding for their teaching/demonstration efforts. My big question to them was would they still come if I was not successful in getting funding all be it partial?

Would they pay their own way? At the very least, I could offer them a home stay, but were they still going to run with the opportunity I was presenting. Could I put my faith in them once I put the effort in for funding?

Was there a cross communication and a misunderstanding with translation?

But I did believe in what I was doing and I think that came across.

The next year's visit was to be an inaugural visit to the Sunshine Coast and also the tenth anniversary of the Sister City relationship.

It was a very successful exchange with school residences, community and school workshops, master classes and demonstrations, culminating with a three week exhibition in a Montville gallery.

This gave tourists as well as the community the opportunity to appreciate the diverse range of works that were on offer.

One visiting Japanese artist of international acclaim donated a large clay sculpture to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the relationship.

"Deep Sea Fish in love with the Moon" is displayed at the Sunshine Coast Airport welcoming the community and tourists.

Every other year we celebrate the arts in each community yet you need to work on your friendship as in life with a mixture of community and professional artworks.

This cultural love affair is strong due to the importance of being "ernest" and true to your word.

If you work heart to heart with perseverance you will keep an art link happening between two communities.

It is not something that you can turn off and pick up ten months later.

The cultural link serves a purpose for artists young and old to test the waters of Japanese taste, or the mere fact that each community is learning through simple tea or perhaps indigenous ceremonies, how and what is important in each culture.

This is a good thing.

I still hear people categorising cultures due to wars that have passed, and I think that some people will take a lot to change the ideas firmly planted by stories told by their peers.

I am still happy to chink away at the armour through art and its diversity and not to give up. This year a group of eight Sunshine Coast artists travelled to Tatebayashi and exchanged thoughts and ideas culminating in a group exhibition of professional and community artists, and incorporating a collaborative wooden sculpture of sixteen art works from both countries.

There is always something to

learn, it is a small, small world. If I can connect cultures through art and bring a better understanding between people from all walks of life I think my days volunteering with sister cities is well spent.

We are trying to keep this avenue open for all people who have a passion in life and want to share their knowledge with like minded people.

Working with your sister city, the world can be your oyster, if you would like to take time to understand a different culture and share their customs and traits.

The cost of an airfare, sharing your time and home is an inexpensive way to move closer to cultural awareness, and thinking globally.

There have been many moments I will always treasure, many hugs and tears, through emotional highs and lows in sharing experiences which we have both worked together to make happen.

With the amalgamation of our regional councils we are now one big Sister City Association here on the Coast with other relationships in Xiamen, China; Fenland, England; Alotau, Papua New Guinea; and new developing relationships with Mont Dore in New Caledonia.

These links have passionate people working towards a better and stronger communication between our communities. To communicate and break down barriers the secret password is passion.

A global wall of friendship for Casey



CASEY councillor Wayne Smith officially opened the Casey Wall of Global Friendships at the Balla Balla Community Centre in Cranbourne on Sister Cities Day.

Cr Smith also presented 10 volunteers with awards in recognition of their work for the friendship group. The wall is an outdoor community space which acknowledges Casey's diverse cultural community and global friendships and will feature a collection of inscribed plaques from different ethnic groups settled in the City of Casey. Many people from different cultures attended the function and national dress was a feature.

Cr Smith said Sister Cities Day was celebrated around Australia and was an opportunity for people to reflect on the positive benefits of sister city relationships.

"We enjoy sister city and friendship links with Berwick - upon - Tweed in England, Springfield, Ohio, USA, and Ermera in East Timor."

"The aim is to improve peaceful coexistence and why not work for world peace," he said.

Springfield Ward councillor Sam Aziz said people from 163 countries lived in the City of Casey. He said the Wall of Global Friendships was designed to be a solid and enduring acknowledgement of this community's rich multicultural composition.

"The wall also acknowledges and promotes our sister city and global friendship links," he said.

Ten volunteers were on Sister Cities Day 2009 presented with awards in appreciation of their work for Casey Global Friendships. The awards were made during the official opening of the Wall of Global Friendships. They are. Standing. From left: Saleh Parkar, Stephanie Valena, Evelyn Jolayemi, Syd Pargeter, accepting for the late Pearl Pargeter, Kay Morland, with Springfield Ward councillor Sam Aziz. Centre: Michele Halsall, and Brenda Miller. Front: Kay Vrieze, with River Gum Ward councillor Wayne Smith, Professor John Miller, and Bert Ainge.

Secretary takes message to university forum

Sister Cities Australia secretary, Margaret Evans, delivered the opening address to a Monash University forum and workshop held to discuss Japanese sister city relationships in Australia. Professors Ross Mouer and Jun Tsutsumi from the Japanese Studies Centre at Monash University organised the forum, held in the Melbourne Town Hall on Friday 21 August, with representatives from 13 Victorian councils that have Japanese sister cities.

Director of the Japan Local Government Centre (CLAIR), Mr Kenji Ikeda, and Deputy Consul General, Consulate General of Japan in Melbourne Mr Yasufumi Kotake, also addressed the delegates.

Sister Cities Australia president Ald Bill Wilson also attended the forum.

Ms Evans said Professors Mouer and Tsutsumi arranged the forum after collecting material from the various websites of each of the municipalities.

"They interviewed people responsible for each of the sister city relationships.

"It became apparent that although these municipalities shared a common sister city relationship, that being Japan, there was no forum or opportunity for them to meet to discuss like minded interests and share what experiences they had between them.

"The forum was most successful and it was a unanimous view among the group that this type of gathering should continue," Ms Evans said.

Professors Mouer and Tsutsumi prepared a paper on Australia's sister city relationships with Japan.

Copies of the paper are available from Margaret 03 9932 1043.



From left: Professor Ross Mouer, Japanese Study Centre, Monash University, Margaret Evans, Secretary, Sister Cities Australia, Mr Kenji Ikeda, Director, Japan Local Government Centre (CLAIR) and Ald. Bill Wilson, President, Sister Cities Australia.

New Caledonia sends recycling to Australia



New Caledonia waste landed in Brisbane as part of a sister city relationship.

ONE hundred tonnes of recyclable waste was brought to Brisbane early this year from New Caledonia for processing at the Amcor plant, Petrie.

In a first for the French Pacific territory, the city of Mont Dore sold the consignment of paper, cardboard and plastic to Amcor.

The city is the only one on the territory with collection facilities for recyclable waste. Since the service was first introduced 18 months ago more than 150 tonnes of waste have been collected.

Jacques Fayolle from Bureau Francais, an organisation for French Pacific Islanders in Queensland, says he was happy to help Mont Dore find a partner in Australia to deal with the waste.

"They were at the point where they had a stockpile and something needed to be done with it," he said.

Mr Fayolle said Bureau Francais arranged the con-

tacts and the assistance to make an arrangement with the Australian company that was able to take it off their hands," he said.

Blacktown and Porirua Cities celebrate 25 years

BLACKTOWN City, the largest local government area in New South Wales (NSW) by population, celebrated the 25th anniversary of the signing of its sister cities agreement with Porirua City, New Zealand.

The agreement between Blacktown and Porirua is based largely on cultural exchange.

It was quite fitting therefore that celebrations to mark the 25 year partnership focussed on art and culture and formed part of Western Sydney's largest community festival, the Blacktown City Festival during May 2009.

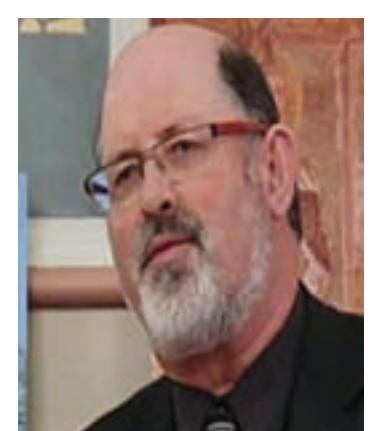
The celebrations included several performances by the Whitireia Performing Arts Group, internationally acclaimed, as one of the best Polynesian dance groups in the world.

Blacktown Arts Centre celebrated the anniversary by showcasing an outstanding art exhibition 'Small Treasures', sent from the Pataka Museum in Porirua, and displayed in Blacktown from April until early June.

Maori weaver, Tracy Huxford, also helped to celebrate the anniversary by conducting workshops with Blacktown students. The most exciting and somewhat revolutionary aspect of the anniversary celebrations was the Artists - in - Residence program although they were in residence for a very short time.

Blacktown indigenous Artist, Danny Eastwood, and Maori artist from Porirua, Darcy Nicholas, both have works displayed around the world. They worked tirelessly during the festival to produce pieces that were presented to Blacktown mayor Charlie Lowles and Porirua mayor Jenny Brash at an anniversary dinner. The Blacktown City and Porirua Sister Cities Agreement continues to deliver opportunities and foster understanding between the two cities. If the 25th anniversary celebrations are anything to go by the next 25 years will be even more exciting as the cultural revolution between the two cities gathers momentum.

Town Hall Ballroom in June. This was an evening of Italian culture featuring performances by members of the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra of works by Vivaldi, Rossini, Tosti and



Hobart Lord Mayor Rob Valentine

Canzone Abruzzese. There was also a recitation of Ovid and an art installation by Marisa Mastro-cola. A silent auction was organised with a number of donated goods including wine, vouchers and art works from local artists.

Guests sated their hunger with antipasto, pizza and fine wine. The second fundraiser was the L'Aquila Earthquake Recovery Appeal Dinner Dance, organised by the Abruzzo Association and supported by the council at the Australian Italian Club in North Hobart. Guests were treated to a sumptuous four course Italian dinner served with wine.

Again many donated goods were auctioned in some fiercely competitive bidding.

More than \$20,000 was raised from the two events. All money raised from the appeals will go towards reconstruction of historic buildings in L'Aquila.

Perth reaches out to the world

PERTH Lord Mayor Lisa Scaffidi said sister city relationships were important in building global alliances and fostering better relations with trading partners.

Cr Scaffidi said Perth had eight sister cities and three Charters of Mutual Friendship with other cities.

"Our first sister city was Kagoshima, in Japan, established in 1974," she said.

Cr Scaffidi led a delegation to Kyushu Island, to mark the 35th anniversary of that relationship. She was accompanied by Deputy Lord Mayor Janet Davidson, Perth councilor Rob Butler, and a business delegation.

"It was a fantastic experience to receive such a warm and enthusiastic welcome from the people

of Kagoshima.

"The streets were adorned with banners welcoming us and there was even a street and tram named after Perth," Ms Scaffidi said.

Kagoshima mayor Hiroyuki Mori hosted a special anniversary commemorative ceremony with traditional Japanese dancing.

While in Kagoshima, the delegation met representatives of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, inspected Kagoshima Port and waterfront and called on students at Immaculate Heart College and Gyokuryu Middle School.

The Lord Mayor's visit also assisted with development of a unique higher education exchange between the International University of Kagoshima and Western Aus-

tralia's Edith Cowan University.

A new memorandum of understanding between the sister city universities involves collaboration in the areas of academic staff exchange and student study tours that will provide new and exciting higher education opportunities for Perth and Kagoshima.

"Kagoshima values highly the sister city relationship with Perth and I believe West Australians can gain a lot from engaging with our overseas friends when they visit Perth, many of them being students studying here.

"A sister city program enables citizens to become directly involved in international relations in a unique and meaningful way, bringing long-term

benefits to the community and its partners abroad.

"Sister city relationships allow communities to exchange ideas, gain an international perspective and increase their understanding of global issues.

"In addition to encouraging international peace and goodwill, many sister

city relationships go much further leading to economic growth, increased tourism, and reliable business contacts," the Lord Mayor said.

After the visit to Kagoshima, the Lord Mayor visited Hefei in eastern China and a Perth sister-city, Nanjing, at the invi-

tation of Perth Education City which organised a delegation promoting WA's education sector.

China is WA's number one source market for overseas students, accounting for 13 per cent of student visas, 5506 students, as at December 2008.



Lord Mayor Lisa Scaffidi and Kagoshima Mayor Hiroyuki Mori, with members of the delegation, and Japanese officials.

Perth Lord Mayor visits earthquake victims

PERTH Lord Mayor Lisa Scaffidi witnessed some of the devastation caused by an earthquake which struck the Italian city of L'Aquila earlier this year and personally handed over a cheque from the City of Perth to assist with recovery and reconstruction.

The cheque for 10,000 Euros, \$17,100, was presented to L'Aquila mayor Dr Massimo Cialente on behalf of the people of Perth.

L'Aquila is the capital of Italy's Abruzzo region, and is located close to Perth's sister city, Vasto. The quake killed more than 260 people, injured more than 1000, and left 28,000 people homeless.

The Lord Mayor, Deputy Lord Mayor Janet Davidson, and Perth councillors Rob Butler and Sandra Liu were at Abruzzo for the 20th anniversary of Perth's sister city relationship with Vasto.

A contingent of Perth's Abruzzese community accompanied the councillors and presented donations from their own fundraising held to provide relief for earthquake victims.

The councillors witnessed some of the rebuilding projects, met with victims and had lunch with people forced to live in temporary tent accommodation.

Ms Scaffidi also presented a letter from the Lord Mayor of Hobart Rob

Valentine that expressed Hobart's best wishes for the people of L'Aquila as they rebuild their lives.

She also delivered greeting cards made by primary schoolchildren from Hobart.

"Perth and Hobart both have significant Abruzzese communities and it is at times of adversity such as this that we feel for our friends and relatives on the other side of the world.

"Abruzzo is an indelible part of the heritage and character of Perth's people, with our strong Vastese community being pivotal to our success and development.

"The people, city and councillors of Perth were shocked and saddened to hear of your tragic earth-

quake and the destruction you suffered.

"Apart from the terrible toll of death and injury, your loss is more extensive as it also includes ancient buildings, churches and medieval monuments.

"We wanted to come and

visit and reach out to you

and show our care and concern.

"I feel honoured to be

standing here today on

land that has seen so

much culture and history

unfold.

"With an eye to the future, this is also a place world renowned for its technological research excellence, and it is important that the city returns to normal as soon as possible so it can move forward, Cr Scaffidi said.



Perth Lord Mayor Lisa Scaffidi witnessed the devastation in L'Aquila

She said the agreement would not only pave the way for increased economic cooperation between the businesses of Perth and Chengdu City, but would provide a raft of other benefits for the cities including opening the doors for tourism and education.

The council noted that economic development was the objective of this agreement, with the City of Perth to benefit from targeting inbound international students via the Perth Education City, business migration via the Small Business Development Corporation, inbound tourism via Tourism Western Australia, and inward investment

efforts via the Western Australia Trade Office in the building and construction sector.

Chengdu mayor Dr Honglin Ge, invited the City of Perth to formalise a relationship with Chengdu City after he visited Western Australia several times through his previous role as vice president of Shanghai Bao Steel Group.

Dr Ge's proposal was presented to the council via the Western Australian Trade Office in China.

The council also voted to defer any future requests to form sister city relationships until a more strategic approach was developed to guide the city's international relations program.

Chengdu City has a population of 9.9 million and is the provincial capital of Sichuan that has a population of 82 million.

Referred to as the province of abundance, Chengdu City boasts fertile land and agriculture produce, and is rich in natural mineral resources including vanadium, titanium, iron, cobalt and silver.

It is recognised as part of China's top 10 economically dynamic cities.

One hundred and thirty of the 500 corporations listed in the Fortune 500 have set up operations in Chengdu City.

Chengdu City hosts regular high level Australian Government and diplomatic visits.

The city has a rich cultural heritage which dates back 2300 years and many countries around the world are recognising Chengdu's significance with the United States, Germany, France, Thailand, Singapore, Korea and Pakistan all of which have established consulates in the city.