

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the Sister Cities Australia Newsletter.



Season's Greetings to you one and all. My goodness time sure flies and it seems not long ago when I was penning the same message, only for 2018. This past year has been one of some wonderful success stories but also one of extreme hardship and challenges for so many. Regardless of the problems the friendship and assistance by and to so many from within the circle of Sister City relations gladdens the heart. From simple words of support to very generous donations the world becomes a smaller and friendlier place to be. On behalf of myself and our members I hope that you may enjoy the Festive Season in peace and harmony with family and friends.

It is my pleasure to welcome the following new members to SCA:

- City of Bunbury
- Fraser Coast Regional Council
- Pauline Vukelic
- City of Greater Geraldton (in progress)
- City of Swan (in progress)

We certainly trust you enjoy an exciting and stimulating journey with us.

It is also my sincere pleasure to advise of two new appointments to the Executive. Mr Gordon Allen from Blacktown, NSW as Treasurer and Cllr Ben Stennett from Whitehorse, Victoria. Lovely to have you both aboard and we look forward to working with you.

Recently I, along with the President of the Devonport SCA, met with a representative of the City Council to document some of the past history of Sister Cities in Devonport. As various issues were brought up it made me very aware of just how important it is to document what transpires with your relationships. So if it is not happening in your area perhaps it may be time to start.

The next twelve months is going to be a very busy and exciting time for SCA and I will have more to pass on early in the New Year.

[This issue has some great stories so please read it but more importantly, please share it.](#)

Wishing you all the very best. May your God be with you and may your world be one of peace.

Bill Wilson, President
Sister Cities Australia

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2020 SCA NATIONAL AWARDS UPDATE



Now the dust has settled on the Awards for 2019 it is now time for us to begin looking at the Awards for 2020. The major change this year is that Jan Teasdale is no longer at the helm following her departure from the SCA

Executive at the AGM in Perth. Her knowledge, experience and expertise will be sorely missed, but the new Awards Coordinator, our recently elected Vice President Christina Despoteris, will no doubt do a fine job.

There will be emails sent to all of our members in the New Year to provide the 2020 Awards Handbook that will contain all of the vital information on the Award Categories and the key

dates. I hope that many more of you will take the opportunity next year to showcase some of the excellent work that is done in the name of Sister Cities. There is nothing more satisfying than sharing and being recognised for excellence by your peers plus be able to share this recognition with your Sister Cities.

For those cities considering an award entry next year the categories will be:

- **Community Involvement:** A project that demonstrates the widest possible community participation involving cultural differences or sporting activities between sister cities during the relevant period.
- **Youth Project:** a significant youth project that encouraged and stimulated youth participation in the local sister cities program. The project may include any number of activities including sporting, cultural, educational and fundraising projects.
- **New Affiliation:** This award is presented in recognition of new affiliations either

completed or well under way during the period under review.

- **Tourism and Trade:** This award is presented for an imaginative project that furthers the development of tourism and trade between sister cities whilst at the same time promoting the ideals of people-to-people contact during the eligible period.
- **Overall Program:** The "Overall Program Award" is presented to the member that has been able to demonstrate continuity of activity, citizen and community involvement at all levels and shown imagination in a wide range of projects and activities.

If you are not already a member of SCA and you would like to enter one of your projects into our awards, you can do so as long as you become a member of SCA prior to March 31, 2020. To obtain a membership form please email the Secretary at mike.jakins@sistercitiesaustralia.com.

The eligible period for entries is: 1st April 2019 to 31 March 2020

The SCA National Awards Handbook will be emailed early in 2020.

Blacktown and Suseong-gu, South Korea:

Celebrating 25 Years

A delegation from Blacktown Council travelled to Suseong-Gu South Korea in September to participate in the 25th Anniversary celebrations of the signing of the Sister Cities agreement.



The delegation comprised the Mayor, Cr Stephen Bali MP, Chief Executive Officer, Manager Events and Sister Cities, 2 members of the Sister Cities

Committee, our 2 current Youth Ambassadors and Korean translator.

Twelve performers and staff from Mitchell High School Blacktown who had signed a Sister School partnership with Daegu Dong Middle School in 2014 accompanied the delegation. The performers and staff spent a few days with their student counterparts during an extended stay.



In what was a busy schedule, everyone enjoyed the hospitality of our South Korean Sister City. Key highlights of the visit were:

- The resigning of a Reaffirmation of the Sister Cities Declaration between Blacktown and Suseong-gu to re-affirm the strong active links which have been established and maintained since 1994



- Outstanding acceptance and interest for the performers from Mitchell High School who opened the City's 2019 annual Water Festival on the main stage in front of 10,000 avid fans. The group drew similar applause from another 10,000 rapturous fans during their subsequent show. What a response!!

- Progression of business connections which had been established during our inaugural business and economic delegation visit in 2017.



The visit served to reinforce the strong bonds which have been developed during the 25 year partnership while consolidating the friendships established in a youthful Sister Schools arrangement.

The series of photographs clearly display the enthusiasm, energy and excitement of all those involved during this very special visit.

Gordon Allen
Sister Cities Project Officer
City of Blacktown, NSW

RMIT University, Melbourne - Report Launch: 'Australia-China Sister Cities: Seizing Opportunities Together'



Figure 1: (L-R) Jane Chu (City of Melbourne), Dr Shea Fan (RMIT), Shaun Miller (City of Warrnambool), Christina Despoteris (SCA), Dr Matthew Walker (RMIT), William Wilson (SCA), Virginia Birrell (Australia China Business Council Victoria), Prof Timothy Bartram (RMIT)

On 22 October a team from the School of Management at RMIT University held a project report launch event titled "Australia-China Sister Cities: Seizing Opportunities Together". The

project showcased how Australian cities and regions can derive economic, cultural and educational benefits from sister-city relationships with China. The project, supported by a grant from the Australia-China Council, drew of a survey of Australian local governments and five in-depth case studies across four Australian States and Territories. The work was motivated by the current limited understanding of the character of these relationships and the benefits and challenges, as well as by questions about the value and efficacy of local governments developing sister city relationships.

Key findings from the project point to the effectiveness and powerfulness of sister city relationships as a way of developing people-to-people and community-to-community relationships through mutual understanding, respect, and collaboration. Social, cultural, educational, and economic benefits can be generated by individuals,

communities and governments through dialogue, trust and network-building over time. Numerous examples of such tangible benefits are detailed in the full report, drawing on specific relationships as case studies. The launch event also provided the opportunity to further discuss current practice and effective practice.



Figure 2: William Wilson (President, Sister Cities Australia)

Participants included representatives from industry, government, and education. In the morning session a number of speakers drew on their experiences and expertise to engage with the

topic of Australia-China sister cities. Speakers included: Rachael Ratican (Australia-China Council), William Wilson (President, Sister Cities Australia), Virginia Birrell (CEO, Australia China Business Council Victoria), David Livingstone (International and Civic Services, City of Melbourne), Shaun Miller (Manager Economic Development, City of Warrnambool), and Professor Timothy Bartram (School of Management, RMIT University). In the afternoon session, participants gathered in a roundtable format to discuss experiences, challenges and opportunities around managing sister city-type relationships.

The RMIT University team would like express our sincere gratitude to the organizations and people that offered generous support in our research, as well as all participants on the day of the report launch. Our thanks go to Sister Cities Australia, which offered generous support and assistance for our research. For further information or a copy of the full report, please contact Dr Shea Fan (shea.fan@rmit.edu.au)

Dr Shea Fan, Dr Xueli Huang, Prof Timothy Bartram, Dr Matthew Walker (RMIT University)

Click [HERE](#) to download a PDF copy of the report

Frankston Susono Friendship Association

'A New View of Sister Cities'

On Friday 15 November I had the pleasure of presenting 'A New View of Sister Cities' to the SCA Executive Committee. It is the story of Frankston's delegation visit to our sister city Susono, Shizuoka, Japan in September 2018 and the audio-visual and virtual reality display we featured during the Australian Fair. The visit was a part of a biannual visit agreement where there is a delegation one way every 2 years – this means Frankston visits Susono every 4 years and vice-versa.



The Frankston Susono Friendship Association (FSFA) has been administering the sister city relationship with Susono on behalf of the Frankston City Council for over 37 years. Unlike many sister city relationships, FSFA is run by passionate community volunteers, not local government employees.

Traditionally sister city interactions with Japan have tended to concentrate on people and culture as the promotional vehicles, with little attention given to the "city" other than some local landmarks and cultural icons. Displays usually featured photos and videos, some maps and possibly a brochure in Japanese.

The 2000's saw the immergence of the internet and tools such as Google, Google Maps, Street View and even a Skype video link which we featured during our 2009 visit to Susono. Whilst this time was an era of exploration in Australia, for those in rural Japan the technology was not moving at the same pace.

FSFA decided that our 2018 delegation would showcase the City of Frankston in some new and

interesting ways. We believed that using the latest in "Virtual Reality" technology in a simple and innovative way would enhance the sister city experience and lead to an increase in interest and engagement. The theme for our display was "Frankston, you are standing in it". We created a



large banner with aerial photos of Frankston, obtained a 3-minute promotional video from the City of Frankston, and another 3-minute drone video highlighting the major developments in central Frankston. These elements gave scale and dimension to the city for those viewing them.

We approached Bruce Pearce from Veality to create a 3-minute virtual reality video of 7 different aspects of Frankston. This included the beach, shopping precinct, football field, botanical gardens and footage from the top of a ten-story building. FSFA then purchased 4 Oculus Go headsets from the USA to show the video (purchased for \$380, now selling for under \$300).

The display and videos were a huge success with the four VR headsets going non-stop and a queue of people all day wanting to be transported to Frankston. People of all ages were wanting to experience the virtual Frankston. Through the 360° video and sound people were transported to Frankston for 3 minutes. The impact and reactions were astounding! The 3-minute VR video is available to download from the FSFA website (www.frankston-susono.com) and can be viewed

on a smartphone and a low-cost headset which can be purchased for as little as \$15.

We have only begun this journey, as the possibilities of VR technology are almost endless. Our real motivation was to encourage and assist our Susono counterparts to produce a similar visual presentation for their 2020 delegation to Frankston – and we are pleased that several residents have accepted this challenge! Using the 360° immersive video with the low-cost VR headsets we featured in Susono would be considered Level 1. In the next level the VR headsets would be used as you walk around in an interactive presentation space. Level 3 would be an interactive meeting space for educational and sister city organisations to interact in real time. This would be very powerful and compelling!

Bruce Pearce (Veality) is seeking to create 2 virtual reality worlds – one Japanese and one Australian – where interchangeable 360° immersive video and 2D multimedia screens would enable each city to interchange their own local video and audio content at low cost. Bruce can provide a demonstration to interested stakeholders using the higher-level HTC Vive headset.



Interested sister city organisations seeking further information should contact FSFA Vice-Chairperson Simon Hast (hasts@tpg.com.au) or Bruce Pearce of Veality (bruce@veality.com.au)

Sister Cities Mildura, Victoria and Upland, USA:

"Golden Anniversary celebrations" from 26 May to 2 June 2019

The cities of Mildura, Victoria and Upland, California were both founded by brothers, W.B. & George Chaffey. A unique occurrence in the Sister City World...

Members of Mildura Sister City hosted 14 members of the Upland Sister City; Paul Christensen, Dick & Carol Zahniser, Brenda Zaldivar (President), Norma Castaneda, Desiree Herrera, Tom & Ann Thomas, Tina Miranda, Lis Johnson, Marilee & Jim

Rhoads, Julie Bridge and Gene Newton for the first part of the celebrations in honour of the Golden Anniversary.

Many new friends were made during this week and old connections affirmed.

Sunday 26th

- An informal meet & greet with a "Pot Luck" meal was shared. There was great excitement over anticipated experiences and hopes for the weeklong visit.

Monday 27th

- Mildura Rural City Council Mayor hosted a Civic Welcome/morning teat the Information Centre where members of Mildura Sister City, guests and general public attended. Some took the opportunity to view a movie on the history of Mildura.



- Following a walk through Rio Vista (Chaffey home), a picnic lunch was held in the foyer of the Mildura Arts Centre before heading to Lock 11 to see the PS Melbourne go through the lock. A walk around the Island to the weir completed the day.

Tuesday 28th

- A walk and talk along the Murray river front from the wharf area through the gardens prior to boarding the paddle steamer Melbourne for a cruise downstream, experiencing the rise and fall through Lock 11.



- Members & guests experienced a Jaffle & damper lunch (cooked in the open fire) at the Mildura Station Homestead before visiting the Chaffey graves nearby.

- Dinner was enjoyed at the Pizza Café following Happy Hour at Mildura brewery.

Wednesday 29th

- A private tour of Psyche Pumps - designed by George Chaffey allowing water to vineyards in the region and onto Chateau Mildura Winery where first grapes were planted in 1888.
- Lunch at Woodsies Gem Display & Cave



- Following an at home dinner, members & guests attended a Film night in Langtree Hall followed by fellowship and supper.

Thursday 30th

- Prior to heading to the Mungo National Park, members had a quick stop at Red Cliffs to hear about the early settlement and see Big Lizzie - a very big day.

Friday 31st May Mildura Day

- A history lesson down Deakin Avenue highlighting various buildings.
- The group joined children from 3 local primary schools at the Mildura Station Homestead where "old time" games were played and guided tours of the Chaffey building, Customs House (model), a steam engine in operation and Rose Garden. Local wood turners showed off their skills and finished items.



- A Lemon scented Gum, a Cinnamon Ash and a Canadian Red Maple, were planted by presidents, Ian Cook, Mildura and Brenda Zaldivar, Upland, dedicated to the countries of the Chaffey Brothers.



- A dinner cruise on the PV Mundoo was held to formally celebrate 50 Golden years of Friendship. A very enjoyable evening with good food and friends. Presentations were made to the Mayor of Mildura, Simon Clemence and Upland Council representative, Brenda Zaldivar.

Saturday 1st June

- A visit to the Botanical Inland Gardens included a train ride and checking on a tree planted by members of Upland on a previous visit.
- A visit to Wentworth included seeing the junction of our greatest two rivers, the Murray & the Darling, the Old Goal and the Museum before lunching at a local Hotel.

- A stop off at the renowned Blandowski walk at Merbein on the return trip to Mildura.
- Farewell dinner at the Irymple Seniors Club which was an emotional end to this fabulous week.

Sunday 2nd

Upland guests departed Mildura for various places in Australia or directly home.

9 Members of Mildura Sister City departed Mildura mid-October for Upland where the celebration of the Golden Anniversary and the signing of the Agreement by Mayors, George Gibson, Upland on 20 October & Ken Wright, Mildura on 28th November 1969 will continue.



2020 Sister Cities New Zealand Conference:

"Growing Cultural Diversity in Regions" from 30 April to 2 May 2020



On behalf of our friends in New Zealand I'd like to give you some early details of their Annual Conference for 2020. This can also be found on their website (<https://sistercities.org.nz/>) where additional information will be provided once it becomes available.

"Ashburton District Mayor Donna Favel is pleased to announce that Ashburton will host the annual Sister Cities Conference next year.

She made the announcement at this year's conference in Palmerston North, where more than 140 delegates and dignitaries from New Zealand, United States, Japan, China and Australia gathered for the three-day event.

"Hosting the 2020 conference will be an extraordinary opportunity to showcase our district, build even stronger international relationships and

further our cultural, educational, youth, sports, professional and technical projects."

The proposed theme for the 2020 conference is, 'Growing cultural diversity in regions'. The theme will focus on the unique opportunities that makes regions prime destinations for employment, tourism and lifestyle that will further economic growth.

"The Sister Cities Conference will be an opportunity to focus on regional capabilities, offerings and needs, while recognising our respective locations on the international stage with our partnering Sister and Friendship Cities," Mayor Favel continued.

Ashburton has three Sister City relationships and two Friendship City relationships. These are with Minamiuonuma, Niigata, Japan; Pulaski, Virginia, United States; and Ashburton, Devon, United Kingdom; while the Friendship Cities are with Puyang, Henan, China; and Xianyang, Shaanxi, China.

There are also two expressions of interest for a Sister City relationship with Handan, China and a Friendship City with Zaohaung, China.

The 2020 Sister Cities Conference in Ashburton will run from the 30 April – 2 May 2020. Transportation will be provided to and from Christchurch Airport."

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SHARE YOUR LINKS?

Does your Sister City Association or Committee have a webpage?

Do you have a Facebook Page?

Do you have a presence on Social Media?

Would you like to share those links with SCA members and friends?

In 2020 I am looking to do a review and update to the SCA Website and part of this will be to include a Links page where we can all contribute to growing

a Sister City Communities Contacts List. If you would like your website, Facebook page, LinkedIn page, Instagram account, or other social media pages added to the list please let me know by clicking on the link below. Thank you for your help and support with this SCA initiative, which I hope will be a useful resource for all.

Click [HERE](#) to send your link details to SCA.

Mike Jakins
National Secretary

LOOKING FOR, OR TO BECOME, A SISTER CITY?

Check out the SCA website where there is a list of cities actively looking for affiliations, . There are cities in China, Japan, South Korea, Vietnam, Uganda, Kenya, USA and Ghana waiting – and more to come.

FEATURED CITY 1 – Nagi Town, Okayama, Japan

Nagi Town, a small rural Japanese community of only 6,000 people, is actively looking for a sister city in Australia – if you would like more details please check out the full information sheet at [Nagi Town Information Sheet](#).

Are you seeking an Australian sister city? Fill out the details on the request form and return to SCA as per the contact information at the end of the document, [click here](#).

FEATURED CITY 2 – Kpando, Volta Region, Ghana

Kpando, a medium size developing Ghanaian community of over 60,000 people, is actively looking for a sister city in Australia – if you would like more details please check out the full information sheet at [Kpando Information Sheet](#).

STAY IN TOUCH WITH SCA

Your SCA Committee

President – Bill Wilson

Mobile: 0439 363 149

Email: [Click here to email Bill](#)

Vice President – Christina Despoteris

Mobile: 0426 682 682

Email: [Click here to email Christina](#)

National Treasurer – Gordon Allen

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National Secretary – Mike Jakins

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Executive Member – Sim Hayward

Mobile: 0417 784 341

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Executive Member – Ben Stennett

Mobile: 0415 931 761

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Full contact details for any of the above are available on the SCA website on the Administration page.



NEWSLETTER

www.sistercitiesaustralia.com

December 2019

SCA has a website – www.sistercitiesaustralia.com

Visit the association's website for: information about us; what activities we are involved with; any events that are of interest; all the details on the annual awards; access to our publications and images; and how to contact us.

If you notice any changes that need to be made to the website, or if you have any suggestions for improving the site please let us know. Send an email to the [Website Editor](#) (click on this link) with your comments and/or your suggestions.

SCA on Social Media

In essence the goal of every Sister City program is to understand and appreciate other cultures and ways of life. Join us on **Facebook** ([link here](#)) and embark on this journey together.

SCA invites you to contribute stories, photos, successes and even failures to our Facebook Group page so that we can all learn from one another and take our relationships to a higher level.

SCA Newsletter Options and Contributions

Sign Up for the Newsletter	Submit a story (plus up to 4 images)	Opt out of receiving the Newsletter
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Have your contact details changed? Click here to [email the editor](#) if they are incorrect.

Please forward this newsletter on to interested colleagues and friends, thank you.