

## A FEW WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENT



As I write these words I cannot help but think of the uncertain and tumultuous world we live in. As if Covid 19 was not enough to be contending with on it's own, we have now had the protests in Melbourne and Sydney to add to the concerns of all. So as this has not been sufficient to test the community Mother Nature decides to put on a show of her own. One may wonder as to what is coming next? Hopefully we may all live through all the current challenges and emerge on the other side better, stronger and one may but hope, more unified than ever.

All that aside, the role of Sister Cities continues and it is possibly more important than ever that our relationships are supported and strengthened. SCA as an organisation is committed to working to ensure that assistance may be provided to those members who do so much in the promotion of International understanding and World Peace.

On Wednesday 22nd of this month the AGM of SCA Inc was held via Zoom. Elections were held for the 2021-2023 term of office and Returning Officer, Mr Peter Filmer, declared the following as elected. President – Mr William Wilson;

Vice President – Mrs Christina Despoteris; Secretary – Mr Mike Jakins; Treasurer – Mr Gordon Allan; and, Executive Member – Cllr Jennie Barrera. As there were insufficient nominations to fill all Executive Member positions it will be up to the Executive to decide whether to appoint an additional member. Should you have an interest please forward an EOI to the Secretary asap. I know that this will be an excellent group to work with and to take the organisation forward during the two year term.

I wish to thank Cllr Ben Stennett for the past term and thank him for his interest, work and friendship. It is also with some sadness that we farewell Mrs Sim Hayward who made the decision not to re-nominate. Sim has given many years commitment to SCA and has worked tirelessly in her home city of Cairns to further their Sister City role and on behalf of all our members I say thank you Sim for your endeavours.

Thank you to everyone for your support of SCA Inc. We exist only for you, our members. Should you require information, advice or assistance please be in touch. Thank you to all our contributors for this edition of the Newsletter. I know everyone will enjoy the read.

In closing may I urge you one and all to move past the politics, get the job and let us work together to ensure we may get to meet in person in the not too distant future.

Yours in Sister Cities, Bill

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## 2021 AGM REVIEW – held Sept. 22, by Zoom.

The Sister Cities Australia Annual General Meeting (AGM) for this year was held via a Zoom videoconference on Wednesday 22 September, 2021. Many thanks to those members that took the opportunity to join the Executive in reviewing the year's activities.

The financial accounts have been depleted again this last fiscal year as SCA, for the second year in a row, has waived membership fees due to the on-going COVID crisis. We extend our thoughts and prayers to those in places that are still being badly affected by lockdowns and continuing high case numbers. It was also resolved that membership

fees would be reinstated for the 2022/23 financial year as the association cannot continue with no income.

2021 was a bi-annual election year with all positions on the Executive Committee open and available for members to nominate others for. Members of the Executive Committee have to be financial individual members of SCA, or be a nominated representative of an SCA corporate member. We would like to thank Sim Hayward and Ben Stennett, who did not renominate this year, for their contribution to SCA during their time on the Executive. For Sim this has been for an extended period

of time and we wish her well in her future endeavours in Cairns. We would also like to extend a warm welcome to Councillor Jennie Barrera from Wyndham City, Victoria, who has joined the Executive for the next two years. This does leave one position vacant and SCA may fill this should a suitable candidate be identified.

We hope that the next year will allow SCA to once again reconnect with our members and enjoy the interaction and camaraderie at a Forum or Conference in 2022.

Mike Jakins  
National Secretary

## THE ALL NEW SCA WEBSITE LAUNCHED



### It is here – a totally new look

The major activity for SCA in 2021 has been a total upgrade to our website along with a new domain name – we are now [sistercitiesaustralia.org.au](http://sistercitiesaustralia.org.au) and I would like to ask you to update any links or references to our website that you may have.

The new website now has a totally new 'look and feel' to it bringing us into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is much easier to navigate and key information is now readily accessible from the Home Page as well as from the easy to follow menus. There is a Members Only area where forums can be accessed to share information and ideas, pertinent documents relative to members accessed, National Awards entry forms and documents retrieved, plus other exclusive content. Members will be receiving instructions on how to access this area very soon.

SCA has worked closely with Moshi Moshi, a Bunbury and Perth, WA based marketing, graphic design and web

development company to update our aging website. The other major benefit with the new website is that SCA now has editing control of the content and we are now our own webmaster.

This is **YOUR** website and we would love for you to make any suggestions on what content you might like to see. Also, our email addresses have now changed in parallel with the website so we also request that you update any contact information you have for SCA by changing the .com at the end of our email addresses to .org.au. I would also like to extended a huge THANK YOU to our former webmaster who looked after the old site so well for us.

Thank you for your continued support of SCA and for continuing to keep the sister city message flourishing.

Mike Jakins  
National Secretary

## CITY OF BUNDABERG – A NEW RELATIONSHIP Bundaberg (Australia) and Luganville (Vanuatu)

## Establishment of a Sister City relationship between Bundaberg (Australia) and Luganville (Vanuatu).

There were emotional scenes on 30th July, 2021 as the South Sea Islander community celebrated formal ties being forged between Bundaberg and Luganville.



Mayor Jack Dempsey signing the MOU with Luganville

Community members also welcomed the “healing” of Mayor Jack Dempsey’s apology for the past practice of “blackbirding” which saw indentured labour from Pacific islands forced to work in the region’s cane fields.

The two historic moments were observed on Vanuatu Independence Day in Buss Park, including a choir of seasonal workers singing the Vanuatu Anthem.

The establishment of a Sister City agreement is the first between Australia and Vanuatu. The agreement aims to;

- Promote and celebrate historical and traditional links between the two communities, noting the existence of community ties going back many years,
- Share common interests and learnings in the areas of agriculture, tourism and education, and
- Facilitate technical assistance where possible in fields where expertise can be shared in areas such as infrastructure, waste management, education and agriculture.

Mayor of Bundaberg, Councillor Jack Dempsey spoke at the event and stated “It’s my vision that Bundaberg will become the gateway to Australia for people from Luganville, all of Santo and other islands in the northern part of Vanuatu,”

“We know how important seasonal workers are to both our economies. When people come to Bundaberg from the Islands, they provide essential labour on our farms. When they return, they have funds to support their families and invest in businesses that create jobs. It’s our mission and responsibility to make sure that Ni-Vanuatu

are always welcome and looked after, like we care for our own sons and daughters.”

Prior to the event, Luganville Lord Mayor Peter Patty said: “Our two cities are united by many similarities, including of course the close personal connection of ni-Vanuatu citizens living in Australia. Through this MOU we hope to facilitate technical assistance where possible in fields where expertise can be shared, such as infrastructure, waste management, water, education and agriculture,”

Mayor Dempsey reflected it was 41 years since the New Hebrides became the independent nation of Vanuatu, ending decades of French and British rule. “Today I wish to extend a sincere apology on behalf of the Bundaberg Region community for the abuse which occurred in ‘blackbirding’ people from Vanuatu and other Pacific Islands to work in the Queensland sugarcane industry,”

Mayor Dempsey said the region’s sugarcane industry was built on the backs of Pacific Island labour, along with infrastructure such as rock walls, which are still visible today. “Although slavery was abolished in the British Empire at the time, the practice of forcing indentured labour into Queensland cane fields was equivalent to slavery and abhorrent, I sincerely regret the pain caused to families and communities in Vanuatu and other Island nations. Saying sorry is necessary for healing and to move forward in friendship. Our industries today rely on voluntary seasonal labour. This must always be a relationship based on respect, courtesy, fairness and trust.”



Mayor Peter Patty and Mayor Jack Dempsey

Mayor Dempsey said the future looks bright for Bundaberg and Luganville to grow together in friendship, especially after Covid travel restrictions are eased.

Emily Murray  
City of Bundaberg

[emily.murray@bundaberg.qld.gov.au](mailto:emily.murray@bundaberg.qld.gov.au)



## VALE DEVONPORT STALWART JOAN ANDREWS

### A city farewells a social Powerhouse

I remember meeting the powerhouse Joan (and Alida) in my first week at Council, and have been lucky enough to have worked with the Devonport Sister City Association over the last 8 years. Joan was associated with the Devonport Sister Cities Association since its inception and visited Minamata multiple times with her best friend and co-Association member – Alida Beattie.



*Joan (2nd from Right) at the 2012 SCA Conference in Devonport*

Joan's teaching experience proved instrumental when it came to organising delegation visits and the Australian Sister City Conferences held in Devonport 2006 and 2012.

Recipient of a Diamonds of Devonport Award 2013, an International Women's Day Awards celebrating the achievements and efforts of women who live or work within the Devonport community. Joan was nominated for tireless work for the Sister Cities and Devonport Eisteddfod. "Loved and respected by all of her many friends and participants. The loveliest woman you would wish to know." Recipient of the Australia Day Award - City of Devonport Citizen of the Year 2015

Joan was nominated for service to the community through her years of:

- teaching;
- involvement with Chat n' Choose at the Baptist Church. She originally enrolled to learn Norwegian needlecraft, called Hardanger where she developed expertise in this craft, going on to tutor others. Joan's hardanger work has been recognised internationally, being awarded first prizes in 2007, 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012 with an honourable mention in 2008 in the Hardanger Design contest at Nordic Needle in the USA.
- dedication to the Devonport Sister City Association, involved since its inception, Joan acted as secretary for a period of time.
- volunteering at the Devonport Eisteddfod including holding the office of Vice-President and President for a number of years.



*City of Devonport Citizen of the Year 2015*

Danielle O'Brien  
Administration and Project Officer  
Devonport City Council

## DEVONPORT PHOTOGRAPHIC PROJECT

### Seeing cities through each other's eyes

Devonport residents are being invited to share a photo of something they love about their city, with the people of Minamata, Japan, as part of Devonport City Council's project "Through each other's eyes".

Council's Community Services, Devonport Regional Gallery and the Bass Strait Maritime Centre developed

the art and language exchange project with Devonport's Sister City Minamata, which encourages participants from both cities to submit a photo, or a picture of an original artwork inspired by their home cities.

Submissions are to include a short description about what it is, and why you love it, and will be translated in

Japanese, exhibited digitally with select photos to be displayed at exhibitions in Devonport and Minamata.

Devonport Mayor Annette Rockliff said the project would not only strengthen ties with Minamata, but also recognise the importance of art and mindfulness after a stressful 2020, due to the global pandemic.



*Taking photos of Devonport*

Cr Rockliff said organisers hoped the project would inspire submissions from all ages, local artists, students studying Japanese and Devonport residents who have visited Minamata as part of delegations, student exchanges or holidays, over the cities' 25-year relationship.

"Many Devonport students study Japanese, and over the years many of Devonport residents have visited Minamata. In fact, several Devonport High School students were due to visit Minamata in April 2020, however had to cancel due to the pandemic," Cr Rockliff said.

"This project is a great way to bring the two cities closer in spirit and celebrate our wonderful cities through the eyes of their communities."

Devonport and Minamata have successfully collaborated on an exchange art program before with decorated Koinobori (carp streamers), which were displayed in the Gallery foyer during 2018 and 2019.

Submissions will be accepted until Monday, 11 October 2021 via Council's website or emailed at [council@devonport.tas.gov.au](mailto:council@devonport.tas.gov.au).

For more information visit council's website at [www.devonport.tas.gov.au/visit-devonport/arts-culture-heritage/through-each-others-eyes/](http://www.devonport.tas.gov.au/visit-devonport/arts-culture-heritage/through-each-others-eyes/).

For more information on the Koinobori Project visit council's website at [www.devonport.tas.gov.au/visit-devonport/arts-culture-heritage/the-koinobori-project/](http://www.devonport.tas.gov.au/visit-devonport/arts-culture-heritage/the-koinobori-project/).

Danielle O'Brien  
Administration and Project Officer  
Devonport City Council

## CITY OF CAIRNS – INIATIVE ONE

### Hearts For Lae Kids Bike Program



*Cairns Mayor Bob Manning, Sim Hayward and Neil Ellery, CEO of Lae City Authority*

The Hearts For Lae Kids Bike Program was launched on the 27th June 2021. A Sister Cities initiative between Cairns Sister Cities, Cairns Regional Council and Lae City Authority, supported by Rotary Cairns and local churches and community groups.

Donations of bicycles of all makes, shapes and sizes, including helmets, bike parts etc are collected from within the community in Cairns. These are repaired, restored and bikes in good working condition, are then





packed by volunteers for shipping to our sister city of Lae.

The bikes will be distributed to children and adults living in the settlements and villages in Lae, who would normally not have the ability to own their own or have access to a bicycle.

This Sister Cities International Aid exchange program, aimed at providing a sense of independence, transportation for children to and from school,

experience the freedom and joy riding a bike, plus a sense of pride and ownership, to a segment of the community who may otherwise not be able to afford what most of us take for granted.

Cairns Regional Council kickstarted the program by donating 20 bicycles from its 'Buy Back' shop.

Sim Hayward  
Cairns Sister Cities Ambassador

## CITY OF CAIRNS – INIATIVE TWO

### Communication continues despite restricted travel

Communications and overseas travel restricted by the effects of COVID since early 2020, have resulted in new and innovative methods of staying in touch with our 7 sister cities.

*Mayor Manning and Mayor Asano of Oyama City, Japan after their Zoom meeting.*



Mayoral 'face to face' meetings were conducted with Cairns Mayor, Cr Bob Manning and with Mayor Asano Masatomi of Oyama city in Japan and Mayor Cliff McNeil Smith of Sidney in Canada. In 2020, Mayor Manning had

a zoom meeting with former Mayor Lane of Scottsdale, Arizona, USA.

Other communication and online exchanges have taken place virtually between the Ambassador for Cairns Sister Cities, Mrs Sim Hayward with support from local community groups and departments within the Cairns Regional Council to ensure that the links between the 7 sister cities and Cairns remain strong and active.

The restrictions on movement, inability to travel and interact in person, have allowed time for reflection, of what and why these friendships nurtured over time, are important to maintain, for individuals and community groups alike.

A heightened sense of community and friendship, bonding people together in times of crisis, brings out the very basic human need.

Sim Hayward  
Cairns Sister Cities Ambassador

## CITY OF BUNBURY – ANNUAL EVENT

### The South West Festival of Japan



Each year the City of Bunbury, WA, puts on a week of arts and cultural events, displays and engaging activities for



the public to join in with. This is to help celebrate their wonderful sister city relationship with Setegaya in Japan.

There was a Japanese Film Festival, music and dance displays, taiko drumming, martial arts and a range of exciting hands-on workshops for anyone to join in and share the experience. The workshops covered practical demonstrations and interaction with Manga, Taiko Drumming, creating Cherry Blossom from recycled products, sweet making, the Japanese tea ceremony, woodblock printing, Japanese cuisine and a Japanese Discovery tour!

During the Festival there was a Blooming Art exhibition celebrating spring in Japan and Australia, a number of

various food and market stalls, plus the ever popular (especially in Japan) Stamp Rally where you visited various locations around the Bunbury City centre to collect stamps on your card.

Yours truly was more than happy to lend a hand to the City of Bunbury volunteers in helping them make the Festival such a wonderful success. I look forward to being part of the team again in 2022.

Mike Jakins  
SCA National Secretary

## SCA Affiliation Directory and Links Update

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?



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.

### SCA AFFILIATION DIRECTORY

Have you checked out the Affiliation Directory recently? It has been meticulously updated to reflect all of the Council amalgamations that have occurred in all of the Australian States.

Is there information missing? Is there incorrect data? This Directory is the definitive document on Australian Sister City and Friendship City links and your help is needed to ensure that it remains as up-to-date and accurate as possible.



2021 DIRECTORY OF  
AUSTRALIAN SISTER CITY  
AND FRIENDSHIP CITY  
AFFILIATIONS

Click [HERE](#) if you would like to download the latest version of the Affiliation Directory from the Documents page of our NEW website. Please send me an email if you find any errors or omissions – thank you in anticipation.

## SCA on Facebook

Please FOLLOW, LIKE, or SHARE us, we'd love to see your contributions



SCA has had a web presence on Facebook for a while now. We have updated it to allow us all to share our stories and articles on all things sister city related.

Click [HERE](#) to go to our Facebook page



The Facebook Group will still remain as this is where we are able to share files, such as our quarterly newsletter.

Click [HERE](#) to go to our Facebook Group

## STAY IN TOUCH WITH SCA

### Your SCA Committee

**President** – Bill Wilson  
Mobile: 0491 118 779  
Email: [Click here to email Bill](#)

**Vice President** - Christina Despoteris  
Mobile: 0426 682 682  
Email: [Click here to email Christina](#)

**National Treasurer** – Gordon Allen  
Mobile: 0412 278 646  
Email: [Click here to email Gordon](#)

**National Secretary** - Mike Jakins  
Mobile: 0417 176 568  
Email: [Click here to email Mike](#)

**Executive Member** – Cllr. Jennie Barrera  
Mobile: 0437 892 933  
Email: [Click here to email Jennie](#)

**Executive Member** – VACANT  
Mobile:  
Email:

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

## SCA has a NEW website – <http://www.sistercitiesaustralia.org.au>



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 Newsletter Options and Contributions

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