

A FEW WORDS FROM OUR NEW EXECUTIVE MEMBER



Welcome to the latest addition of the Sister Cities Australia newsletter. I am very grateful to our President, Bill Wilson, for the opportunity to introduce myself to all of you.

My name is Jennie Barrera, I am a Councillor for the City of Wyndham in Melbourne's outer West, the CEO of the Wyndham Community Education Centre, and your newest Executive Board Member.

As the CEO of an organisation that works tirelessly to deliver quality programs and education opportunities for diverse groups, especially newly arrived refugees, I am passionate about fostering welcoming and resilient communities. That is what also inspired me to join Sister Cities Australia. I believe more can and should be done to encourage us to look beyond our own personal circumstances and provide a compassionate hand up to those who need it.

The same goes for the relationships that are developed through Sister City agreements. There is so much to be gained by working together to understand not only what

makes us different, but what we have in common and how we can collaborate more effectively.

I am also my Council's Welcoming Cities portfolio holder, which is a role I am very passionate about. Wyndham is one of the fastest growing communities in Australia, with more than 100 babies born every week. Our population is edging closer to 300,000 people, and by 2041 it is expected to surpass that of our nation's capital.

We are also more diverse than Greater Melbourne, with almost half of our residents born overseas and 47 per cent speaking a language other than English at home. This means that we often have to work harder and smarter to ensure that all of our communities have access to the relevant information and resources that Councils offer.

Wyndham has two formal Sister City relationships, with Costa Mesa in California and Chiryu in Japan. These have been in place since 1996 and 2000 respectively, and largely focus on shared educational opportunities, with students from local schools participating in annual exchange programs.

We also have a formal Friendship Agreement with Changzhou in China, which confirms our commitment to develop a strong and sustainable working relationship focusses on a range of industries and outcomes.

I am thoroughly enjoying my time at Sister Cities Australia and I look forward to seeing what we can achieve as we work with Councils all over the country to harness the benefits that come from collaborating with our international counterparts.

Thank you,
Cr Jennie Barrera.

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UPDATE ON SCA PLANS FOR 2022*

* Perth Japan Festival

Unfortunately, due to COVID finally hitting WA hard the organising committee for the Festival had to take the unhappy step in cancelling the event for 2022. We are all going to put in an extra effort and make a big show next year.

Many thanks to the Councils that pledged support and we very much look forward to having you onboard again next year.

* SCA On-Line Forum

Planning is well under way for an exciting and educational on-line Forum where we will have four councils sharing their sister city journey over the past two years. Innovation was the key ingredient in taking relationships forward during these times of difficult communication, and some councils around Australia have done this remarkably well. This will be an opportunity to hear their stories, ask a few questions, and maybe gather some neat ideas to include in your future programs.

Program topics and presenters have been finalised and we will be sending out full details of the sessions and details on how to register for the 75 minute Zoom event very soon.

Save the following date and time in your diary so that you can join us: Wednesday, May 4 – from 11am (EST), which will be 9am for those of us in the West. A big THANK YOU to our Treasurer, Gordon, for pulling this event together and your Executive look forward to having you join us.

SUMMARISED SESSION DETAILS

Welcome and introductions

Presentation 1 – Carol McDowall (Bunbury, WA)

Jiaxing Modern Folk Painting/Noongar Art Exchange project which commenced in late 2018 and went all the way through to mid-2021.

Presentation 2 – Greg McCallum (Blacktown, NSW)

Launch of Korean-Australian Art Display to Celebrate 60 years of Korean Diplomatic relations.

Presentation 3 – Simon Hast (Frankston, Vic)

Strengthening Ties in Challenging Times.

Presentation 4 – Wayne Hodges (Mildura, Vic)

Maintaining Sister Cities Friendships through COVID restrictions and lockdowns with extra effort.

Summary and close

* Update on the New SCA Website

As mentioned in the previous newsletter, we have officially launched the new SCA website. There is so much more information on the new site, and it should be much easier to navigate to it. This is **YOUR** website which means that we would value your feedback on:

- What do you like about the website?
- What don't you like about the website?
- What other features would you like to see?

- **MEMBERS** – have you visited the Members area? If yes, any comments?
- **MEMBERS** – is there anything else the Members Area could provide?

Please send any feedback you have to our Secretary, who also doubles as the webmaster, and we will look at your comments and see what changes and/or improvements we can make. The email address for feedback is mike.jakins@sistercitiesaustralia.org.au.

* SCA National Awards

SCA has not held its National Awards for the past two years, competition is being resumed in 2022. The one major change for this year only will be the eligibility

periods for the Awards. Traditionally this has been for a 12 month period but next year we will be making it for the **18 month period from 1 October 2020 to 31 March 2022.**

There will also (for this year only) be a special Category 6 – Special Program Award to cover from **1 April 2019 to 30 September 2020**. This will allow member councils to showcase any activity during those time periods and to highlight the great work done by councils and the community in furthering the aims of sister cities.

As the Awards are open to SCA Members only, full details have been sent only to all member councils. Also, click here to access full details of the Awards – [ACCESS AWARDS INFO](#).

* Membership Subscriptions

This is just a gentle reminder that SCA has not charged any membership fees since 2019 and all members that were current on June 30, 2020 have automatically been rolled over. Unfortunately our finances can't handle having no income forever and it was decided at the last AGM that membership fees would be reinstated from the end of this financial year.

The membership fees will remain the same as they were in 2019 and the Treasurer will be contacting all members in early June, 2022 with an invoice detailing fees and payment options. Given that Australia is predicted to begin opening soon then we are more than hopeful that you will be able to receive great on-going value for your membership of your association.

* RMIT Research Project

Many thanks to all of you who have provided information to RMIT, and also taken time out of your very busy schedules to engage in interviews with the researchers. Without your important input the research would not be able to reach rich and valuable outcomes. If, for some reason, you missed this article in our last newsletter and you might like to still be able to contribute, here are all the details including who to contact.

Dear Councils,

Sponsored by the Australia-Japan Foundation, we are conducting research on Australia-Japan local government level collaborations with special focus on practices building sustainable and resilient communities.

We would like to hear and promote your experiences and practice to a broader community in both countries. Please feel free to contact us if you:

- 1. Have successful collaborations between Australian and Japanese councils*
- 2. Have examples in new directions in collaboration, including but not limited to practices in disaster response and public health management (e.g. COVID-19), supporting vulnerable communities, and building smart cities.*
- 3. Have innovative practices that could potentially contribute to international collaboration in the future, not limited to Japan.*

Project info:

Project titled "Australia-Japan local government collaboration: building sustainable and resilient

communities" has received the Australia-Japan Foundation grant. The project information can be found by clicking here:

Project description: Australia-Japan local governments have established a foundation of collaboration, especially in cultural and education exchanges to promote peace over the last 50 years (e.g., through sister cities). Our project aims to rejuvenate the collaboration between Australia-Japan local governments by improving the visibility of Australia-Japan city-level international collaborations, identifying new directions and forms of collaborative efforts to build sustainable and resilient communities, such as practices in disaster response and public health management (e.g. COVID-19), supporting vulnerable communities, and building smart cities.

Our project team members:

Dr. Shea Fan (RMIT, Australia)

Associate Professor Hiroaki Mori (Japan)

Dr. Charlie Huang (RMIT, Australia)

Dr. Matthew Walker (RMIT, Australia)

Dr. Tse Leng Tham (RMIT, Australia)

Professor Timothy Bartram (RMIT, Australia)

Our past project outputs are ready for your review:

· Media article: [After 40 years of Australian-Chinese sister cities, how are they faring?](#)

· [Australia-China Sister Cities: Seizing Opportunities Together](#) (click to download the full report written for Australia-China Council)

Kind regards,

Shea Fan <shea.fan@rmit.edu.au>

If you are able to contribute to the research **please contact Dr Shea Fan directly** and she will be very pleased to hear from you and include you in the program. A copy

of the final report will be made available on the SCA website once it is made available. Thank you.

Mike Jakins
National Secretary

SPECIAL ARTICLE FROM BLACKTOWN, NSW

Vale Doug Adams



It was with great sadness that Blacktown City learnt of the sudden passing of Doug and Maree Adams in a tragic accident on 2nd January this year. Residents of Tregear, Doug and Maree were devoted and inseparable for 56 years.

Doug Adams was a very proactive community member of Councils Sister Cities Committee for more than 20 years.

With the support of his wife Maree, Doug joined Blacktown City delegation visits to Porirua, New Zealand; Suseong-gu, South Korea; Liaocheng, China and was a regular visitor to our friends in the Liverpool Plains Shire Council area.

Doug Adams represented Council at a number of Sister Cities Australia National Conferences. He was always keen to talk with representatives of other councils about their own programs, while promoting the initiatives at Blacktown City. Doug Adams was heavily involved in the development of Council's Sister Cities Strategic Plan, the first such plan developed by a New South Wales Council.

This plan has been utilised as a template by a number of other councils for their own Sister Cities programmes. Doug Adams was also a keen supporter of our Youth Ambassador program and the wonderful young people who, each and every year, are selected as our Ambassadors.

Doug and Maree Adams will be sadly missed by the members of the Sister Cities committee and by many people from our Council and the general community.

Greg McCallum,
Blacktown City Council
greg.mccallum@sistercitiesaustralia.org.au

DO YOU HAVE A SISTER CITY DAY?

A Novel Way to Celebrate a Sister City Relationship

Did you know that some cities around the world have declared a Sister City Day in order to celebrate their ongoing relationships? Why not explore the possibility of your Council embracing the option of nominating to have a <Name of Sister City> Day declared to be held on the anniversary of the signing of the sister city agreement!

This could provide a number of benefits:

- 1) Re-focus councils and communities as to the benefits of the relationship post-COVID.
- 2) Lead to resurrecting interest in 'dormant' relationships.
- 3) Highlight the relationship in a very positive way.
- 4) Provide a day each year that the community can all gather to celebrate the relationship, get to

know the sister city's culture much better and explore future options to grow the relationship.

- 5) It costs nothing, except a little time, to make the declaration, and it will enhance the relationship with this symbol of recognition.

Should you decide to progress this idea and the Day is declared, SCA would be thrilled to hear from you and to keep a record of this milestone

SPECIAL ARTICLE FROM BUSSELTON, WA

Celebrating 25 years of Busselton and Sugito Sister Cities Friendship

The City of Busselton Celebrated 25 years of Sister City friendship with Sugito, Japan in November last year. The official signing took place in Sugito, Japan on the 19 November 1996 and then another signing and tree planting took place the following year on the 19 February in Busselton.

To mark this occasion the City of Busselton and the Busselton and Sugito Sister Cities Association created a Japanese themed cultural immersion Dinner with Japanese food and entertainment and theming.

Held in the City's Undalup Room, guests heard from Key Note speaker, The Hon. Richard Court AC, recipient of the Japanese Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star, former Western Australian Premier and former Australian Ambassador to Japan. Guests were also treated to performances from Taiko On - Japanese drums, viewed a martial arts demonstration from sensei Rick Berghuis and traditional Japanese Dancing by Sayaka and Miyu Ishii.



Japanese dancers with The Hon. Richard Court and Pauline Vukelic

City Officials and community representatives were joined by the Consul General of Japan, Perth, Mr Toru Suzuki and his wife Kumi. Mr Suzuki said that "The people of WA have continued to express a passion for Japan, Japanese Culture and most importantly the unwavering commitment to the relationships and friendships between our two countries".



Consul General of Japan, Perth, Mr Toru Suzuki and his wife Kumi visit the displays

While the annual student exchange and biennial community exchanges has been paused due to COVID, the Busselton and Sugito Sister Cities Association (BASSCA) looked for different ways to offer Japanese cultural experiences.

- Students who would normally participate in the exchange program have been offered a day trip cultural incursion to Perth at the Hyogo Centre.
- A goodwill postcard exchange between high school students has kept students connected, albeit in a different way.
- The Rotary Club of Busselton Geographe Bay also created a special Japanese section at their Rotary market in January.

The Hon Richard Court highlighted the importance on travel and student exchange opportunities for our Youth and urged everyone to recommence exchanges as soon as possible once the current Covid restrictions are lifted.

A sentiment that everyone within the sister city community would agree.

Tonia Kilian,
City of Busselton

Tonia.Kilian@busselton.wa.gov.au

SPECIAL ARTICLE FROM CAIRNS, QLD

Artists In Residence - SISTER CITIES EXCHANGE with Lae, PNG



Sim with Chris Stannard, Curator, Cairns Art Galleries

The Papua New Guinean coastal city of Lae has been a sister city of Cairns since 1984. Over the past decade, artists from Lae have been able to visit and exhibit in Cairns through group exhibitions alongside local artists. But this is the first time Cairns has hosted an exhibition dedicated to the artists of Lae.



The launch of the 'Artists In Residence' exchange program with Lae, was the culmination of two years of planning.

An exhibition was held at the Courthouse Gallery to showcase works from artists from our sister city of Lae and Morobe Province. The exhibition was on show from 17 Dec 2021 - 15 Jan 2022.



Due to COVID restrictions, the three artists from Lae have been unable to come to Cairns to take up residence in 2020 and again in 2021, as provided for by the program. Therefore a decision was made to bring their works, and others, to Cairns and to have them exhibited at the Courthouse Gallery.

Sim Hayward
Ambassador, Cairns Sister Cities

SPECIAL WORDS FROM SISTER CITIES INTERNATIONAL

Citizen Diplomacy and the Importance of Maintaining Sister City Relationships

The following words were sent out by Leroy R. Allala, the President of Sister Cities International, in the USA on March 2 in response to the actions being taken by Russia over the Ukraine. It is a timely, and hugely important, reminder to us all as to why we have Sister City relationships and the power they should have in regards to using Citizen Diplomacy to seek world peace.

Leroy R. Allala wrote:

Dear Fellow Citizen Diplomats,

Witnessing the horrific events of the past week in Ukraine, leaders in our communities – instinctively and understandably – want to say something, to do something, and to act towards a collective disapproval of this assault on humankind; endeavouring to make a positive difference at this critical juncture in our global discourse.

Yet, suspending or ending a sister city relationship with a Russian city partner should not be one such action.

As citizen diplomats, we must be alert to counsel and remind our elected officials as well as our local municipal leaders of the critical role that Sister Cities International and each local sister city relationship offers, especially in times of conflict. We applaud those sister cities programs and citizens around the globe, including in Russia, who have voiced their support of an independent Ukraine and reaffirmed their belief in peace through mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation.

While suspending or ending a sister city relationship to register disapproval of a foreign government's actions may seem, on the surface, like a positive policy protest action, it has the complete opposite effect – closing a vital and, oftentimes, last channel of communication with vulnerable or isolated populations.

As a result, we reemphasize and underscore that our policy remains to encourage our members and U.S. communities to keep their sister city relationship active, especially now when the political issues and actions of the

day threaten to disrupt the positive, constructive relationships that have been made, over many years, at the people-to-people and community-to-community levels. We ask each of you to reaffirm this policy in all your interactions within your communities.

Should you have any questions or need any assistance, please contact our SCI National Headquarters. Thank you for your continued support of Sister Cities International and our mission to "Promote Peace through Mutual Respect, Understanding, and Cooperation – one individual, one community at a time."

Individual-to-individual, community-to-community, council-to-council and government-to-government we all need to work hard to cement and grow our relationships and to use them to leverage respect, understanding, goodwill and a tolerance for those things that are different to what we are used to.

Together we can make a difference!

SCA Affiliation Directory and Links Update



Is there information missing? Is there incorrect data? This Directory is the definitive document on Australian Sister



2021 DIRECTORY OF AUSTRALIAN SISTER CITY AND FRIENDSHIP CITY AFFILIATIONS

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.

City and Friendship City links and your help is needed to ensure that it remains as up-to-date and accurate as possible.

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

The OFFICIAL SCA Facebook Page

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 OFFICIAL SCA Facebook Group

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 64;

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

National Secretary - Mike Jakins;

Mobile: 0417 176 568;

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Executive Member – Cllr. Jennie Barrera;

Mobile: 0437 892 933;

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

Executive Member – Greg McCallum;

Mobile: 0422 404 129;

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

Full contact details for any of the Committee are available on the SCA website on the [About Us/Administration](#) page.

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



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members



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