

FROM YOUR VICE-PRESIDENT



Welcome to the latest edition of the Sister Cities Australia Newsletter.

I first met Bill Wilson at the Annual General Meeting of Sister Cities Australia (SCA) in Melbourne in late 2016. At the time, I had just completed a major project involving the construction of a replica of the White Tower of Thessaloniki, to be gifted to the City of Melbourne, Thessaloniki's sister city.

I had read up on the work of SCA and decided that it may be an organisation that I would be interested in joining considering my involvement with Melbourne and Thessaloniki and its sister city relationship since 1984 when it was established.

That was six years ago. It feels like yesterday and yet, sometimes, it feels like a lifetime. That is the impact that

Bill's friendship has had on me. I feel that I have known him all my life. His infectious smile, his sense of humour, his leadership and guidance will not be forgotten.

Bill has supported me, encouraged me and allowed me to create, develop and organise activities, not only for SCA but also other organisations. We have laughed together and complained together. We have stressed together and celebrated together. He has been a great colleague and I am very sad to see this chapter end. Working with him has been such an enjoyable experience, one I am not ready to let go just yet. Although his departure marks the end of our professional relationship, I hope we will remain friends. I take this opportunity to honour our journey shared.

It was a sad occasion receiving and having to accept Bill's resignation. Bill has been struggling with some health issues for some time now. I am sure it was a very difficult decision for him to make. He has been involved with sister cities for many years and has led SCA most amicably.

We all have wonderful memories we have made with him which will remain with us for ever. I am sure I speak on behalf of all members of SCA, in wishing Bill well for the future, good health and long life. I can say without a doubt that SCA will not be the same without him.

Thank you, Bill for giving yourself to this position. You'll be remembered for your commitment, passion and ability to roll with the punches. Farewell and best of luck my friend.

Christina Despoteris OAM
Vice President, Sister Cities Australia

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TRIBUTE TO BILL WILSON

Our Vice-President, Christina, has already mentioned how many of us are feeling about the departure of Bill Wilson from Sister Cities Australia. He has been a champion for the movement and the Association for nearly 25 years, and he is always quick to point out that he lives in the greatest place on Earth – Devonport, Tasmania.

I can't add much more about Bill that hasn't already been said, but I would like to simply give you all a very brief rundown of his involvement in Sister Cities:

- August 1989 – he was elected as the inaugural President of the Devonport Sister Cities Association.



- Around 1998 – he was elected on to the Executive of ASCA (Australian Sister Cities Association, the predecessor to SCA).
- October 2007 – won selection as President of ASCA replacing long-standing President Cr Kevin Hill.
- November 2014 – made a Life Member of SCA.
- September 2022 – he resigned as President of SCA.

We will miss your wit, your knowledge, your contacts, your experience and your guidance as we continue to support our members and friends going forward.

I hope our paths will cross again someday, but until then enjoy life and keep smiling my friend!



Mike Jakins, SCA National Secretary

Pictures are from the SCA AGM/Forum, Blacktown, 2018

NOTIFICATION OF THE 2022 AGM

14 November, 2022, from 4pm EDST

Sister Cities Australia will be holding our Annual General Meeting (AGM) via a Zoom video-conference on Monday 14 November, 2022 as part of our next online Forum commencing at 1:00pm (EDST).

Full details of the AGM will be circulated soon once all the paperwork has been prepared. Please note that this is not an election year.

Mike Jakins, SCA National Secretary

SPECIAL ARTICLE FROM CAIRNS, QLD

Japan's Ambassador to Australia visits Cairns Bon Dance Festival



Culture, tradition, music and dance were the focus of the annual Bon Dance festival, which was held on the Cairns Esplanade on Saturday 13 August.

The free event was jointly organised by the Japanese Society of Cairns and The Consular Office of Japan in Cairns and supported by the Cairns Regional Council.

This year marked 30 years since the formation of the Japanese Society of Cairns and 25 years since the establishment of The Consular Office of Japan in Cairns.

In celebration of these milestones, Ambassador of Japan to Australia, Shingo Yamagami, as special guest, attended the Cairns Japan Bon Dance Festival and participated in a



traditional rice cake pounding activity with Cairns Mayor Bob Manning.

Mayor Bob Manning said it was a great honour to have the Ambassador of Japan attend the event.

“The attendance of the Japanese Ambassador to Australia reinforced the strong ties

between Cairns and Japan,” Mayor Manning said.

“Cairns has built very solid ties with Japan over many decades, particularly through tourism links and direct flights, as well as the Sister City program.”

The Sister Cities program aims to develop meaningful and long term links with cities and communities in other countries to achieve a greater level of international understanding and goodwill between peoples, and to share economic, community, cultural and social interaction.

Cairns has a Sister City relationship with two Japanese cities.



The city of Hiwasa – now known as Minami – was Cairns’ first Sister City in 1969, and in 2006, Oyama became the city’s most recent sister city.

In 2019, Cairns welcomed a Minami mayoral delegation to celebrate the 50th Anniversary, which included a ceremonial tree planting with Mayor Manning at Centenary Lakes.

Student groups from Minami and Oyama also visited in 2019.

Prior to the pandemic, it was common for regular delegations and annual student groups to be undertaken between the sister cities.

Unfortunately, the pandemic has temporarily halted visits between the two countries.

“However, after two years of no international travel, the planes are beginning to fly again, and I know that rebuilding a strong connection between Japan and Cairns is a focus,” Mayor Manning said.

Sim Hayward
Ambassador, Cairns Sister Cities

SPECIAL ARTICLE FROM BUSSELTON, WA

Busselton – Sugito Sister City Student Exchanges still on hold but local students still experience Japanese culture!

Busselton’s Annual student exchange program with its Sister City Sugito (Japan) may not have been possible for the last two years due to Covid and travel restrictions but the Busselton and Sugito Sister Cities Association (BASSCA) has ensured that local students still get to experience the unique Japanese Culture.

The exchange program would normally be in full swing in August with local Busselton families hosting students from Sugito. Students from the City of Busselton would then normally visit the Town of Sugito in the October School Holidays.

“This has been extremely disappointing for those students in years 7, 8 and 9 who have eagerly been waiting for the opportunity to take part in this exchange” said BASSCA Student Exchange Coordinator Mary-Lee Kemp”. Over 250 Busselton students and their families have benefited from the unique homestay exchange.

The Busselton and Sugito Sister Cities Association who administer the city’s Sister City relationship were determined to keep local youth engaged with their program and last year developed a full day excursion to Perth to experience Japanese Culture.



“By developing this one day cultural immersion we are hopefully keeping their dreams of overseas travel to experience another culture alive. Other options will be available to them as older students and young adults when normal international travel resumes”, said Mary-Lee Kemp, Student Exchange Coordinator.

Another added benefit of this one day program is that when the usual Busselton Sugito Exchange program resumes, this one day immersion could be available for students who might not otherwise be able to travel overseas.



Two Teachers and 22 local students travelled to the Hyogo Centre in Perth last month and took part in Calligraphy, Hanko, Obento and manga workshops. They also experienced a Japanese Tea Ceremony Demonstration and Tasting.

“This Japan Immersion Day, provided something for everyone, and the feedback from attendees has been very positive. Each of the activities on the day was someone's favourite, which means the organisers did well, catering to a range of interests,” said Group Leader, Tracey Smith.

The Australia Japan Society of WA supported this initiative for the first time this year.

Uncertainty still surrounds when the student exchanges might be able to recommence.



Tonia Kilian
Public Relations Officer, City of Busselton

SPECIAL ARTICLE FROM PERTH, WA

Perth-Chengdu Reception to Celebrate their 10 Year Anniversary

During the evening of Tuesday 13 September 2022, the City of Perth’s Council House and other prominent assets around Perth were lit up for the 10th anniversary of the City of Perth’s Sister City relationship with Chengdu, China.

Whilst this feature lighting took place, the City hosted a reception for members of the Chengdu/China-Australia expat, business, government, cultural, and academic community, shining a light on the great many achievements in the Perth-Chengdu relationship over the past decade.

Speakers on the night reaffirmed the importance of the Perth-Chengdu relationship, and included the



City of Perth Lord Mayor Basil Zempilas and Acting Chinese Consul General Wang Fengzhong.

Lord Mayor of Perth Basil Zempilas, Mayor of Chengdu Wang Fengchao (via pre-recorded remarks) and Acting Chinese Consul General in Perth Wang Fengzhong. In addition to highlighting previous cooperation and acknowledging champions of the relationship, the City unveiled a civic gift to be



Lord Mayor holding the two SCA Certificates of Recognition.

delivered to Chengdu, and Chengdu's gift to Perth

was shown on screen. Finally, National Secretary, Sister Cities Australia Mike Jakins presented the Lord Mayor with English and Chinese Certificates of Recognition. Chengdu will also be lighting up to celebrate the relationship later in the year, and an online meeting between both Mayors is planned as part of commemorative activities.



Perth Council House lit up in honour of Chengdu being the Centre for the Giant Panda in China.

Chengdu is one of the largest cities in China, and one of the most influential economic, cultural, culinary, and academic centres in the country. It is an exciting and fun-loving city that embraces the ancient and the ultra-modern, and is the home of the giant panda. Perth and Chengdu have been engaged in activities across education, culture, innovation, tourism and various other sectors over the past decade.

Photographs by kind permission of The City of Perth

SPECIAL ARTICLE FROM BUNBURY, WA

South West Festival of Japan

Wow! What a festival we've had!

This year's South West Festival of Japan meant so much to our team of organisers - after a rough two years of events in the South West being affected by COVID, our team really put our hearts and souls into this year's show!

Everyone, from performers to caterers and local restaurants, artists, bus trip organisers, local Stamp Rally stores and venue curators, gave it their all this year, and we are so impressed with the spirit of the community in backing and encouraging the SWFJ.



Taiko drummers in action.

After an absolutely incredible Opening Matsuri Day on Saturday 10th, (with amazing weather, may we add!), we tasted Japanese cuisine via Foodey Meal Kits and Right on Burgers, sipped cocktails at Lost Bills and ate way too many cupcakes from Guardians of Happiness, meditated in nature with JoyTrails' Shinrin Yokus, learnt about Japanese travel with Helloworld Travel Bunbury (and tried sake!), belted out a tune at karaoke, AND THEN joined in for the closing Floating Lantern Ceremony.



Creating that very special lantern.

We want to say the biggest heartfelt thank you to everyone who helped bring this year's festival together. Our sponsors (City of Bunbury, Regional Arts Australia and Regional Arts WA, Triple M Southwest, Tokyo City University, Bunbury Geographe

Motor Museum, Helloworld Travel Bunbury, Yellow Digital, CLAIR, Tokyo Underground, and of course, Your Turn Events), Japanese students, volunteers, organisers, marketers, lantern builders, cuisine experts, and YOU! The community who keep these events thriving!



The lanterns take to the waters on their final journey.

The SWFJ Team (as reported in the local newspaper) The full image gallery is available on our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/swfestivalofjapan

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ADVANCE NOTICE OF A SPECIAL EVENT

Smart Communities Summit 2022 – Update.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT SHOW 2022

8-10 November 2022
Accor Stadium | Sydney | Australia

Building resilient, smart and sustainable communities through collaboration, access to solutions, networking and innovation

DigiTech.Local.Gov Summit 2022 | **LOCAL GOVERNMENT PARKING SUMMIT 2022** | **RESOURCE RECOVERY SUMMIT 2022** | **SMART COMMUNITIES SUMMIT 2022**

Dates: 8th-10th of November 2022, this is a two-day conference with a pre-conference workshop

Location: Accor Stadium, Sydney Olympic Park

Target market: Local government representatives

Objective: To boost collaborative partnerships and civic engagement while also addressing urban challenges through case studies into the digital innovation in the council's governance, planning and infrastructure investment.

Australia's newest and biggest Local Government event is here! It's where local government leaders from across Australia come to meet, collaborate and learn from the best – from Mayors, Ministers, CEOs, planning managers, resource recovery officers, digital delivery managers, transport managers, and everyone in between.

With loads of networking opportunities, four content streams, and a solutions expo, it's where you can find

inspiration, explore industry leading content, make new connections and rekindle old ones.

For just one ticket price you have the freedom to move between four knowledge streams and choose the content that will empower you to achieve exceptional results for your community.

Smart Communities Summit speakers include:

Hon. Wendy Tuckerman, Minister for Local Government, **New South Wales Government**

Hon. Geoffrey Brock, Minister for Local Government, Minister for Regional Roads, Minister for Veterans Affairs and Minister for Executive Council, **South Australia Government**

Clover Moore, Lord Mayor, **City of Sydney**

Local Government Parking Summit speakers include:

Hon. Victor Dominello MP, Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, **New South Wales Government**

Jay Suvaal, Mayor, **Cessnock City Council**

Linda Weatherson PSM, General Manager – Community City Services, **City of Melbourne**

[Resource Recovery Summit](#) speakers include:

Lisa McLean, Chief Executive Officer, **NSW Circular**

Matthew Davis, Sustainable Resources Engagement Officer, **Blacktown City Council**

Benjamin Bywater, Social Media Advisor, **City of Parramatta**

[DigiTech.Local.Gov Summit](#) speakers include:

Ian Oppermann, Chief Data Scientist, **NSW Department of Customer Service**

David Farmer, Chief Executive Officer, **Central Coast Council**

Carmel Foster, Director, Corporate Strategy and Resources, **Wingecarribee Shire Council**

View the full speaker line-up [here](#).

Reasons to attend Local Government Show 2022:

- **INSIGHTS INTO CRITICAL ISSUES** – Gain insights & strategies into the key issues impacting local councils right now, including smart communities, digital transformation, resource recovery, and parking

- **FLEXIBILITY** – Pick and choose the content most relevant to your role from 4 knowledge streams spread across 3 days featuring 75+ presentations & in-depth masterclass workshops
- **LEARN FROM THE LEADERS** – Gain knowledge and inspiration from 100+ speakers including Ministers, Mayors, CEOs, and other local government leaders who are solving the same problems you're facing
- **NETWORK & COLLABORATE** – Break out of your silo & meet with peers from a variety of local government functions and locations at the gala dinner, networking breakfast, expo, & many other networking opportunities
- **FIND SOLUTIONS** – Cut through the red tape by quickly and easily building relationships with innovation and solutions providers at the expo

Early bird pricing includes: Register on or before 7 October (**SAVE \$400**)

Sister Cities Australia members get additional 10% off the registration fee with VIP code '**SCA10**'. Book online [here](#) or call +61 (0)2 9977 0565.

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.

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.

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

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

The **OFFICIAL** SCA Facebook Group

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

STAY IN TOUCH WITH SCA

Your SCA Committee

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Vice President - Christina Despoteris;

Mobile: 0426 682 682; Email:

[Click here to email Christina](#)

National Treasurer – Gordon Allen;

Mobile: 0412 278 64;

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

National Secretary - Mike Jakins;

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