

## THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



It has been a while since we heard of a new sister city relationship been established in Australia. Recently, we learnt of the signing of the MOU to establish Blacktown in New South Wales and Wexford in Ireland to do just that.

On behalf of Sister Cities Australia, I would like to congratulate Blacktown City Council and Wexford Council for their initiative and wish them well in their future endeavours. Our own Greg

McCallum, who is the International Links and Sister Cities Coordinator at Blacktown has been instrumental in making the relationship happen. Read the full story below.

I am absolutely delighted to announce that due to the generosity of Wyndham City Council, our partners for the 2023 National Conference "Sister Cities – Linking the World Together", we are now able to present the Conference FREE OF CHARGE to all our members and non-members.

There have been a couple of changes to the overall program, that is we are no longer having the conference dinner on Thursday night, nor the Mayoral Reception on Wednesday evening, but the Thursday program is bigger and better with some amazing speakers. Delegates will still be able to join the SCA Executive at an informal dinner on Wednesday or Thursday evenings. The SCA National Awards will be presented at the Mayoral Luncheon on Thursday.

Our speakers will include the Hon John Brumby AO Chancellor La Trobe University and Former Premier of Victoria, George Shaw the Chairman of the Melbourne to Osaka Yacht Race, the Consul General of the United States of America Kathleen Lively, the Consuls General of Italy and Japan, Russell Tulett from the Department of Foreign

Affairs, Vivienne Nguyen AM Chairperson Victorian Multicultural Commission as well as several representatives from councils presenting case studies of sister city relationships. And of course we have our international guest Taylor Marston, Youth Director of Global Cities New Zealand who is going to speak about "Engaging Youth in Sister City Relationships – Lessons from Aotearoa New Zealand". Click here to view the program - <https://www.sistercitiesaustralia.org.au/conference-forums/2023-national-conference>.

For our Members, please don't forget that our Annual General Meeting is conducted at the National Conference. You should have received all the paper work for the AGM. Also please note that this is an election year. If you want to have a say as to how our organisation functions, please do not hesitate to nominate for an Executive position.

Also we would love to hear about your projects. Please write to our Secretary and send information to him to be included in this Newsletter about your events.

As I have said before, people across Australia are looking for opportunities to travel again. What better way to start your travels than by attending our National Conference in October. I can guarantee a very exciting experience, meeting with old friends and making new ones and of course listening and partaking in some serious discussion about sister city relationships and their benefits as well as their future.

Looking forward to seeing you all at our Conference.

Thank you,  
Christina Despoteris OAM  
President, Sister Cities Australia

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## 2023 NATIONAL CONFERENCE UPDATE

**Time is running out!**

**Register Now!**

Sister Cities Australia in Partnership with  
Wyndham City Council Present

**2023 National Conference**

*Sister Cities – Linking the World Together*

**Thursday 12 October**

We have worked hard to present a program which is relevant and informative and which will prove to be fruitful for all delegates participating in the conference.

We are covering a wide range of topics including the benefits of sister city relationships, the cultural aspects, engaging youth, local government collaboration, reflecting on past activities - we will present several case studies, looking at the current situation and of course, looking at creating a new relationship with the motto "never give up".

To Register your interest please click [HERE](#)

For the full Program please click [HERE](#)



## SPECIAL ARTICLE FROM BLACKTOWN, NSW

### Blacktown and Enniscorthy, Ireland, new Sister Cities.



**Vinegar hill, Enniscorthy**

Blacktown City Council have signed a formal Sister Cities Friendship agreement with Enniscorthy, Wexford in Ireland.

A delegation from Blacktown City led by Cr Brad Bunting who represented the Mayor Cr Tony Bleasdale OAM and included Chief Executive Officer, Kerry Robinson OAM, Events and Sister Cities Manager Kevin Poiley, Project Officer Greg McCallum and representatives of the Sister Cities Advisory Committee were warmly welcomed by Wexford Council elected members and staff.

A Civic Reception was hosted on the evening of the 25 August 2023 by Enniscorthy Council in Enniscorthy Castle, a venue first occupied in 1203 AD.

The signing of the Sister City deed took place during the evening.

Signatories to the deed were Cr Brad Bunting and Kerry Robinson OAM (Blacktown City) and Cathaoirleach of Enniscorthy Municipal District, Cllr John O'Rourke and Chief Executive Officer Tom Enright



**Signing of the Sister City Agreement**

The agreement is a product of a significant historical event known as the Battle of Vinegar Hill which took place in Enniscorthy in 1798

The Battle of Vinegar Hill was a military engagement during the Irish Rebellion of 1798 on 21 June 1798 between a force of approximately 13,000 government troops under the command of Gerard Lake and 16,000



United Irishmen rebels led by Anthony Perry. Convicts from this uprising were sent to Australia



**Delegation in Enniscorthy Castle, Vinegar Hill in background**

The first battle fought on Australian soil between government troops (with local defence support) and rebel forces of European heritage was the Battle of Vinegar Hill fought in and around Blacktown in March 1804.

The Battle took place when British troops caught up with a group of convicts who had escaped from Castle Hill Convict Farm. Many of those involved were convicts from the Irish uprising.

Blacktown City Council hosts a Battle of Vinegar Hill memorial within its LGA within the grounds of Castlebrook Memorial Park.

Given this rich history a Sister Cities friendship agreement between the two cities is an exciting venture.

The signed Sister Cities Agreement looks to enhance the historic Vinegar Hill relationship as well as schools and university links, cultural exchanges, art and craft connections as well as sporting opportunities and Youth Ambassador experiences. Discussions and feasibility studies are underway for Blacktown to host a Gaelic Football centre within the region.



**Delegation immersed in Irish history at the Ferns Experience, Wexford**

An invitation has been extended by Blacktown City Council to host a delegation from Enniscorthy in May 2025.

It is an extremely exciting agreement which emphasises the historic Irish connection with Blacktown.

Greg McCallum,  
International Links and Sister Cities Project Officer  
Blacktown City Council  
[greg.mccallum@sistercitiesaustralia.org.au](mailto:greg.mccallum@sistercitiesaustralia.org.au)

## SPECIAL ARTICLE FROM ENNISCORTHY, IRELAND

### Article from the Enniscorthy, Ireland, local news.

#### **Enniscorthy signs Sister City Agreement with Blacktown City, Australia, celebrating a shared historical Vinegar Hill link.**

The Cathaoirleach of Enniscorthy Municipal District, Cllr John O'Rourke hosted a civic reception for a delegation from Blacktown City, a suburb of Sydney Australia, in Enniscorthy Castle on Friday evening, 25th August 2023. The Civic Reception included the signing of a 'Sister City Agreement' between Enniscorthy Municipal District and Blacktown City Council - committing each Council to

officially recognizing both Vinegar Hills in commemoration events as well as a commitment to fostering new connections across the areas of tourism, sport, arts and culture.

The delegation from Blacktown City Council, led by Cllr Brad Bunting (representing the Mayor Tony Beasdale OAM) and CEO Kerry Robinson, OAM, are enjoying visits to key tourism locations, including Johnstown Castle and the Irish National Heritage Park, as well as making business connections with local elected members, local schools, Wexford Campus of SETU and Co Wexford GAA.



Welcoming the group to the Civic Reception, Cllr John O'Rourke said 'As Cathaoirleach of Enniscorthy Municipal District and on behalf of the elected members and people of Enniscorthy, a céad míle fáilte to Cllr Brad Bunting and his delegation. From little acorns, oak trees grow and we look forward to commemorating our friendship this evening and developing it over time'. Speaking warmly of his previous visit to Ireland and Enniscorthy in 2022, Cllr Brad Bunting complimented the hospitality that the people of Enniscorthy have extended him and his delegation and highlighted the value and importance both he, and the Blacktown City Council, place in building new relationships at a community level with Sister City areas.

Tom Enright, CE of Wexford County Council said, 'I want to highlight the good work that is happening in Enniscorthy led by the elected members and I am delighted to be here this evening signing this special agreement between the two areas.' The CEO of Blacktown City Council, Mr. Kerry Robinson, OAM thanked both his own team and the local district and council staff for the effort put into the delegation's itinerary.

Referencing the differences in scale between Blacktown City and Enniscorthy town, Mr. Robinson also emphasized that the importance of the Sister City relationship was about finding and building on the community, education, arts & cultural aspects that the two areas share; noting one the City Councils longest Sister City Relationships is with an area twice the size of Wexford County, but with a population a little over 7,000.



### Historic Battle of Vinegar Hill Link

The first battle fought on Australian soil between government troops and rebel forces of European heritage was fought in and around Rouse Hill, located in the Blacktown City area, on 5 March 1804. As the ringleaders of the rebel forces were Irish, the battle became known as the Vinegar Hill Rebellion or the Battle of Vinegar Hill. Today, the city of Blacktown is home to over 400,000 people, with approximately 5% of those identifying as having Irish heritage. While the exact location of the battle is no longer known, in 1988 a permanent memorial was unveiled commemorating the Battle at a spot in the Castlebrook Memorial Park.

## SCA NATIONAL AWARDS UPDATE FOR 2023

### National Awards to be announced on October 12!

The National Awards Program was implemented in 1983 to enable our members to record and enter successful sister city activities both locally and with their sister cities overseas. It is great to be able to resume the Awards this year.

Due to the COVID disruption to the SCA Awards over the past three years a couple of changes were implemented

for this year to allow everyone a chance to enter as many times as possible:

- There were **TWO eligibility periods**.
- We also implemented a **special Category 6** designed to reflect the use of innovative ideas and techniques to maintain relationships during COVID.

Following the close of entries in July the entries received were assessed by our panel of esteemed judges. I would



like to thank my fellow panel members, Peter Filmer OAM, and Julie Jewell, for their excellent work in reviewing and scoring the entries. It was disappointing that only a small number of entries were received – BUT the quality of all the entries was exceptional.

It will now be a wait until the winners of the National Awards are announced during the National Conference to

be held, with grateful thanks, by the City of Wyndham at their Civic Centre in Werribee on October 12. We look forward to presenting the winning cities with their awards!

Mike Jakins

Chief Judge, Sister Cities Australia National Awards

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## 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

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## SPECIAL ARTICLE FROM FRANKSTON, VICTORIA

### 2023 FSFA Japanese Speech Contest



The Frankston Susono Friendship Association held its annual Japanese Speech Contest at Monash Peninsula Campus on Friday 1st September. The Association is a group of volunteer citizens who administer Frankston's

sister city relationship with Susono, Shizuoka in Japan on behalf of the Frankston City Council. FSFA has worked to promote Japanese culture, the study of Japanese language plus student and cultural exchanges since the sister city relationship was formally established in February 1982.

The Association invited students from local primary and secondary schools to this year's contest and 53 entries were received. Contestants were required to recite a short self-introduction followed by a set piece

based on the folktale story of Kasajizō (Straw Hats for the Jizō) and were judged by a panel of Japanese speakers. Contestants competed in Lower Primary, Upper Primary, Japanese Environment (Primary), Junior Secondary, Intermediate Secondary and Senior Secondary divisions.

FSFA Chairperson Julie D'Arcy welcomed all contestants, their parents and teachers before explaining the work undertaken by the Association and the importance of the annual contest in promoting the teaching of Japanese language in our local schools.

The evening's program started with the 3 primary divisions and 34 excited and nervous contestants presenting before the judging panel. Individual trophies were awarded to the top three students in each division, with the top contestant in each division also awarded a perpetual trophy which is displayed with pride at their school for the next 12 months.

Results:

**Lower Primary (Prep to Year 3):**

- 1st Charlotte S (Derinya Primary School)
- 2nd Hannah R (Overport Primary School)
- 3rd Grace M (Derinya Primary School)
- Commendation Award: Max W (Derinya Primary School)

**Upper Primary (Years 4 to 6):**

- 1st Zara T (Haileybury)
- 2nd Lucy S (Derinya Primary School)
- 3rd Lucy U (Derinya Primary School)

**Japanese Environment (Primary):**

- 1st Mae F (Overport Primary School)
- 2nd Hannah F (Overport Primary School)
- 3rd Leah (Overport Primary School)
- Commendation Award: Lydia T (Bayside Christian College)



*Primary Division Trophy Winners with FSFA Chairperson Julie D'Arcy*

The secondary schools followed with students presenting a more detailed self-introduction and set piece or Japanese themed topic in each of the 3 divisions. At the conclusion of these speeches Committee member, former exchange student to Susono and judge Sam Warrington commented on the impressive standard of all contestants and recognized the enormous challenge of memorizing and presenting a speech in the Japanese language, especially given that the senior division students are required to write, memorize and present a 3-to-5-minute speech on a topic of their choice.

Results:

**Junior (Years 7 & 8):**

- 1st Lakesha H (Hillcrest Christian College)

- 2nd Evette P (Hillcrest Christian College)
- 3rd Thehan K (Haileybury)
- Commendation Award: Christopher T (Haileybury)

**Intermediate (Years 9 & 10):**

- 1st Rhitt C (Nossal High School)
- 2nd Kimberley I (Nossal High School)
- 3rd Alyssa L (Frankston High School)

**Senior (Years 11 & 12):**

- 1st Jordan L (Frankston High School)
- 2nd Oscar M (Frankston High School)



*Secondary Division Trophy Winners with FSFA Chairperson Julie D'Arcy*

A special thank you to our panel of judges for assisting at this year's contest; the teachers for their hours of hard work preparing their students; and the parents and families for their attendance, encouragement and support. Finally, our appreciation to Monash Peninsula Campus for making such a wonderful venue available to our Association and the hard-working members of the FSFA Committee for organising and running another successful Japanese Speech Contest.



*Our Judges with Senior Division Contestants Jordan and Oscar*

Simon Hast, FSFA Vice-Chairperson  
[www.frankston-susono.com](http://www.frankston-susono.com)



## SCA 2023 NATIONAL CONFERENCE INVITATION



### SISTER CITIES AUSTRALIA IN PARTNERSHIP WITH *Wyndham City*

Invite you to the 2023 National Conference  
Sister Cities – Linking the World Together

**Thursday 12 October 2023**  
Wyndham Civic Centre, 45 Princes Highway,  
Werribee Victoria

**12 OCTOBER  
THURSDAY**

8.30am - 5.00pm  
CONFERENCE

including the 2023 AGM  
and the  
NATIONAL AWARDS PRESENTATIONS

To Register for the Conference,  
please use the link below.  
[www.trybooking.com/CLNYY](http://www.trybooking.com/CLNYY)



## 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



### 2023 DIRECTORY OF AUSTRALIAN SISTER CITY AND FRIENDSHIP CITY AFFILIATIONS

UPDATED: 24/09/2019 – with data supplied by CLAIR for all Australia-Japan relationships.  
10/01/2020 – with data supplied from survey to all Local Govt. Authorities.  
26/05/2021 – with all amalgamated LGA names in all Australian States.

**DISCLAIMER:** Sister Cities Australia does not accept any liability or responsibility for the accuracy of the information contained in this directory. The directory has been faithfully compiled from the data provided, some of which has been substantiated however much of it has not. Persons or organisations using the data contained within the directory should follow-up with their own research to verify the accuracy of that data.

[www.sistercitiesaustralia.org.au](http://www.sistercitiesaustralia.org.au)

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

Don't forget to register for the 2023 National Conference "Sister Cities – Linking the World Together" at [www.trybooking.com/CLNYY](http://www.trybooking.com/CLNYY).



## STAY IN TOUCH WITH SCA

### Your SCA Committee

**President** – Christina Despoteris OAM;

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;

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

**Executive Member** – Cr. Dr 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](#)

**Executive Member** – Peter Filmer OAM;

Mobile: 0416 150 055;

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

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

## Your SCA website – <http://www.sistercitiesaustralia.org.au>



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