

**ITEM 5 POLICY REVIEW - CIVIC RELATIONS COUNCIL POLICY**

Council has a Civic Relations Council Policy that helps prioritise international relations. This Council Policy is due for review and the attached draft policy has been amended taking into account recent changes in federal legislation. The major changes relate to reflecting Australia's *Foreign Relations (State and Territory Arrangements) Act 2020* and removing procedural actions from the Council Policy.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Council adopt the revised draft Civic Relations Council Policy.

**REPORT AUTHORISATIONS**

Report of: Sue Savage, Manager Community Culture + Engagement

Authorised by: Kerry Hunt, Director Community Services - Creative and Innovative City

**ATTACHMENTS**

- 1 Draft Civic Relations Council Policy

**BACKGROUND**

The draft Civic Relations Council Policy is designed to guide how Council interacts and prioritises international relations and activity requests.

The policy references Council's long-standing relationships with Longyan China, Ohrid Macedonia and Kawasaki Japan.

It also provides a framework for managing requests to host visitors from around the globe, not all of which can be managed within existing resourcing.

The revised policy deals with formal Sister City and Friendship City relationships as well as less formal exchange relationships.

**PROPOSAL**

The Civic Relations Council Policy has been reviewed taking into consideration the current political and economic climate, Department of Foreign Affairs policy and legislation and Council resourcing and priorities.

In late 2020, the Foreign Arrangements Scheme commenced. The purpose of this legislation was to ensure that arrangements between state or territory governments (and their entities) and foreign entities do not adversely affect Australia's foreign relations and are consistent with Australia's Foreign Policy. The draft Council Policy has been amended to include reference to the legislation and its requirements.

Other changes largely revolve around adjustments to language for better clarity.

The proposal recommends the draft Civic Relations Council Policy be adopted by Council.

**CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION**

Consultation in the review of these policies occurred with the Events team, Economic Development team and the Office of the Lord Mayor, all of which contributed to the review recommendations.

**PLANNING AND POLICY IMPACT**

This report contributes to the delivery of Our Wollongong 2032 - Community Strategic Plan Goal 2 'We have an innovative and sustainable economy'.

It specifically delivers on core business activities as detailed in the Events and Corporate Relations.

## RISK MANAGEMENT

Adhering to the *Foreign Relations (State and Territory Arrangements) Act 2020* provides an added level of risk management to this area of operations.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications as a result of the recommended changes to the policies. There is an existing civic relations and sister city budget that allows for activities undertaken as a result of existing or newly formed relationships.

## CONCLUSION

The Civic Relations Council Policy is designed to guide and prioritise international relations and activity requests. These policy updates align both political and economic climates when considering requests and ensures that the activity maintains consistency with other existing national foreign arrangements as well as alignment with Council priorities.



## CIVIC RELATIONS COUNCIL POLICY

ADOPTED BY COUNCIL: [TO BE COMPLETED BY GOVERNANCE]

### PURPOSE

This policy is designed to help Council prioritise international relations and activity requests. The policy outlines the criteria for the establishment and maintenance of the more formal Sister City and Friendship City relationships with the City of Wollongong.

This policy also ensures Council's activities are in keeping with Australia's *Foreign Relations (State And Territory Arrangements) Act 2020*.

Wollongong City Council has formal relationships with three overseas cities and one 'domestic', or Australian based, Inter-Council Friendship Agreement as outlined below:

#### Sister Cities

- Kawasaki in Japan (established in 1988).

#### Friendship Cities

- Longyan in China (established in 2001).
- Ohrid in Macedonia (established in 1996).

#### Other Relationships

- Lifeguard Exchange Program with Nova Scotia
- Inter-Council Friendship Agreement with Carrathool Shire Council.

### POLICY INTENT

This policy has been developed to provide a framework for Council's interaction with domestic and international governments.

The main objectives of this policy are to ensure that:

1. Sister Cities, Friendship Cities, international relationships and other agreements are relevant and effective.
2. The activities from these relationships derive economic, social and cultural benefits to each city.
3. Any arrangements or agreements with foreign government entities do not adversely affect Australia's foreign relations and are not inconsistent with Australian Foreign Policy.

### WOLLONGONG 2032 OBJECTIVES

This policy contributes to the deliverables within Our Wollongong 2032 - Community Strategic Plan – Goal 2 'We have an innovative and sustainable economy'.

It specifically delivers on core business activities as detailed in the **Events and Corporate Relations CSP Strategy and DP Services**

## CIVIC RELATIONS

## COUNCIL POLICY

### POLICY

#### Sister City relationships

Council may establish Sister City relationships with carefully selected cities in accordance with this policy and explore opportunities for positive links with other cities as they arise. Care must be taken to manage expectations and avoid commitments which can be complicated in a cultural exchange.

Council's Civic Relations Framework Management Policy provides a framework for assessment to support this decision making process.

Establishment of a formal relationship requires approval of the Minister for Foreign Affairs and a Council resolution.

#### Friendship City relationship

A Friendship City relationship is less formal than a Sister City relationship and exists primarily through a 'paper link' (ie through written communications).

#### Inter-Council Friendship Agreement

An Inter-Council Friendship Agreement exists primarily to promote greater awareness and understanding between respective regions and cultures within NSW and other Australian states.

#### Civic Relations

Civic Relations relates to all Council activities, both international and national, which involve formal relationship building activities for the benefit of the city be it via economic, cultural or information exchange.

#### Industry and Investment

Economic development business and investment enquiries are facilitated through the Invest Wollongong partnership between Council, the NSW Government and the University of Wollongong with oversight of the Office of the General Manager. This long term strategic partnership has the goal of attracting new businesses, investment and jobs by promoting Wollongong as a superior business location in key target sectors.

International investment related enquiries received through Council and facilitated through the Invest Wollongong partnership are done so in consultation with relevant state and federal government agencies, such as Investment NSW and AusTrade.

### DEFINITIONS

#### Sister City and Friendship City

For the purpose of this policy, a Sister City or Friendship City is a formal link between cities to bring economic, social and cultural benefits to each city. Sister City and Friendship City relationships allow communities to:

- Promote economic growth
- Build reliable business and other contacts
- Increase tourism
- Exchange cultural and educational experiences and values
- Exchange ideas
- Gain valuable international, national, state or local government perspectives and increase the understanding of global, national, state and local government issues
- Generate harmony, tolerance and goodwill.

CIVIC RELATIONS

COUNCIL POLICY

## LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

[Australia's Foreign Relations \(State And Territory Arrangements\) Act 2020](#)

## REVIEW

This Policy will be reviewed every three years from the date of each adoption of the policy, or more frequently as required.

## REPORTING

Reporting requirements are in line with the type of activity as noted within this Policy. The following reports may be required:

- Annual Report requirements
- Council report
- External reporting to other agencies, etc required under this policy.

Notification to the Minister of Foreign Affairs is required on each instance.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Initial requests are received via:

- Office of the Lord Mayor or General Manager
- Customer requests
- Events Team.

The initial enquiry is reviewed by Events and Visual Strategy Manager and Events Team Leader. This includes a notification to the Minister for Foreign Affairs for review in line with the Australia's Foreign Relations (State and Territory Arrangement) Act 2020.

Recommendation is reviewed by Manager Community, Culture and Engagement.

Determination of recommendation by General Manager and endorsed by Council resolution.

Any civic events to be delivered are done so by the Events team in consultation with the Office of the Lord Mayor, Office of the General Manager or Economic Development.

## RELATED STRATEGIES, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Economic Development Strategy 2019-2029

CIVIC RELATIONS

COUNCIL POLICY

APPROVAL AND REVIEW	
Responsible Division	Community, Culture and Engagement
Date adopted by Council	[To be inserted by Corporate Governance]
Date/s of previous adoptions	9 September 2013 (previously titled Sister City and Friendship City Relationships); EMC 3 March 2010; Council 12 February 1996; 28 November 2005; 13 August 2018;
Date of next review	[Not more than two years from last adoption]