

1 POLICY STATEMENT

The City of Marion's participation in the sister cities program enables the community to establish and maintain friendships with other communities throughout the world.

The program creates the opportunity to foster international goodwill while enriching our community with a broader understanding of other nations, their traditions, customs and cultures. It also provides an avenue which may lead to economic benefits, tourism and cultural exchanges.

This policy outlines how the City of Marion will select and maintain sister cities' relationships.

2 DEFINITIONS

Memorandum of Understanding – A formal document describing a bilateral agreement between two parties.

Sister cities – A co-operative agreement between the City of Marion and another city/town in Australia or overseas to promote shared cultural, educational, humanitarian, economic connections and awareness.

Sister Cities Friendship Group – A group comprising Elected Members and the community to advise Marion Council on establishing and maintaining sister cities relationships.

3 EXISTING SISTER CITIES RELATIONSHIPS

The City of Marion maintains the following sister cities relationships:

- Kokubunji, Japan (established in 1993)
- Naracoorte, South Australian (established in 1995)

This relationship is a link between the City of Marion and the above city to promote the objectives of the program.

4 PRINCIPLES

The objectives of the sister cities program are to:

- Develop long-lasting, mutually beneficial friendships and exchange ideas.
- Gain a valuable understanding of international, national or state issues, cultures and traditions.
- Generate harmony, tolerance and goodwill.
- Promote economic growth and increase tourism.
- Exchange cultural and educational experiences and values.
- Exchange technical assistance and advice to other cities.

5 ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING A SISTER CITY RELATIONSHIP

Sister city relationships should be established for their strategic relevance to the City of Marion and its residents.

Relationships, where possible, should be based on the concept of reciprocation and mutual benefit except in circumstances where they have been entered into for humanitarian reasons.

Criteria

In addition to ensuring the relationship meets the objectives of the Sister Cities Policy, council will use the following criteria to assess the suitability of entering into a new sister cities relationship or reviewing existing friendships:

1. **General** – Relevance to the local community, any existing linkages, demographics (including cultural), historical, sporting or artistic significance, and ease of access.
2. **Economic** – Similar economic conditions, trade and investment opportunities, tourism potential.
3. **Social** – Similar social infrastructure and issues, opportunity for broad-based activity, people-to-people interest, energy and commitment.
4. **Educational** – Opportunity for student/teacher exchange programs.
5. **Humanitarian** – Opportunity to use skills of City of Marion staff and the community to assist in the development of the sister city consistent with the provisions of the Humanitarian Leave Procedure.
6. **Existing relationships** - Assessed against level of communication with Sister City, history of outcomes to date, and current and proposed projects.

In considering the above factors, it is necessary to compare not only the similarities between the towns/cities but also value the differences and consider if they can be a source of mutual benefit.

Approval process

Approval of a sister city relationship is a three-stage process:

1. Step one – *Sister Cities Friendship Group* (see below) identifies and recommends to a General Council Meeting a potential relationship.
2. Step two – Adoption at a General Council Meeting of a resolution to establish a sister city relationship.
3. Step three – Formalising the relationship with the exchange of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by the Mayor of the City of Marion and the leader of the nominated city/town.

Sister Cities Friendship Group

A *Sister Cities Friendship Group* will be established with the purpose of:

- 1 Identifying potential sister city relationships based on the above objectives and criteria, and making recommendations to council.
- 2 Recommending to council a program, including any budgetary considerations, to strengthen and maintain the relationship.
- 3 Reviewing the ongoing success of the relationship in meeting the key objectives and criteria outlined in this document and making recommendations to council.

The group will meet as required and comprise:

- Mayor
- Two Elected Members
- Community members (number as interested)

City of Marion staff will provide support to the group

Review of relationship

The relationship will be reviewed every four years to ensure it is meeting the policy objectives.

Cost of Sister Cities relationship

Costs associated with the operation of sister cities relationships will be determined through mutual agreement with respective cities and be subject to the normal budget approval process.

6 REVIEW DATE

The Sister Cities Policy was adopted by council on 26 November 2013 and will be reviewed in four years.

7 AUTHOR

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8 References

Humanitarian Leave Procedure