

1. RATIONALE

The City of Marion's participation in the Sister Cities Program (SCP) enables the community to establish and maintain friendships with other communities throughout the world.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

The SCP 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 that may lead to economic benefits, tourism and cultural exchanges.

3. OBJECTIVES

To identify how the City of Marion will select and maintain the SCP 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.

4. POLICY SCOPE AND IMPLEMENTATION

The City of Marion maintains the following sister cities relationship:

- Kokubunji, Japan (established 1993)

This relationship is a link between the City of Marion and the above city to promote the objectives of the SCP. Sister city relationships should be established for their strategic relevance to the City of Marion and its residents. Where possible, relationships should be based on the concept of reciprocity and mutual benefit except in circumstances where they have been entered into for humanitarian reasons.

4.1 Criteria

In addition to ensuring the relationship meets the objectives of the SCP and this policy, council will use the following criteria to assess the suitability of entering into a new sister cities relationship or when reviewing existing friendships:

- 4.1.1 **General:** relevance to the local community, any existing linkages, demographics (including cultural), historical, sporting or artistic significance and ease of access.
- 4.1.2 **Economic:** similar economic conditions, trade and investment opportunities tourism potential.
- 4.1.3 **Social:** similar social infrastructure and issues, opportunity for broad-based activity, people-to-people interest, energy and commitment.
- 4.1.4 **Educational:** opportunity for student/teacher exchange programs.

- 4.1.5 **Humanitarian:** opportunity to use skills of City of Marion staff and the community to assist in the development of the sister city consistent with other organisational policy/procedure.
- 4.1.6 **Existing relationships:** assessed against level of communication with sister city, history of outcomes to-date and current/proposed projects.

4.2 Approval Process

Approval of a sister city relationship is a two-staged process to be followed as identified below:

- 4.2.1 Adoption at a General Council meeting of a resolution to establish/not establish a sister city relationship.
- 4.2.2 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.

5 DEFINITIONS

Nil

6 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This policy will be implemented and managed by the City of Marion's Communications Unit.

7 REFERENCES

Nil

8 REVIEW AND EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed once in a term of Council (2018 – 2022). Its review schedule will be coordinated by the City of Marion Governance Unit in consultation with the Communications Unit and other key stakeholders.