

ADOPTED BY COUNCIL: 24 FEBRUARY 2025

PURPOSE

This policy is designed to help Council prioritise international relations and city-to-city 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 the Republic of North 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**

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 Office of the General Manager.

Council has a range of internal and external partners that support and assist.

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.

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

APPROVAL AND REVIEW	
Responsible Division	Community, Culture and Engagement
Date adopted by Council	24 February 2025
Date/s of previous adoptions	13 August 2018, 9 September 2013, 3 March 2010, 28 November 2005, 12 February 1996
Date of next review	24 February 2028