



THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello to all the loyal Members of SCA. Trust you and yours are enjoying a successful year filled with friends, good companions and importantly, good health.

Today (April 9, 2016) my home city, Devonport, is celebrating our 25th Anniversary of our

relationship with Minamata in Japan. Over my years in this great movement I have come across many reasons for links being formed and the wonderful myriad of stories that have emanated from the partnerships. In the case of Devonport/Minamata, a major reason was the entirely different stories we had to tell in relation to our environment. I urge you to read the story on Minamata disease, that you may readily find on Google, and you will see how tragic a stage this was in the history of our partners in Japan.

I am also delighted to welcome Mayor Glenn Milne and the Mildura Regional Council as new Members. We trust that you will find the friendship, information and advice so important a part of sharing with the SCA Membership and affiliations.

Over the past few months I have been working with DEFAT and DVA in looking to forge a link with a small town in France. FUILLOY is just outside Villers-Bretonneux and Mayor Brochot has expressed a wish to be linked with Australia. This is a wonderful opportunity, at an important stage in our history, to further the relationship between our two countries and I am delighted to advise that the Council of Liverpool Plains has appointed former Mayor and current Councillor, Ian Lobsey, to follow through. Ian and his family will be visiting FUILLOY later this year and it is hoped the link will be formalised not

long after. It is also worthy to note that the Australian Government is building an interpretive centre, Sir John Monash Centre, situated between the two towns. Liverpool Plains also has a further connection in that several sons from the Plains paid the ultimate price whilst fighting in this region.

As most are now aware there will be no conference in 2016 however I wish to advise prospective hosts for 2017 that an early EOI may be in your interests as there are already several communities who have expressed a desire to host. Further to that I also need to advise that there will be no 2016 Awards however they will definitely return in 2017 and will be bigger than ever. The Executive realise the amount of time and effort that is required to prepare and submit an entry and to this end are looking to make the results more rewarding.

Our Constitution states there will be an AGM each year and to this end I am currently working on a venue to hold this. Perhaps we could have a lunch for a get together? Let me know should you be interested. At this stage we are leaning toward a NSW venue however, always open to offers and suggestions.

Several big events on in the next month or so and to this end I may advise that Mike Jakins will be our representative in Washington for the SCI Conference and I shall be attending the SCNZ event in NZ and presenting a paper on the history of youth involvement in SCA.

May I wish you well in all your SC relations and we, your Executive, look forward to working with you in the future, for as we all recognise, there has never been a more urgent need for us to be involved in seeking World Peace.

May your God be kind and may your World be one of Peace.

Bill

SCA SPECIAL ARTICLE

SCA Celebrating Relationship Milestones

SCA is a member's organisation and as such would like to acknowledge and congratulate the following member cities who have reached significant milestones in the development of their international and domestic sister city relations, namely 10, 25 and 50 year anniversaries.

We encourage each Council to celebrate these coming-of-age milestones with their sister cities. If you are planning something special around these

dates let us know so that we can share your celebrations in our next newsletter. If you are an SCA member and we've missed out on placing your milestone year on our list please let our editor know [Click here to email the Newsletter Editor.](#)

Following are the milestones that were celebrated at the 2015 Sister City Annual conference held in Blacktown, NSW last November.

Celebrate 50 year sister city relationships

Launceston, Tasmania with Ikeda, Osaka, Japan

Celebrate 25 year sister city relationships

Darwin, NT with Haikou, Hainan Province, China

Gold Coast, Queensland with Kanagawa, Japan

Marrickville, NSW with Kos, Greece

Orange, NSW with Timaru District, New Zealand

Celebrate 10 year sister city relationships

Blacktown, NSW with Liverpool Plains, NSW

Cockburn, WA with Mobile, Alabama, USA

Marrickville, NSW with Safita, Syria

Marrickville, NSW with Larnaca, Cyprus

Southern Downs, Queensland with Shiwa, Iwata, Japan

SCA SPECIAL ARTICLE

Ako Children's Choir Visits their Sister City, Rockingham

Rockingham's sister city, Ako in the Hyogo prefecture of Japan, has a very talented children's choir and they made another visit to their Australian city in March – their seventh in the past 19 years. A civic reception for the choir was held by the Rockingham City Council on



Rockingham Mayor, Cllr Barry Sammels, with SCA Vice-President Jan Teasdale and SCA Executive Member Mike Jakins.

March 31 and following some hospitality the Ako choir performed a selection of mainly Australian songs with a couple of Japanese songs included. The audience was thrilled with the performance which was highlighted by an amazing rendition of Waltzing Matilda. Mayor Barry Sammels was asked what the importance of the choir was to the sister city relationship. Barry responded, *"Every time we make contact with our friends from Ako it's a special occasion. A visit from the children's choir is a unique opportunity to deepen our ongoing friendship with our friends in Japan. We are very much looking forward to the City of Ako's Mayor, Motohide Akashi visiting in 2017 to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of our Sister City relationship. I would like to thank our local schools, the Global Friendship Committee and City staff for organising activities for our guests. I hope this was a visit to remember and that our friends from Ako experienced the very best of Rockingham and Perth on their visit."*

Before the choir left to return to Japan I was fortunate to spend a little time with the leader of the choir, Mrs Tomoko Abe, and was able to ask her a few questions about the choir. Mrs Abe told me that the choir celebrates its 40th anniversary in 2017 and it is made up of children between the ages of 8 and 18. All children in Ako are able to join the choir and they will teach and engage with as many as

want to sing with the choir. A number of the children have made up to six visits to Rockingham since the sister city agreement was formalised back in 1997.

The children attend two hours of choir practice each week and they have perfected a repertoire of fifty songs and currently have seven Australian songs that they include as part of their program. As well as singing the choir also perform choreographed moves during the songs adding to the visual excellence of their traditional kimonos.

In Ako the choir performs one major concert each year in Harmony Hall which is always well attended and received by the citizens of Ako. They also perform, on average, at another seven venues in and around Ako each year allowing many people to be able to enjoy the wonderful voices and harmonies possessed by the choir. Mrs Abe was asked what makes her visits to Rockingham so enjoyable (as well as the seven visits with the choir she has also made a further four visits) and she



Mrs Tomoko Abe, choir leader, with Mayor Barry Sammels.

replied that it was mainly because of meeting the people who are always so kind, friendly and welcoming. It is also a chance to renew the friendships that have been made over the years of the sister city relationship.

Finally I asked her for her most memorable time with the choir and she said the times that they sang along with the Rockingham Children's Choir. One



special concert was held in Ako in 2007 when the Rockingham choir was taken to Japan for the first time. A combined concert with the two children's choirs and also the Ako Burger Choir (adult) was held in front of a packed Harmony Hall. The highlight of the concert was when all three choirs took the stage together to perform two Japanese and two Australian songs. When they finished the applause was deafening and the emotion of the performance meant there was barely a dry eye in the hall.

[Mike Jakins, SCA Committee member and former member of the Rockingham Sister City Committee.]

LOOKING FOR, OR TO BECOME, A SISTER CITY?

Check out the SCA website where there is a list of cities actively looking for affiliations, [click here](#).

STAY IN TOUCH WITH SCA

Your SCA Committee

President - Bill Wilson

Mobile: 0439 363 149

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

Vice President - Jan Teasdale

Mobile: 0407 442 136

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

Treasurer - Caisley Graham

Mobile: 0412 571 041

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

Executive Member - Sim Hayward

Mobile: 0417 784 341

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

Executive Member - Mike Jakins

Mobile: 0417 176 568

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

Full contact details for any of the above are available on the SCA website on the Administration page, accessed through the About Us link.

SCA has a website – www.sistercitiesaustralia.com

Visit the association's website for: information about us; what activities we are involved with; any events that are of interest; all the details on the annual awards; access to our publications and images; and how to contact us.

If you notice any changes that need to be made to the website, or if you have any suggestions for improving the site please let us know. Send an email to the [Website Editor](#) (click on this link) with your comments and/or your suggestions.

SCA on Social Media

In essence the goal of every Sister City program is to understand and appreciate other cultures and ways of life. Join us on **Facebook** ([link here](#)) and embark on this journey together. SCA invites you to

contribute stories, photos, successes and even failures to our Facebook page so that we can all learn from one another and take our relationships to a higher level.

SCA Newsletter Options and Contributions

[Sign Up for the Newsletter](#)

[Submit a story \(plus up to 4 images\)](#)

[Opt out of receiving the Newsletter](#)

Please forward this newsletter on to your colleagues and friends to help spread the word, thank you.