

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



This World of ours sure has some interesting characters and places and through the eyes of the Sister Cities many of these come to the fore. This August will mark some twenty eight years since I first became involved and still I am

surprised and excited by many of the events that take place between people and communities, some of which you will read later in this newsletter. Please take the time to share your experiences and where possible make the effort to enter the National Awards. Speaking of awards I have some great news for those who share a relationship with a US partner who is a Member of SCI. You are eligible to enter the US SCI Awards with your American counterpart. Interested? Contact Mike or myself and we can provide more information.

I am delighted to report that come this April I shall have the pleasure of welcoming the Chair of CLAIR (Tokyo), Mr. Tamotsu Okamoto, to my home town, Devonport. At this time we are not aware of his full itinerary however once advised we will provide more information.

Sister Cities New Zealand will hold their 2017 Conference in Invercargill from 4 -6 May. Details

<http://icc.govt.nz/sister-cities-conference-2017/> Conference theme is "Communication Overcoming Distance". From past experience I can assure any attendees they will be well looked after by SCNZ's delightful and passionate President Hiromi Morris, her Board Members and the Invercargill Conference Team. Whilst speaking of NZ I must pass on our best wishes for a speedy recovery to our great friends in the City of Wellington after their recent disaster. our thoughts and prayers are with you.

Interesting to see the response by the NSW Government in light of the huge public backlash over the amalgamations. I would guess there are many who are happy with the change of heart for many of the regional communities however I am not sure that many inner Sydney residents are overly pleased. I wonder what will happen next?

In closing I must convey my disappointment that we have not had too many expressions of interest for hosting the 2017 Conference. This is a wonderful way to highlight your programs, invite your SC to visit and to receive income for your community from the delegates you may entice. Great way to advertise your community throughout Australia and entice participation from several countries around the World and therefore advertise your town Internationally. This is also an election year and all positions will be declared vacant.

Stay safe and be kind to one another.

Bill

NEW LOOK FOR SCA NATIONAL AWARDS – 2017



WE HAVE GONE ELECTRONIC!

The SCA National Awards Program has been streamlined to make it easier to enter an award.

Comprehensive notes detailing the process are included in the 2017 SCA Handbook which will be emailed out to all members following this Newsletter.

Entering an award will be completed with electronic templates for each of the 5 award categories.

Time to reflect on the successful events that took place between **1st April 2016 and 31st March 2017**.

"Special Thanks" to SCA Colleague Mike Jakins for the SCA New Look Awards Program.

Chair, SCA National Awards Program – Jan Teasdale

NEW MEET YOUR COMMITTEE – Christina Despoteris

I am absolutely delighted and privileged to join the SCA team.

My association with sister cities goes back thirty three years, 20th March 1984, when I was working

for the Victorian Ethnic Affairs Commission and was asked to produce a concert to celebrate the twinning of Melbourne and Thessaloniki. The concert was attended by a delegation from Thessaloniki

including the then Mayor, the Lord Mayor of Melbourne and the Minister for Ethnic Affairs.

There have been many cultural and educational activities organised in both cities since then. I got actively involved again during the 25th Anniversary celebrations when I hosted students from Thessaloniki.

More recently I initiated and managed a multi-faceted, cross-cultural, inter-generational community project consisting of the construction and decoration of a replica of the White Tower, Thessaloniki's most famous landmark. The tower was covered with over 8,000 crocheted white laurel flowers which were made by ladies in the local community as well as ladies in Thessaloniki. The tower was gifted to the City of Melbourne.



In 2013, I attended a conference on the island of Lemnos in Greece organised by

the Lemnos Gallipoli Commemorative Committee. The conference wanted to raise awareness of the role that Lemnos played in the Gallipoli Campaign, as all the Australian soldiers who fought at Gallipoli were stationed on Lemnos before the campaign for training or later for medical attention. I am now the Vice President of that committee which has since raised funds and erected a memorial at Albert Park of a soldier and nurse.

During the Centenary of Anzac in 2015, I was present on Lemnos for the commemorative services and later organised at the Athens War Museum an event, the first of its kind, "The Lemnos Connection to Anzac". This event was under the auspices of the Australian Embassy in Athens and was attended by Ministers, Military Heads and many hundreds of people.

I am currently involved with the Speak Greek in March Campaign, am a member of the Art and Craft Committee of the Royal Melbourne Show, former member of the Victorian Committee of the Fred Hollows Foundation – I was privileged to have met

Fred and spent time with him during his Tour of Honour as the Australian of the Year and only last week was made an Honorary Member of the Pontian Women's Welfare Association of Oceania.

My twenty five year employment with the Victorian Government was both interesting and rewarding. As the State Media Liaison Officer of the Premier's Department, I was lucky enough to have worked on the official visit to Victoria and met people like Nelson Mandela; Sarah, the Duchess of York; George Bush Senior, the President of the United States; Mary Robinson, the President of Ireland and many more.

As the Executive Director of the Australia Day Committee Victoria I was involved with organising events for the whole State, working very closely with local councils and Australia Day Committees around the State.

Further my roles in other Departments saw me organising international conferences, community consultations and workshops in various parts of the State, liaising with committees on issues such as the decommissioning of Willesmere Hospital, working on major publicity campaigns, organising events for Victoria's sesquicentenary and Australia's bi-centenary and the Australia Remembers Campaign.

I believe Victoria has not had a representative on the SCA team for a while.

I have started meeting with representatives of councils involved with sister city relationships and will continue to do so. I am looking forward to working with you all to promote and enhance existing sister city relationships and encourage new ones. Further down the track I would like to organise a get together of councils in Victoria to discuss common issues and exchange ideas.



I am only a phone call or email away, so please do not hesitate to call if you feel that I can be of any assistance. My contact details are on the last page of this newsletter.

Christina



SCA SPECIAL ARTICLES FROM ROCKHAMPTON

Rockhampton boosts economic opportunities with friendship agreement – first step to a formal Sister City link

Rockhampton Regional Council has started the journey of building stronger economic ties with China after the signing of a friendship agreement in October last year.

The promising new relationship with Zhenjiang, China was formalised with the signing of a Friendship City Agreement in October by Rockhampton Mayor Margaret Strelow in Zhenjiang followed by a reciprocal visit by Zhenjiang officials in mid-December.

A delegation led by Mayor Strelow joined by business and educational representatives promoted opportunities in the Rockhampton Region for investment and as a tourism and education destination. "Regional Queensland has well and truly learnt that the world won't come to us," Mayor Strelow said. "At a time when so much focus is on Asia, and there are so many opportunities and so many other regions actively attracting investment and exports, it makes sense for us to take our story to the marketplace directly.

A crack team to crack Asia!

The door to new Asian investment is now open for the Rockhampton Region with the appointment of Young Beamish as the Senior Trade and Investment Executive in September last year. Council created the position to capitalise on opportunities emerging from established relationships with key stakeholders throughout Asia.

With a clear mandate to strengthen trade pathways between Rockhampton and Asian markets, Young will provide assistance to facilitate trade investment across a number of high demand sectors. With a strong background in international business and trade development, Young will complement the work underway on Council's Economic Development Strategy.

"I look forward to exploring a number of international investment opportunities across the agricultural, education and tourism sectors to bring tangible new development to the Rockhampton

"There are plans for direct relationships between our University and a partner University in Zhenjiang and already one Rockhampton school has enquired about school to school visits."

Zhenjiang Peoples Republic of China representatives touched down in Rockhampton for the first time in mid-December, just two weeks after Council's trade mission to Asia and the signing of the Friendship Agreement.

"We were delighted to welcome the Zhenjiang delegates so soon after our visit to China," Mayor Strelow said. "It was another great opportunity to promote Zhenjiang and our new relationship to our business community and explore the potential to work collaboratively across a variety of sectors."

Mayor Strelow said additional elements of our Region's economy were discussed including opportunities around education as well as our world renowned agriculture sector with a focus on beef. The Friendship City Agreement is the first step in a more formal Sister City Agreement.

Region," Young said. "There are a great number of synergies between Rockhampton's economic offering and investment demand areas across Asia."

Young is available to help local businesses explore or expand into the Asian market. "My role will be to act as a conduit for businesses thinking of exporting products and services, and to profile business investment opportunities in the Region," she said.

"I invite businesses who fall within these categories to get in touch to identify potential markets and how to move forward. We want to identify who is ready to explore and expand exports to Asia and provide assistance in facilitating trade development. We have some well established relationships with our Sister City and with Singapore and now is the time to take these relationships to the next level.

SCA SPECIAL ARTICLE FROM TOOWOOMBA

Toowoomba Takatsuki Celebrating 25 years

2016 marked the 25th anniversary of the signing of the Sister City Friendship Agreement between Toowoomba and Takatsuki with various celebrations being held over a number of days in Toowoomba.



To encourage community participation and raise awareness of the Sister City programme, the residents of Toowoomba Region and Takatsuki City were invited to participate in a Sister City Photographic Competition. The winning entries and selected images from the competition, along with a combined Sister City Photographic Exchange Exhibition 'Living in Harmony' by the Toowoomba Photographic Society and the Takatsuki Koeisha, were displayed in the Toowoomba Regional Art Gallery from the 15 October – 20 November 2016.

Toowoomba residents were also invited to enter a Sister City Art Competition in keeping with the theme 'Japan'. Winning and selected entries were placed on display at Murrays Art and Framing. Both the photography and art exhibitions will tour Toowoomba's regional galleries in 2017.



Thirty delegates, including Deputy Mayor Inui, the Takatsuki Taiko Drum Group, traditional performers and a friendship group, visited Toowoomba from the 10 -13 November to celebrate this milestone. The delegation enjoyed the sights of Toowoomba, a school visit to St Ursula's College and a City Hall reception hosted by the mayor and councillors. A visit to the Highfields Pioneer Village, a local

heritage tourist attraction, provided the opportunity to learn more about our local history and indigenous culture. Our visitors were also invited to try billy tea and damper and enjoy a BBQ lunch.

The official anniversary dinner was held in the magnificent setting of the Cobb and Co Museum. The 80 guests received a traditional indigenous welcome, followed by a whip cracking display and the performance by the Takatsuki Taiko Drummers under the stars in the courtyard. The visitors were then treated to dinner in the National Carriage Factory featuring local produce, wine and beer.

A feature of the celebrations was the Nihon Matsuri (Japan Festival). This was a community event featuring elements of Japanese culture such as origami, bonsai, ikebana, Taiko drumming, martial arts and Japanese food. Mr Hidehiro Hosaka, Consul-General of Japan (Brisbane) officially opened the festival. The event was a huge success with approximately 2000 members of the public enjoying the activities.



An excited audience of over 500 Toowoomba students enjoyed a dynamic and rhythmic performance by the Takatsuki Taiko Drummers. For the first time the group were joined by a national award winning Shamisen (traditional Japanese guitar) player. Also visiting with the group for the fifth time was a renowned Noh performer (traditional Japanese theatre).

The Takatsuki Chamber of Commerce President and General Director met with Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce representative to investigate potential business opportunities between the two cities. This provided a great opportunity to share ideas and discuss future business exchanges to help bring economic benefit to both cities.

Celebrations concluded with a tree planting ceremony and unveiling of a plaque at the Japanese



NEWSLETTER

www.sistercitiesaustralia.com

February 2017

Gardens to mark the 25th anniversary. Attendees then enjoyed a final performance by some of the energetic members of the Takatsuki Taiko Drummers.

Toowoomba and Takatsuki have enjoyed and benefitted from a strong and active relationship with

exchanges in arts and culture, friendship, sporting, knowledge sharing, education and council delegations for the past 25 years. Toowoomba Region looks forward to the next 25 years of friendship with Takatsuki and further building on the warmth and strength of our international friendship.

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](#). There are cities in China, Japan, South Korea, Vietnam, Uganda, Kenya and the USA waiting – and more to come.

Are you seeking an Australian sister city? Fill out the details on the request form and return to SCA as per the contact information at the end of the document, [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](#)

Secretary - Mike Jakins

Mobile: 0417 176 568

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

Executive Member - Sim Hayward

Mobile: 0417 784 341

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

Executive Member - Christina Despoteris

Mobile: 0413 943 796

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

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](#)

Have your contact details changed? Click here to [email the editor](#) if they are incorrect.

Please forward this newsletter on to interested colleagues and friends, thank you.