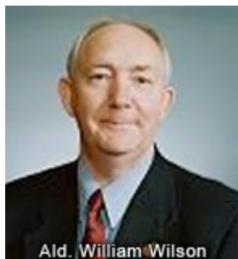


**SISTER CITIES AUSTRALIA (SCA)** seeks to support and promote sister city affiliations. SCA also aims to provide a forum for cultural, economic and educational interchange between communities and to encourage friendship, co-operation and understanding to improve peaceful co-existence worldwide.



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### MESSAGE FROM BILL

Welcome to the first of our new look newsletter. We will be working on making these a regular feature of our communication and will be only too pleased to include items from our membership. There are so many great programs and events involving sister cities and they are certainly best shared.

Last year I was fortunate enough to be invited to share in the inaugural joint conference to be held in the Middle East. This was held in Cairo and involved participants from 88 organisations from 34 countries. Hosted by our US counterparts, Sister Cities International (SCI), the event was made possible through the wonderful contribution of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. We in the worldwide movement thank them for their support and continued interest in our goal of pursuing peace and friendship everywhere.

SCA has also made some interesting strategic introductions and these include the Australia Japan and Australia China Associations as well as the Local Government Managers Australia (LGMA). We will be working toward mutual benefit to all these interests in furthering ours and their aims.

As is mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter, our annual conference will this year be held in Devonport, Tasmania. Having lived here most of my life I am possibly slightly biased but I can assure

you that the Devonport City Council and the organising committee, under the leadership of Alderman Peter Hollister, are leaving no stone unturned to put on an event that will linger in your memory for a long time after. There is a special emphasis being placed on programming what you, the member, want as content and as part of this a particular effort is being made to attract a larger than usual youth component.

We all realise that times are tough and all forms of government are under continuous financial pressure however the benefits that are produced from programs through our movement are far beyond being judged on a monetary value alone. A perfect example of this was one that is very close to home. The relationship between Broken Hill and Bankstown recently celebrated 25 years of youth sports exchange and it was great to see the way in which these young citizens from two totally different regions interacted together. Especially pleasing was to hear the commitment from both Mayors, GM's and community representatives to not only continue this exchange but to actually work on ways to expand it in coming years. Congratulations to all concerned.

Our friends across the ditch at Sister Cities New Zealand (SCNZ) are holding their Conference in Wellington from 9th – 11th May. Should anyone wish to attend, all SCA members may register for member rates.

Please feel free to contact myself or any of the executive members with any news, comments or suggestions and if you think it worthy of print in this newsletter contact Secretary Matt directly.

Thanks to Matt for the work he has put in to collate this newsletter and a special thanks to Bankstown City Council for their assistance.

My final word is on membership. An organisation is only as strong as the membership and it would be wonderful if we could increase this, especially in regards to our individual numbers. The investment for individual members is \$55 annually and we are currently looking at more benefits that we may provide with membership.

Keep up the good work and enjoy life.

*Bill*



Growing Our Future: The Journey Together

### SISTER CITY CONFERENCE 2012

Put the 11 – 14<sup>th</sup> of November in to your diaries now! The weather will be beautiful, the food will be great and the team at Devonport, Tasmania will deliver not only an inspirational but practical Conference. The Devonport team have received some great feedback (thanks to everyone who took part in their survey) and will continue to explore the important ideas brought up during the 2011 Conference including Economic Development, creative thinking, problem solving and idea sharing.

This year's theme is

### Growing Our Future: The Journey Together

Of course we can't grow our future without investing in our youth and Damian Collins and youth volunteer Brandon Goss are creating a youth program which focuses on developing leadership skills.

If you are interested in bringing youth to the conference but unsure of the costs, community grants are available from Sporting Clubs and Associations for just such an opportunity as this. SCA would like to support you in any fundraising endeavors by providing a letter of support to your nominated youth delegate in the pursuit of funds to cover registration or transport. Email the National Secretary to get the process going.

SCA would like to give a hearty thank you to Toowoomba Regional Council who hosted the National Sister Cities Australia Conference in August 2011. Follow this link to view the presentations, speeches and some photos from the Conference.

### VICTORIA TAKES A REGIONAL APPROACH

The annual SCA Conference is often the only opportunity to meet with colleagues and discuss issues relating to sister city programs. Victoria has tackled this problem by creating its own regional network. Since their first meeting hosted by the City of Casey in 2009, attendance has grown to incorporate wide representation from metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria.

The meetings are informal and a great opportunity to gain support from colleagues, get some helpful feedback on sister city project ideas, discuss issues or concerns, and share inspiration and resources.

Representation at meetings has included the municipalities of Casey, Frankston, Greater Bendigo, Greater Dandenong, Hobson's Bay, Latrobe City and Whitehorse.

### Want to join their group or get some tips on setting up one of your own?

Kristin Sweeney from the City of Casey is happy to help you out with some great ideas P 9705 5200

or

Register your attendance at the next Victorian regional meeting with Jie Liu, International Relations Officer at Latrobe City Council P 1300 367 700.

### ONE YEAR ON, WE REMEMBER



Bathurst Regional Council hosted a memorial commemoration to mark one year since the Earthquake devastated Japan, crippling Fukushima's nuclear power plant and resulting in thousands displaced from their homes.

While much of Japan shows signs of progress, Bathurst's sister city of Ohkuma still faces an uncertain future. Unable to return to their homes which have been severely impacted by radiation, many do not know when, or if ever, they can return to the city.

The people of Bathurst showed tremendous support through donations to their Sister City Appeal and continue to extend a hand where ever they can. To date, they have raised over \$70 000 which has been put towards kindergarten facilities and provisions of food.

The community attended a ceremony at the Bathurst Japanese Gardens to commemorate the tragic event on Sunday 11 March. The service included a one minute silence for all those who lost their lives as a result of the earthquake.



Stockman Hall of Fame, Long Reach West Qld



Pink Dawn

Photographs reproduced by kind permission of the Cairns Photographic Society.

### CAIRNS CONTRIBUTES TO 'ORIGINATION'

Distinctive images captured by Cairns artists and showcasing Australian culture have been the centrepiece of a Sister City photographic exhibition in the United States.

Members of the Cairns Photographic Society contributed to the Sister City exhibition Origination held in Scottsdale, USA, April 14 and 15. The aim of the exhibition was to highlight native cultures and will be held annually with a focus on the native culture of the host region (American Indians from the Southwest) and the native culture of the 'Discovery Region'. This year the Discovery Region was Australia and New Zealand.

The Cairns Photographic Society provided a selection of 40 photographs of members that covered the cultural aspects of both Aboriginal and Maori culture with flora, fauna and landscape imagery of both countries.

The selection also provided an insight into the diverse climatic conditions of the country with stills depicting the dryness of the outback through to the lushness of the coastal fringe.



Fire Ceremony

### SHOW ME THE MONEY

Like it or not, sister city programs are increasingly being viewed through the lens of economic development. This is especially true in the wake of so many Council restructures and amalgamations. Our good friends at Sister Cities New Zealand have shared the results of a study they commissioned through the NZ Institute of Economic Research and the following are some points to keep in mind if your program ends up at the pointy end of a fiscally driven service review.

#### Typical benefits:

- Establishment of business contacts
- Gateway to new markets and product lines
- Enhancing of overseas reputation for both individual firms and the country
- Reducing transaction and search costs in business negotiations
- Attracting foreign fee paying students
- Facilitating knowledge and technology sharing and joint research
- Increasing tourism

#### Keys to success

- Set explicit goals (but be open and flexible as the program evolves)
- Regularly review your progress
- Exploit your region's competitive advantages
- Target key growth industries building on regional and national strategic economic goals

Remember that cultural and commercial objectives need not be mutually exclusive – enhancing cultural understanding in the short term can promote commercial exchange in the long run. Contact the National Secretary for a copy of the full document.

### Join us on facebook

In essence the goal of every sister city program is to understand and appreciate other cultures and ways of life.

Join us on Facebook and embark on this journey together.

SCA invites you to contribute stories, photos, successes and even failures to our Facebook so that we can all learn from one another.