

## SPECIAL EDITION – A REPORT ON THE 2019 SCA NATIONAL AWARDS, FORUM IN WA AND AGM.

### THE VICE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

#### Welcome to the Sister Cities Australia Newsletter.



Pictured at the Perth Forum from left to right:

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition in Western Australia the Hon Bill Marmion MLA, Christina Despoteris Vice President Sister Cities Australia and Mr Tony Suzuki the Consul General of Japan in Perth.

I am absolutely delighted and honoured to have been elected Vice President of Sister Cities Australia (SCA) at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) held in Perth recently. The AGM was incorporated as part of the Perth Forum at which a range of issues pertinent to sister city relationships was discussed.

I have been on the Executive of SCA since December 2016. During this time I have worked closely with my colleagues, councils, sister city committees, state representatives, the consular corps and the general public to encourage, support and create sister city relationships.

In July 2018, I organised the first state forum (in Victoria) on sister city matters. The forum was sponsored by the President and Speaker of the Victorian Parliament. It was held in the prestigious Queen's Hall Parliament House. One hundred and twenty delegates, including Consuls General from over twenty countries, Members of Parliament, Mayors, Councillors, Federal and State

representatives, as well as interested guests, participated in this inaugural forum. I believe the forum went a long way in initiating discussion, at all levels, and made people aware of the important benefits which sister city relationships bring.

Another component of my work in recent years has been the establishment of sister schools. In Victoria, I have initiated four such relationships. Students from Victoria have visited their overseas sister school as have students from overseas visited Victoria.

My initial contact with the sister cities movement was when I organised the events, 35 years ago, during the establishment and signing of the MOU declaring Melbourne and Thessaloniki sister cities, and of course, I have been involved with the relationship since then.

My interest and knowledge of sister cities have developed further during my three years with SCA, beyond the Australian/Greek connection.

I would like to take this opportunity, to congratulate my fellow members of the Executive, Bill Wilson President, Mike Jakins Secretary, Caisley Graham Treasurer and Sim Hayward Executive Member and also to thank the out-going Vice President Jan Teasdale for her dedication and hard work during her 35 years with the sister city movement.

I look forward to working with you and all in the sister cities movement to promote and enhance all that "sister cities" stands for.

Please do not hesitate to contact me on 0426 682 682.

Christina Despoteris  
Vice President  
Sister Cities Australia

## THE 2019 SCA NATIONAL AWARDS

### National Awards showcased at WA Sister Cities Forum.



All cities entering the Awards should be justifiably proud of their sister city programs and activities. To those cities who submitted this year, "Congratulations". The standard was very high. That small attention to detail made the difference

between a winning entry and one that did not make it.

Judges Mike Jakins and Michael Greenwood found the electronic awards system far easier to judge, so special thanks to the "Two Mikes" for their precision and time in awarding the best projects.

#### The Winning Cities Are:

##### Category 1 - Community Involvement

**Blacktown, NSW** for 'Drought Relief Initiatives' Community response to a natural disaster and the positive impact it had on Liverpool Plains.

##### Category 2 - Youth Project

**Blacktown, NSW** for 'An International Youth Concert combining all their Sister Cities' of Liverpool Plains, NSW; Porirua, NZ; and, Suseong-gu, South Korea.

##### Category 4 - Trade & Tourism

###### Bundaberg, Qld

Only entrant, but an excellent example of how to build economic benefits from a wonderful sister city relationship with Nanning in China. A very impressive entry!

##### Category 5 - Overall Program

Dual Winners

**Bundaberg, Qld** for their '20th Anniversary Celebrations' - Bundaberg has a very strong relationship with Nanning, China. It is definitely blossoming into economic territories.

**Port Stephens, NSW** for - 'Strengthening community partnerships with sister cities of Port Stephens' - Port Stephens still manages to have strong relationships with all four of their sister cities, a remarkable achievement for a small community in NSW. The cities are: Bellingham, USA; Yugawara, Japan; Tateyama, Japan; and, Kushiro, Japan.

Having been elected to Vice President in 2001 and co-ordinator of the SCA National Awards since that time, I decided not to renominate this year. To have met so many people who share this incredible world of Sister Cities has been my pleasure. Keep up the "Great Work".

Regards, Jan Teasdale.

#### For those cities considering an award entry next year.

The eligible period for entries is: 1st April 2019 to 31 March 2020

The SCA National Awards Handbook will be emailed early in 2020.

## THE 2018 SCA FORUM IN WA AND AGM

### ENGAGE – INFORM - ENTERTAIN

On September 19 and 20 the city of Perth, in Western Australia, was the host for the 2019 SCA Forum and AGM, the culmination of almost six months of planning. SCA received amazing help and assistance from the following: the cities of Belmont, Bunbury, Busselton, Rockingham and Perth, plus from the Hyogo Prefectural Government Cultural Centre. SCA also received generous support from the Parmelia Hilton hotel, the venue for the Nations Awards Dinner and also the post-Forum reception. Without all this kind support and generosity, along with welcome sponsorship from

CLAIR, Sydney, the Forum could not have been the success it turned out to be.

Along with delegates from fourteen councils, plus organisations, consuls and government departments within WA, we also had people from all across Australia - from the Northern Territory, Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania. There was also an overseas component with four delegates from the Chinese Peoples Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries in Beijing attending, the former Chair of the Board of Directors of Sister Cities International, Mr Tim

Quigley, from the USA, and we also welcomed the President of Sister Cities New Zealand, Mrs Hiromi Morris. In all there were about 70 delegates and special guests.



A special 'invitation only' session was held at the City of Perth Council Chambers on Thursday afternoon to allow delegates to discuss four important topics in a roundtable setting. Members of the SCA Executive were facilitators at each table and all delegates had the opportunity to talk about all four topics, which were:

1. Funding for sister cities programs.
2. Overcoming a negative media image.
3. Working within politically charged countries.
4. How do you 'withdraw gracefully' from a sister city relationship?



On Thursday evening, the 2019 SCA National Awards were presented by the Awards Coordinator, Mrs Jan Teasdale, and SCA President, Mr Bill Wilson during a dinner function at the Parmelia Hilton. A warm welcome to all was provided by President, Bill Wilson, and an address was given by the Hon Martin Pritchard, MLC, representing the Premier of Western Australia. He strongly emphasised that sister city relationships could be strengthened, where



applicable, by connecting with and building off of existing sister state relationships.

Following the address the awards and trophies (including a replica trophy for the winners' sister cities) were given in four categories to the following cities:

**Category 1 – Community Involvement.** The winner was Blacktown, NSW for their 'Drought Relief Initiatives' program to assist their rural sister city in NSW of Liverpool Plains.

**Category 2 – Youth Project.** The winner was Blacktown for the wonderful 'International Youth Connect Project' (IYCP) involving youth from their sister cities of Liverpool Plains, NSW; Porirua, New Zealand; Suseong-gu, Daegu City South Korea.



Congratulations Blacktown!

**Category 4 – Trade and Tourism Project.** The winning city was Bundaberg, Queensland, for their 'Economic Development Trade and Tourism Delegation to Nanning, China', their sister city.



Congratulations Bundaberg!

**Category 5 – Overall Program.** Joint winners were declared due to the judges having difficulty separating these two entries.

**Bundaberg, Qld**, for their '20th Anniversary Celebrations: Nanning'.



Congratulations Bundaberg!

**Port Stephens, NSW** for 'Strengthening community partnerships with sister cities of Port Stephens'. Their sister cities are: Bellingham, USA; Yugawara, Japan; Tateyama, Japan; and, Kushiro, Japan.



Congratulations Port Stephens!



Mr Hiroto Akaiwa

A brief address was given by Mr Hiroto Akaiwa, Executive Director, CLAIR, to encourage us to Japan for the Rugby World Cup (2019), the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, and the World Masters games, 2021, in Kansai. SCA sincerely

thanks CLAIR for their very kind sponsorship of the Forum.

For the next day a full program was prepared for the Forum delegates and was commenced with a Welcome to Country performed by one of Perth's



Ms Hayley Winchcombe

most respected Aboriginal elders, Mr Barry McGuire. Following welcomes from the State Opposition Deputy Leader, the Hon Bill Marmion, MLA, and SCA's own Bill Wilson the opening speaker, Ms Hayley Winchcombe, enthralled all by sharing

a little of her own journey that started with a student exchange to her home city's sister city. After Hayley we heard from Mr Tim Quigley, from SCI, about the topic of 'citizen diplomacy' and how this is the cornerstone of all relationships and relationship building – key components of any meaningful sister city relationship.



Mr Tim Quigley

In a change from normal Forum or conference practice, the succeeding five sessions were 'PowerPoint free' designed to encourage the speakers to initiate conversation and discussion so that the delegates also had an opportunity to contribute to each topic. All five sessions were facilitated admirably by Mr Adam Penn our MC, were well received and there were many questions and comments from delegates during each. The session topics were chosen to stimulate debate, be thought provoking, and to address issues that seemed to be common to many councils and sister city committees. Briefly, the sessions were:

**Mayors for Peace** – A very interactive panel discussion lead by Fremantle City (Adrian Glamorgan and Elizabeth PO') and Erin and Casper



Adrian

Casper

Elizabeth

Erin

Adson from Busselton. This was to coincide with International Day of Peace on September 21.

**Session 1, Setting up, managing and promoting a Sister City Relationship.** SCA discussed 'generic' considerations for setting up a relationship, Mike Jakins, and putting them into practice by Jan Teasdale. Hiromi Morris then presented an SCNZ point of view.



Hiromi Jan Mike

**Session 2, Leveraging with like-minded organisations to enhance relationships, e.g. Arts and Culture.** Pauline Vukelic, Busselton and Maggie Jiang, Confucius Institute discussed ways other organisations can benefit sister city relationships.



Maggie Pauline

**Session 3, Relationships and identifying economic benefits.** Barry Sammels (Rockingham) was on the panel with Carol McDowall (Bunbury) and Steven McDougall (Perth) to look at how economic benefits can flow from relationships.



Carol Barry Steven

**Session 4, Engaging youth and getting someone aged under-25 on your committee.** Lead by Gordon Allen (Blacktown) who eloquently described his city's excellent youth initiatives, plus Hayley Winchcombe (Busselton) and Bryce Hellmrich (Belmont) shared their stories and how

we might engage more with young people like themselves.



Hayley Bryce Gordon

Between Session 2 and Session 3, SCA held its AGM which had three main parts: the President's report; the Treasurer's report; and the election for all positions on the Executive Committee. One of the committee members, Mrs Jan Teasdale, did not nominate for re-election and has taken her leave of SCA Executive after almost 20 years of remarkable service. She will be sorely missed! The remaining five members were re-elected, with one positional change, for the next two years but unfortunately there were no additional nominations to fill Jan's vacancy. Therefore, the SCA Executive Committee for 2019/21 is:

<b>PRESIDENT</b>	Mr Bill <b>Wilson</b>
<b>VICE-PRESIDENT</b>	Mrs Christina Despoteris
<b>NATIONAL TREASURER</b>	Mr Caisley Graham
<b>NATIONAL SECRETARY</b>	Mr Mike Jakins
<b>EXECUTIVE MEMBER</b>	Mrs Sim Hayward
<b>EXECUTIVE MEMBER</b>	vacant



Sim Christina Jan Bill Caisley Mike

To conclude the Forum delegates were invited to join the SCA Committee for an informal reception.

**Did we achieve the aims of the Forum theme?**

**ENGAGE** – did we engage with colleagues and discuss important topics that affect all those involved in sister city relationships. **YES!**

**INFORM** – did we inform ourselves on the current state of sister cities in Australia, best practice, innovation and successful projects. **YES!**

**ENTERTAIN** – were we entertained and motivated by an array of engaging speakers. **YES!**

Mike Jakins  
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# NEWSLETTER

[www.sistercitiesaustralia.com](http://www.sistercitiesaustralia.com)

September 2019

## 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** - Christina Despoteris

Mobile: 0426 682 682

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

**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** - Vacant

Mobile:

Email:

Full contact details for any of the above are available on the SCA website on the Administration page.

## SCA has a website – [www.sistercitiesaustralia.com](http://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 Group page so that we can all learn from one another and take our relationships to a higher level.

## SCA Newsletter Options and Contributions

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