



CUMBERLAND
CITY COUNCIL

Sister City and Friendship City Policy

AUTHORISATION & VERSION CONTROL

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INTRODUCTION

This Policy establishes Council's position and policy framework in forming and maintaining effective ongoing formal civic relationships within Australia and internationally.

It also outlines Council's commitment to ensuring that all formal civic relationships established and maintained will be meaningful, effective, accountable, appropriately resourced and based on clear economic, social and cultural benefits to Council and the community.

PURPOSE

This Policy provides an overarching framework for Council in defining and establishing any ongoing formal civic relationships within Australia and internationally.

This Policy recognises that Council operates a two-tier level of formal civic relationships with cities or councils, which includes:

- Sister City relationships
- Friendship City relationships

The Policy guides Council decision-making in establishing and maintaining Sister City and Friendship City relationships and ensures that the primary focus of any relationship is consistent with Council's Community Strategic Plan and current legislation.

SCOPE

This Policy is designed to assist Council to prioritise which civic relationships it pursues as well as outlining the criteria and the process for the establishment and maintenance of formal Sister City and Friendship City relationships with Cumberland City Council.

This Policy applies to all Councillors, Council staff and community members carrying out their responsibilities as part of a Council Sister City or Friendship City relationship.

This Policy excludes requests or invitations to Council for one-off visits from international groups or delegations, which are provided for under the *Councillor Facilities and Expenses Policy*. It also does not preclude Council from entering into cooperative relationships with other councils within the Commonwealth of Australia for specific purposes.

DEFINITIONS

Friendship City Relationship	Recognised through a formal Friendship City Agreement, which may be appropriate in meeting a short term or specific need. A Friendship City relationship involves less administrative requirements and resourcing expectations than a Sister City relationship, and does not require Council to allocate a budget to a specific program or activity outlined in the agreement.
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	A Friendship City relationship may be entered into by the General Manager under delegated authority for up to a 1 year period, after first consulting with the Council. Examples of activities include but are not limited to: • Exchange of information via written or electronic communication. • Hosting of delegations on occasions of visits or activities linked to Council's events program in accordance with the <i>Councillor Facilities and Expenses Policy</i> • Provision of staff expertise and assistance for operational needs or disaster support to a Council within the Commonwealth of Australia. A Friendship City relationship may be used as a first stage in establishing a Sister City relationship, and where there is a clear alignment and commitment to mutual long term benefits following a review period, it may be appropriate to progress to a Sister City relationship. A formal Sister City relationship requires a Council resolution to be established.
Sister City Relationship	Recognised through a formal Sister City Agreement, which involves a clear commitment to developing and maintaining a program of activities with mutual long-term benefits. Examples of activities include but are not limited to: • Facilitation of trade and economic opportunities between business and industry, such as attracting new businesses to Cumberland, facilitating local jobs or expansion of locally based businesses. • Practical applications related to cultural projects or educational exchange, such as touring exhibitions or performance programs linked to Council's Cultural Plan, events or public programs in libraries and arts facilities. • Programs that promote community participation and inter-cultural harmony, such as schools, youth and sporting exchanges. • Staff exchanges particularly in relation to civic relationships within Australia, allowing exposure to diverse skills and professional development opportunities. • Delegation visits of elected Councillors and staff to promote the civic relationship and share resourcing. A Sister City relationship must be formally endorsed at a Council meeting and requires Council to allocate a budget to specific programs or activities outlined in the agreement to ensure adequate resourcing is in place.

POLICY STATEMENT

Council's decision to enter into Sister City and Friendship City relationships will be based on their economic, social and cultural benefits to Council and to the community and must be meaningful, effective, accountable and appropriately resourced.

PRINCIPLES

The following principles provide the criteria for the establishment, maintenance and review of Sister City and Friendship City relationships. The criteria is applicable irrespective of whether Council proactively identifies an opportunity to develop a Sister City or Friendship City relationship of benefit to Council and the community or is responding to an external request to form a Sister City or Friendship City relationship.

Council's Sister City and Friendship City relationships must meet the following essential criteria:

- a) Share strong historical, cultural, social, economic, educational, environmental and geographic similarities or links.
- b) Clearly demonstrate a meaningful mutually beneficial relationship and outline specific activities based on a commitment to shared objectives.
- c) Are purposeful and established with clear objectives, responsibilities, timeframes and outcomes that align with Council's Community Strategic Plan.

In addition, Council's Sister City relationships must also meet all of the following additional essential criteria:

- d) Demonstrate communities of interest.
- e) Promote economic, social or cultural development outcomes for the local community, including but not limited to increased tourism, community participation, educational or learning opportunities, business or trade links, local job creation and cultural exchange.
- f) Evidence and capacity of both parties to contribute financial and other required resources to the agreed specific activities to ensure the relationship is appropriately resourced and sustainable over the agreed period.

REQUIREMENTS

Establishment of Sister City and Friendship City Relationships

1. Any proposal to establish a Sister City or Friendship City relationship must be put forward to the Mayor and/or General Manager in writing, with a rationale outlining the purpose of the relationship and how the relationship addresses the essential and additional criteria (where relevant) as outlined under the Principles of this Policy.
2. A pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest of a Councillor or Council staff with the proposed city must be declared if applicable. The proposal will be considered if any conflicts of interest are overcome.
3. In assessing a proposal, the General Manager will consider:
 - a) How the proposed relationship aligns to the Principles of this Policy;

- b) The purpose of the proposed relationship;
 - c) The relevance and value it has to the Cumberland community;
 - d) Council's capacity to support and resource the proposed relationship;
 - e) Whether the proposed relationship links to existing Australian and NSW Government, industry, university and other non-government programs, policies or relationships that can provide additional supports or resources to the relationship.
4. Council will not enter into more than one Sister City and one Friendship City relationship in any one country.
 5. Council may establish formal relationships with a maximum of two international cities and two domestic or Australian based city or council at any one time.
 6. The General Manager will develop a draft agreement between Council and the proposed Sister City or Friendship City based on the details of the relationship and the essential and additional criteria (where relevant) as outlined under the Principles of this Policy.
 7. As there are no direct additional budget required, a Friendship City relationship may be entered into by the General Manager under delegated authority, after first consulting with the Council.
 8. A Sister City relationship and the related agreement must be formally endorsed at a Council meeting.
 9. Following a resolution of Council, a Sister City Agreement must be signed by the Mayor and General Manager and the equivalent representative of the Sister City or Friendship City to be effective.
 10. The General Manager will determine any appropriate travel arrangements where required, to ensure Council is upholding its commitment to desired outcomes and deliverables detailed within the relevant Sister City Agreement, in accordance with established Policy.
 11. Council will publish on its website any Sister City or Friendship City relationships entered into.
 12. The costs of any travel undertaken by Councillors under this Policy will be included in the Annual Report.
 13. Any agreements with an international city or county are to comply with relevant DFAT requirements.

Ongoing Relationship Management

14. Council acknowledges that delegations and face to face contact are only one aspect of maintaining a Sister City or Friendship City relationship. Budget constraints mean that electronic communication and engaging across a number of tools may be appropriate.
15. Agreements formally approved by Council allow both organisations to commit to working co-operatively together and specify the ongoing objectives, obligations, outcomes and mutual benefits available from the relationship, as well as any costs and limitations.
16. Costs associated with the operation of a Sister City relationship require Council to allocate a budget to specific programs or activities outlined in the formal agreement at the time of establishment. This ensures that financial implications are identified up front and the relationship is sustainable, transparent and adequately resourced.

17. For clarity, Council budget identified in clause 16 will only be utilised in connection to Cumberland City Council and its officials fulfilling its obligations under a formal Sister City agreement.
18. Both Sister City and Friendship City relationships must:
 - a) Have ongoing Council support and acknowledge the primary role and function of the Mayor in maintaining the relationship.
 - b) Comply with the *Councillor Facilities and Expenses Policy*.
 - c) Comply with the *Code of Conduct*.
 - d) Be adaptable to meet changing Council and community needs.
 - e) Be reviewed and can be exited if Council and community outcomes are not demonstrated.
 - f) Be established on a fixed term (of a maximum of 4 years) with renewal dependent on successful evaluation.
 - g) Have no binding agreement and can be terminated on request by either party.

Evaluation and Review of Sister City Relationships

19. A comprehensive review by the General Manager will be undertaken at the end of any Sister City or Friendship City term (as defined in the approved agreement) in which the objectives, obligations and outcomes stated at establishment will be evaluated, with a recommendation reported to Council for determination.
20. A review of a Sister City or Friendship City relationship may also be undertaken at any time if:
 - a) The relationship appears to have stalled or there are no demonstrable community outcomes of the relationship.
 - b) The essential and additional criteria (where relevant) as outlined under the Principles of this Policy are not met or are breached.
21. A relationship may be evaluated at the conclusion of each fixed term (of a maximum of 4 years) and continue over many years as long as there is a successful review at the end of each subsequent renewal of the agreement.

RELATED LEGISLATION

- *Local Government Act 1993*

RELATED DOCUMENTS AND COUNCIL POLICY

- Community Strategic Plan
- Code of Conduct
- Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy