



Sister and Friendship City Policy



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Document Control

Policy	Sister and Friendship City Policy	Policy Number	
Author/Reviewer	General Manager	Review Period and Date	Reviewed 2 yearly

- This Policy shall be reviewed within 12 months of an election, and thereafter at intervals of no greater than two years.
- Any review will ensure this Policy continues to meet all statutory requirements and the operational needs of Hilltops Council.
- The Policy may also be reviewed at other times as determined by Hilltops Council.

Document History

Date	Status	Version	Resolution	Description
8 January 2019	Draft	0.1		Draft Sister and Friendship City Policy – created
27 February 2019	Draft	0.2		Presented to council for 28 day public exhibition
27 February 2019	Draft	0.3	19/16	Placed on public exhibition for 28 days – 27 March 2018 – final submissions
22 May 2019	Draft	0.5		Presented to Council for adoption
22 May 2019	Final	1.0	19/137	Sister and Friendship City Policy – endorsed



1. Purpose

The Hilltops Council has made a commitment to participate in Sister City relationships which establish and maintain friendships with other communities throughout the world.

This policy has been developed to provide a framework for Hilltops Council's interaction with domestic and international parties as well as incorporating the objective to ensure that Sister Cities, and Friendship Cities, international relationships and other agreements are relevant and effective, with the aim of bringing economic, social and cultural benefit to each city.

2. Key Objectives

The main objectives of Councils Sister/Friendship City Program is to:

- Promote and encourage international information exchange and liaison between Local Government, business leaders and the wider community
- Enhance and promote the image of Hilltops Council and Australian Local Governments internationally
- Promote an understanding between people at all levels and of different cultures
- Promote and develop economic, trade, cultural, educational, policy, technical, social, arts and other beneficial exchanges
- Foster international understanding and the exchange of information

It is expected that activities co-ordinated through the Sister and Friendship City Program will facilitate the identification and development of business and trade opportunities between Hilltops Council and its Sister/Friendship Cities. However, such opportunities should be assessed and acted upon by local business/industry.

3. List of Sister and Friendship Cities

3.1 Sister City Relationship

Lanzhou (Affiliation 1997 – former Young Shire Council)

3.2 Friendship City Relationship

3.3 Inter-Council Friendship Agreement

Sutherland Shire (Affiliation 2007 - former Harden Shire Council)

North Sydney Council (February 2019)



4. Statement of Procedures

4.1 Sister City and Friendship City - Definition

For the purpose of this policy, a Sister City or Friendship City is a formal link between two cities to bring economic, social, arts and cultural benefit to each city.

Sister City and Friendship City relationships allow communities to:

- Promote economic growth
- Build reliable business and other contacts.
- Increase tourism
- Exchange cultural and educational experiences and values
- Exchange ideas
- Gain valuable international, national, state or local government perspectives and increase the understanding of global, national, state and local government issues: and
- Generate harmony, tolerance and goodwill

Agreements allow both organisations to commit to working co-operatively together. There are opportunities for staff exchanges between Councils, allowing exposure to both the specialist skills and more rounded skills which are required in each different organisation.

4.2 Eligibility Criteria

Sister City and Friendship City relationships should be established for their strategic relevance to the Hilltops Council area and its residents.

The following factors will be considered in choosing or reviewing a Sister City or Friendship City relationship:

General

- Population and demographics (nationals of one Sister City residing in the other)
- Geographic location and assets
- Ease of access
- Existing linkages
- Relevance of local community
- History of diplomatic relations and/or cooperation in political, economic, commercial and cultural fields

Economic

- Comparison of Key industries
- Similar economic conditions
- Trade and investment climates and opportunities
- Tourism potential

Social

- Similar social infrastructure and issues
- Opportunity for broad based social activity
- People to people interest, energy and commitment
- Arts and culture

Educational

- Export opportunities
- Student/teacher exchange program opportunity
- University and TAFE linkages



In considering the above factors it is necessary to compare not only the similarities but the potential for these similarities to provide mutual benefit within the existing scope and limitations of the program.

Existing relationships are also assessed against:

- Level of communication with Sister/Friendship City
- Outcomes to date, benefits seen
- Current and proposed projects

4.3 Proclamation Wording

The Council of Hilltops, New South Wales Australia, and the hereby confirm our affiliation on as a Friendship City/Sister City.

The citizens of both municipalities will endeavour to promote goodwill and understanding. To develop beneficial social, cultural and commercial exchanges for our mutual prosperity.

It is our firm belief that this affiliation between Hilltops and Will contribute towards strengthening the friendship Australia and

To confirm this auspicious Friendship City Relationship/Sister City Relationship, Cr, Mayor of Hilltops and, Mayor of, on behalf of our respective communalities affix our signature to this proclamation.

4.4 Administration

All correspondence in relation to either Sister/Friendship relationship or proposed Sister/Friendship relationship must be co-ordinated through the General Managers Office to ensure formal records are kept in line with Council policies and procedures.

5. Sister City Relationships

5.1 Establishment of an International Sister City

Council may establish Sister City relationships with carefully selected cities in accordance with the above eligible criteria and explore opportunities for positive links with other cities as they arise. Care must be taken to manage expectations and avoid commitments which can be complicated in a cultural exchange.

Establishment of a formal relationship requires a Council resolution.

The following processes and information will be considered before resolving to seek the establishment of a Sister City Relationship:

Research: Gain as much information as possible about the proposed Sister City, including demographic and industry data, city assets such as infrastructures, education institutions etc to determine sphere of interest and common objectives and consideration in terms of the decision template outlines in this document.

Local community views: Establish what benefits can be gained from the relationship for example discuss with local companies and cultural agencies whether they see economic or cultural benefit deriving from such a relationship.

Types of active engagement: Determine what types of activities could be conducted under the relationship and what funding is available to support such activities.



Council's role: Council should maintain a facilitation role, facilitating relationships between companies, schools, educational institutions, arts/culture etc. in the case of trade, Council should aim to provide initial contact and then leave it to the businesses to conduct their trade.

Clear Statement of roles, limitations and intent: Initially confine the relationship to mutually agreeable areas, being clear that until Council has formally adopted any agreement, we are simply exploring the potential for a mutually beneficial relationship.

Formal Agreements documented: A formal relationship agreement will require a report to Council specifying the ongoing benefits or opportunities occurring or available from the relationship, as well as its costs. Any new Sister City Relationship should include an expiry date or specified period that the relationship is for (review after 10 years). Relationships will be formalised by entering into an agreement such as a Memorandum of Understanding which outlines the aims and objectives of the relationship and level of commitment by both parties.

5.2 Sister City Activities

Activities under a Sister City program include, but are not limited to:

1. Programs promoting tourism and economic development
2. Cultural and Arts information visits
3. Student and sport exchanges
4. Exchanges of information and salutations via written communication
5. Exchange of gifts on occasion of visits
6. Holding of Civic Receptions on occasion of visits

Individual Councillors, community or business members who seek to represent Hilltops Council at a visit to a Sister/Friendship City may only do so where they have received endorsement from Council

5.3 Cost of Sister City Relationship

Cost associated with the operation of Sister City relationship will be determined for each project through mutual agreement with respective cities. All costs to be allocated to Hilltops Council (to value of \$10,000) will be met through budgets for international relations, gifts and civic exceptions or as otherwise determined by Council. In principle, the travel expenses and per diem of a delegation shall be paid by the city sending the delegation. Except where a reciprocal arrangement applies.

6. Friendship City Relationships

A Friendship City relationship is less formal than a Sister City relationship and exists primarily through a "paper link" that is through written communications.

What is involved in the Operation of "Paper Link"

- Exchange of information and salutations via written communications
- Exchange of gifts on occasion of visits
- Holding of Civic Receptions on occasion of visits
- Flag-raising ceremonies

6.1 Cost of "Paper Links"

Costs associated with the operation of 'paper links' will be met through budgets for international relations, gifts and civic receptions as determined by Council.

In principle, any travel expenses, accommodation and per diem for a visiting delegation to and from a Friendship City shall be paid by the city sending the delegation.



7. Inter-Council Friendship Agreement

An Inter-Council Friendship Agreement exists primarily to promote greater awareness and understanding between respective regions and cultures within New South Wales, and other Australian States.

Under such Agreement, both Councils facilitate an exchange of information and activities that will benefit both Councils through local sporting; education; business and cultural groups; and organisations and Council staff participating in exchanges that will lead to greater understanding and involvement between each community.

Inter-Council Friendship Agreements can include subsidiary Agreements such as "Professional Services Exchange Agreement" for staff exchange.

7.1 How an Inter-Council Friendship Agreement is established

An Inter-Council relationship may be established through a Council initiative or in response to another region's request and requires a Council resolution prior to a relationship being formalised. The same process as used for a Sister City relationship will be used.