

Friendship City/Sister City Policy

Policy Name: Friendship City/Sister City Policy	Policy Number: [Policy Number and Version Number]
Date Last Adopted/Amended: April 2020	Review Date: April 2024
Policy Owner: Group Manager Community Connections	

1. Policy Statement/Objective(s)

Shellharbour City Council is committed to fostering productive relationships with other Council's and organisations in order to prosper, therefore Council has made a commitment to participate in Friendship and Sister City relationships which establish and maintain friendships with other communities throughout the world.

This policy has been developed to provide a framework for Shellharbour City 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 social, cultural and economic benefit to each city.

The objectives of the policy are to:

- Outline the process for international information exchange and liaison between Local Government, business leaders and the wider community
- Provide a guideline for the development and maintenance of either a Friendship City or Sister City relationships that fosters external understanding and the exchange of information between Council and other cities, both international and within Australia.
- Outline a framework for interaction, to ensure Council forms relevant, effective and meaningful relationships and agreements that have either economic, social or cultural benefit and are accountable to the Shellharbour City community.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to the establishment and maintenance of all Friendship and Sister City relationships whether initiated by Councillors, staff of Council or the Shellharbour City community. It does not preclude Council from entering cooperative relationships with other Councils, as required.

3. References

- Shellharbour City Council Gifts and Benefits Policy
- Code of Conduct for Council Committee Members, Delegates of Council and Council Advisers
- Shellharbour Friendship/Sister Cities Committee - Terms of Reference
- Friendship City/Sister City Procedure

4. External/Internal Consultations

Internal

Manager Business and Investment
Public Officer
Governance Manager
Manager Community Life
Community Planning Officer

External

Sister Cities Australia Inc
Blacktown City Council - Sister Cities Coordinator

5. Definitions

Term	Meaning
<i>Community</i>	A term which encompasses both the entire body of constituents and individual groups (whether they be cultural, sporting, industry or other) within the Shellharbour Council local government area or Sister/Friendship City.
<i>Council</i>	Shellharbour City Council
<i>Sister City</i>	<p>A formal mutually beneficial relationship between Council and another international or Australian city, which has previously been established as a Friendship City for a minimum of two years and is recognised through an official agreement to develop and maintain a substantial program with mutual long-term benefits.</p> <p>It aims to develop long-term civic and people-to-people linkages to promote the exchange of cultural, educational, economic and social information with communities that have similar interests and characteristics</p>
<i>Friendship City</i>	<p>A relationship established between Council and a City in another country or within Australia that may serve as the first stage in establishing a new Sister City relationship.</p> <p>Those consisting of a less formal arrangement with less administrative and financial expectation than a Sister City relationship, which may be appropriate in meeting short term</p>

	needs and supporting programs run by other sections of the community.
<i>Friendship & Sister City Advisory Committee</i>	A body of constituents appointed to guide decisions in relation to establishing and maintaining Friendship and Sister City relationships with Council. It will consist of at least one Council staff and members of the Shellharbour community.

6. Variation and Review

Council reserves the right to review, vary or revoke this policy.

Review History

Date Policy first adopted – version 1	[enter date]
Date amendment adopted – version 2	[enter date]

7. Policy

7.1. Principles of Friendship City or Sister City Relationships

Council values Friendship and Sister City relationships which:

- a) Work to establish a Friendship City in the first instance, which may remain as such.
- b) Promote and develop cultural, social, educational, policy, technical, arts, innovations and other beneficial exchanges.
- c) Promote and encourage information exchange and liaison between Local Government, business leaders, social/cultural groups and the wider community.
- d) Enhance and promote the image of Shellharbour City Council.
- e) Foster cross cultural understanding and the exchange of ideas and information.
- f) Generate harmony, tolerance and goodwill

7.2 Council's Friendship or Sister City Relationships must meet all of the following criteria:

- a) Be recommended by Council's Friendship/Sister City Committee in the first instance and then officially adopted by Council.
- b) Have maintained a mutually beneficial Friendship City Relationship in the first instance for a minimum of two years;
- c) Is not in the same country or State/Territory within Australia as another Friendship or Sister City that Council has established.
- d) Are between cities which share similarities or synergies such as historic, cultural, social, economic or geographic;
- e) Clearly demonstrate a meaningful reciprocal relationship or activity built on mutual respect, understanding and a commitment to shared objectives;

COLLABORATION

ACCOUNTABILITY

INTEGRITY

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Policy Name: Friendship City/Sister City - [Enter Policy Number]

Date of Last Adoption/Amendment: [Enter date of last adoption of Policy]

Page 3 of 4

- f) The relationship is purposeful and established with clear motives, obligations, objectives and outcomes;
- g) Show that the communities of both cities have a demonstrated commitment to, and interest in, forming and maintaining the relationship;
- h) Are aligned with Shellharbour City Council's Community Strategic Plan and Council's core values.

7.3 Budget and Expenses

The budget and approved expenses are managed in accordance to this Policy.

Costs associated with the operation of a Friendship City or Sister City relationship will be determined for each relationship through mutual agreement with respective cities and through a resolution of Council.

7.4 Gifts

The receiving and giving of gifts will be in accordance with Shellharbour City Council's Gifts and Benefits Policy

7.5 Evaluation and Review

A robust review by the Committee will be undertaken at the end of the Sister / Friendship City term (defined in the Memorandum of Understanding) in which the motives, obligations, objectives and outcomes stated at establishment are evaluated.

8. Related Forms

Friendship and Sister City Guidelines
Friendship and Sister Cities Committee Terms of Reference (ToR)

Note: Related forms can be located Online under "Forms"

9. Attachments

Nil

Policy Authorised by:

Name: [Title of person authorising OR ELT OR Council Resolution Number]

Date: [Date adopted by ELT or Council Resolution]

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Policy Name: Friendship City/Sister City - [Enter Policy Number]

Date of Last Adoption/Amendment: [Enter date of last adoption of Policy]

Page 4 of 4