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**Policy:** INTERNATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS **ED-POL-04**

**Division:** Planning

**Responsible Officer:** Tourism & Business Liaison Manager

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The need for a policy emerged out of the Friendship Agreement with Wuzhou and was to form the basis for assessing any other international relationships that may emerge with Yass Valley.

The modern concept of sister cities/twin towns was conceived after the Second World War in 1947 and was intended to foster friendship and understanding among different cultures and between former foes as an act of peace and reconciliation. It wasn't until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century that the basis for these international relations was expanded into encouraging trade and tourism and by the 2000s, sister cities/twin towns became increasingly used to form strategic international business links among member cities.

The policy approach is based on the principle that Council may establish formal or informal relationships with the governments of cities in other countries for the purpose of economic, social, cultural or environmental development in the mutual interests of both parties. While these may be the principles of the draft policy the guidelines for selecting a Sister City or Strategic Partner City is strongly bias to economic development and tourism.

## 2. POLICY OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this policy is to set out the goals, objectives, selection criteria, and the requirements for managing processes associated with the development and operation of formal relationships between the governments of Yass Valley and cities in other countries.

## 3. POLICY SCOPE

Yass Valley Local Government Area

## 4. POLICY PROVISIONS

### 4.1 Principles

Council may establish formal or informal relationships with the governments of cities in other countries for the purposes or economic, social, cultural or environmental development in the mutual interests of both parties.

### 4.2 Goals and Objectives

International relationships should offer significant benefits to Yass Valley including enhancing economic development, cross cultural community development, international cooperation and educational exchanges and learning. The objectives of individual relationships may differ, but all international relationships should align with Yass Valley's strategic directions as outlined in the current Community Strategic Plan and other key planning documents.

All proposals for the establishment of an international relationship will be assessed based on the following goals and objectives and must be submitted to Council's *Economic Development Committee* for endorsement prior to being submitted to Council for decision.

GOAL	OBJECTIVE
<b>Economic Development</b>	Support strategic priorities
	Expand Yass Valley's network of business contacts and relationships
	Increase international private sector investment in Yass Valley
	Provide a conduit between local innovation and international industry
	Accelerate economic growth through commercial partnerships
	Leverage existing industry strengths into increased innovation and job creation
	Promote Yass Valley as an attractive tourist destination
<b>Cross Cultural Development</b>	Promote Yass Valley's cultural and arts community
	Establish relationships between cultural, arts and educational institutions
<b>International Cooperation</b>	Support international education, research and cooperation
	Increase global awareness of Yass Valley
<b>Other Objectives</b>	Assessed on merit against Council strategic planning documents

#### 4.3 Principles of Establishing International Relationships

The following principles should apply to international relationships.

- The proposed Candidate City may be in a country with which the Federal Government and/or the NSW Government has some form of positive relationship
- Council may add a maximum of one Sister City every two years, with a maximum of three ongoing Sister City relationships, one per country, at any one time
- Geographic concentration of Sister Cities in one global region should be avoided.
- In addition to formal Sister Cities, Council may establish Strategic Partnership relations with cities in other nations, as determined by Council
- Establishing international relationships should take into account cultural, ethical and/or moral issues pertinent to the community at the time

#### 4.4 Guidelines

The following guidelines will be utilised to assist with the selection of a Sister City or Strategic Partner City:

<b>People-to-people relationships</b>	Is there an existing economic, social, cultural or arts link between the Candidate City and Yass Valley to act as a foundation for building and sustaining the relationship?
<b>Gross Domestic Product</b>	Is the GDP proportionately comparable to Yass Valley or the broader Canberra region?
<b>Growth</b>	Does the Candidate City have favourable economic growth rates?
<b>Economic Activity</b>	Does the Candidate City have strong trade activity?

<b>Potential</b>	Has the Candidate City been identified as a priority for future development?
<b>Investment</b>	Does the Candidate City have potential for mutual investment?
<b>Commercialisation</b>	Does the Candidate City have potential for cooperation in commercially applicable research?
<b>Academic organisations</b>	Does the Candidate City have academic institutions such as colleges, universities and research centres?
<b>Innovation</b>	Does the Candidate City encourage new technologies and research?
<b>Tourism</b>	Does the Candidate City provide the opportunity to increase tourism activity?
<b>Affiliations</b>	Does the Candidate City have a Chamber of Commerce or other business or industry associations – or if equivalent bodies are not the custom in the country, some body through which Yass Valley Council and the Yass Valley Business Chamber may engage with business entities in that City or state/province?  Does the Candidate City have strong arts affiliations e.g. representatives for State/regional gallery/museum, literary, visual arts or theatre/performance organisations or a member of a National or International entities (e.g. International Federation of Ares & Cultural Councils)
<b>Cost and benefits</b>	Does the relationship provide appropriate cost to benefit

#### 4.5 Process to Establish a New International Relationship

Proposals are to be assessed by Council management and a report prepared for the consideration of Council's *Economic Development Committee*. The Committee will provide recommendations and reasons for their decisions recorded in the Minutes of the Committee.

Assessment of proposals will take into account the goals and objectives of the Yass Valley Community Strategic Plan and the selection criteria as set out in this policy.

If a proposed relationship is recommended by the *Economic Development Committee*, Council management will prepare a report for Council detailing the anticipated costs and benefits of entering into the proposed new relationship along with a draft Relationship Plan (refer Section 4.7).

Discretion rests exclusively with Council to approve or reject the proposal. Depending on cultural conventions of the international community or city, an agreement forming an international relationship might variously be referred to as a Treaty of Friendship, or a Friendship City Agreement. The nature of the relationship with a particular city will be determined by Council at the time of approving the proposal i.e. either a Sister City Relationship, or a Strategic Partnership.

#### 4.6 Management of International Relationships

Prior to Council consideration of any proposed new relationship, the *Economic Development Committee (or a nominated sub-committee)* through the Economic Development & Tourism Manager may make contact with representatives from the Candidate City to seek further

information, check areas of common interest, discuss individual aims and objectives for the partnership.

Once a new relationship has been approved by Council, all activities associated with programs (such as visits overseas, hosting visits and coordinating local groups seeking to engage with Sister Cities or Strategic Partner Cities) should be coordinated by the Economic Development & Tourism Manager, in consultation with the Mayor and General Manager, to ensure that all activities meet the objectives of this policy.

#### **4.7 Relationship Plan and Reporting**

Every international relationship under consideration should have a relationship plan outlining:

- The key objectives of the relationship e.g. encouraging and facilitating economic, social-cultural and environmental exchanges, developing networks
- The key stakeholders
- Long-term goals
- Key focus areas for the relationship
- Key performance indicators to measure benefits/outcomes

In July of each year, an annual report and review of relationship activities and the relationship plan including an audit of key performance indicators will be provided to Council to ensure that Yass Valley is benefitting from the relationship.

#### **4.8 Budget and Resource Commitment**

Council should establish an on-going operational level of funding in order to maintain the regular cost of promotions, travel and sundry costs associated with each Sister City or Strategic Partner relationship. This will be considered as part of the usual budget process and reflected in the Annual Budget and Operational Plan and in the long term financial plan (LTFP).

Resourcing will generally be based on the following:

##### **Sister City**

- Travel to the city (up to one trip by two Councillors every 4 years and subject to approval by Council)
- Corporate gifts
- Catering for visiting delegations (e.g. welcome morning/afternoon tea, dinner)
- Any other activities specified in the relationship agreement

##### **Strategic Partner**

- Travel to the city (as per the relationship agreement)
- Corporate gifts
- Catering for visiting delegations (e.g. welcome morning/afternoon tea, dinner)

**Visits to non-sister/strategic partner cities** – Councillor arranging their own private travel to overseas cities cannot claim reimbursement for any aspect of their travels. They may not take corporate gifts on behalf of Council (even if they wish to pay for them through their own funds).

#### **4.9 Cessation of Relationship**

Sister City relationships and Strategic Partnerships may be dissolved upon mutual agreement or if Council determines upon annual review that the relationship has ceased to meet stated

goals and objectives.

## 5. REVIEW

The review of this policy will take account of relevant legislation and State Government policies, best practice guidelines and Council plans and priorities.

This policy will be reviewed following each general election of Council and the Director Planning is responsible for arranging the completion of the review.

## 6. LEGISLATION AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the following:

- *Local Government Act 1993*

## 7. DEFINITIONS

***Sister City Relationship*** is a formal relationship between city governments with economic, social and cultural dimensions, involving exchanges in agreed dimensions between city governments on behalf of, and involving, their businesses and communities. Sister City Relationships may focus on all aspects of a city – governance and administration, the economy, society and culture, and the environment.

Sister City relationships are much broader in scope than a Strategic Partnership, with emphasis on developing and nurturing long-term community-to-community relationships, but may also embrace highly focused, mutually supported interests or initiatives in the same manner as a Strategic Partnership.

An Australian City will generally have just one Sister City in a country.

***Strategic Partnership*** is a formal relationship between cities that is typically less broad in scope than a Sister City relationship. This may involve strong business or community level synergies, focused toward specific areas. For example, a relationship between two cities may be focused upon education, or specific research, or particular economic development or tourism projects, or may involve development of a channel to assist with marketing for a specific traded sector. Multiple Strategic Partnerships may be developed with another nation, focusing on different synergies and exchanges with different cities. There will typically be more direct business, institution or community stakeholder involvement in this type of relationship, with business, institutions and community stakeholders funding their own level of engagement, facilitated by the city.

## 8. RESPONSIBILITIES

Council's Tourism & Business Liaison Manager is responsible for:

- Evaluating any international relationship requests under this policy
- Supporting any relationship established in accordance with this policy and available budget

**9. HISTORY**

<i>EMT Review Date</i>	<i>Report to Council</i>	<i>Minute No.</i>	<i>Exhibition Period</i>	<i>Adoption</i>	<i>Rescission Date</i>
	24/04/2019	79		24/04/ 2019	
11/09/2019	23/10/2019	245		23/10/2019	

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