



## Policy Type

---

Council

## Policy Purpose

---

This policy applies to all Sister City and international relationships, including, Friendship City and Memorandum of Understanding. This policy also applies to applications and requests to the City of Cockburn for letters of invitation and for intended visits by International Sister City delegations.

The purpose of the policy is to:

1. facilitate the development and maintenance of effective international relations that promote and enhance Cockburn's reputation as the best place to be;
2. outline the rationale and criteria for entering into international and Sister City relationships;
3. provide Council with guidelines for initiating and accepting requests to engage in new relationships.
4. provide Council with guidelines for dissolving relationships.

## Policy Statement

---

The City of Cockburn is committed to establishing and maintaining effective relationships with international, interstate, and intrastate local governments to facilitate sustainable and continuous improvement in the development of its economic, educational, cultural, social and environmental objectives.

All relationship initiatives must contribute to the achievement of at least one of the City of Cockburn Strategic Community Plan strategy objectives. The officer designated by the Chief Executive Officer shall be the central point of coordination and assessment of all relationships.

In establishing a new relationship the Council is to first establish a Friendship Agreement which will be reviewed by Council after a period of five years, or earlier if appropriate, to determine if a Sister City relationship would be beneficial to the City.

The friendship is to have demonstrated considerable activity in the areas of trade, tourism, education, cultural and sporting exchanges. All relationships are to be reviewed by the Council every five years to ensure the relationship continues to provide mutual value.

### (1) Criteria

A relationship may only be entered into if it is likely to yield one or more of the following outcomes:

1. Economic
  - (a) Business partnerships and opportunities;



- (b) Trade, investment and / or export opportunities;
- (c) Industry attraction and expansion;
- (d) Introduction of new technologies or processes;
- (e) Tourism promotion opportunities.

## 2. Educational

- (a) Enhanced education and training opportunities;
- (b) Attraction of new adult training or tertiary institutions and students;
- (c) University partnerships;
- (d) Local Government knowledge sharing and information exchange.

## 3. Environmental

- (a) Ecosystem and biodiversity research and conservation partnerships;
- (b) Environmental and climate change adaptation information exchange;
- (c) Environmental technology and innovation exchange.

## 4. Social/Cultural

- (a) Cultural enhancement;
- (b) Attraction of sporting competitions and events;
- (c) Improved governance, leadership and internal standing

## (2) Visitation and delegations

- 2.1 All delegations involving Friendship and Sister Cities (both inbound and outbound) shall be considered and funded by Council through resolution at an Ordinary Council Meeting.
- 2.2 Council will encourage all delegations (both inbound and outbound) to be supplemented with representatives who may be able to assist in furthering the benefits of these relationships, as noted at Clauses (1) 1 – 4 above.
- 2.3 Outbound delegations will be led by the Mayor and accompanied by Councillors, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or nominated representative, and relevant staff as appropriate for the scale of the delegation as determined by Council resolution. In the event of the Mayor not being available to attend any outbound delegation, the Deputy Mayor will be nominated to undertake this responsibility.
- 2.4 Inbound delegations will be received by the Mayor and accompanied by all interested Councillors, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or nominated representative, and relevant staff. In the event of the Mayor not being available to attend any inbound delegation activities, the Deputy Mayor will be nominated to undertake this responsibility. For practical, cultural or financial reasons, the Mayor may define a smaller list of attendees.
- 2.5 Elected Members may accept an invitation to visit any existing Sister City or Friendship City in the interest of maintaining an ongoing relationship. Visitation of this nature is not considered a delegation and is not funded through the Sister City budget. Invitations of visitations shall be reviewed by



the Sister City Reference Group to determine if the opportunity warrants initiating a formal delegation.

- 2.6 An Elected Member may, as part of other travel, be provided with a letter of introduction to visit a Sister City. Such a visit is not considered to be an official Sister City visit and is not to be funded from the Sister City budget or by Council.
- 2.7 Delegates participating in activities are authorised to represent the interests of the City of Cockburn. Delegates are not authorised to enter into agreements, contracts or programs unless approved by the Mayor or Chief Executive Officer following approval by the Minister for Foreign Affairs.
- 2.8 A register for all Sister City related outbound travel is to be maintained by City officers and published on the City website.

### **(3) Travel Authorisation**

- 3.1 Any travel related to Friendship and Sister Cities that is not in accordance with this policy is required to be formally considered by the Council.

### **(4) Expenditure**

- 4.1 Outbound travel
  - i Outbound travel and accommodation arrangements for Elected Members shall be funded from the Elected Member travel budget.
  - ii Outbound travel and accommodation arrangements for City officers, translators, community representatives or other delegates as determined by the Sister City Reference Group shall be funded from the City budget.
  - iii All travel arrangements shall be determined by the relevant City policies.
- 4.2 Inbound hosting
  - i Travel and accommodation is not provided to inbound delegates, however City officer may assist in recommending suitable arrangements.
  - ii Ground transport and group meals for inbound delegates may be coordinated and funded from the City Budget.
  - iii A Civic function to recognise and celebrate the inbound delegation may be coordinated and funded by the City budget.
- 4.3 Gifts
  - i The City budget will include up to \$5,000 annually for gifts to be provided to International delegations.
  - ii City officers will maintain a small stockpile of promotional items to complement and support representations to and from the City.
  - iii All gifts made to the City of Cockburn, except small gifts made to individuals, shall be catalogued and displayed in a City facility.

#### 4.3 Asset management

- i City assets representing international arrangements including public artwork shall be maintained in a good manner to acknowledge the important symbolic nature of the relationship.
- ii Council shall support ad-hoc expenditure to maintain and repair public art, assets, gifts and plants directly related to a Sister City relationship.

### (5) Compliance with Australia's Foreign Policy

Any activities, relationship or agreement between the City of Cockburn and any foreign entity, including local governments, agencies and departments, shall be in compliance with *Australia's Foreign Relations (State and Territory Arrangements) Act 2020*, and subsequent legislation.

### (6) Dissolution of agreement

6.1 Council should consider the following key criteria when reviewing the continuation of a foreign arrangement:

- i Alignment with National Interests: If the relationship conflicts with national foreign policy or security, it may need to be dissolved.
- ii Lack of Mutual Benefit: If the partnership no longer meets its objectives or there is diminished engagement from either side, the relationship may not be worth continuing.
- iii Cultural or Social Incompatibility: Significant clashes in values, human rights concerns, or growing tensions may justify ending the relationship.
- iv Economic and Logistical Challenges: Financial constraints or the ineffective use of resources could warrant dissolution if maintaining the relationship becomes unsustainable.
- v Political or Diplomatic Issues: Political instability, diplomatic tensions, or breaches of agreement terms by the Sister City could be grounds for dissolving the arrangement.
- vi Community Sentiment: Strong local opposition or negative impact on the City's reputation may indicate the relationship should be reconsidered.
- vii Strategic Realignment: If the Sister City relationship no longer aligns with the local government's evolving priorities or has completed its objectives, dissolution might be appropriate.

6.2 To dissolve a Friendship or Sister City arrangement, a resolution of Council determined at an ordinary meeting of Council is required. Following a Council decision, all parties to the arrangement shall be informed, including the partner City, the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

## (7) International Relationship Types

Model	Purpose	Duration
<b>Sister City</b>	A Sister City relationship is a formal, long-term relationship based on diverse linkages between the two cities, including cultural, educational, tourism, sporting, and business links. Sister Cities often have similar demographic and other characteristics; however, this is not a mandatory requirement. The relationship requires a high degree of commitment on both sides.	Long-term commitment.
<b>Friendship City</b>	A Friendship City relationship is less formal than a Sister City relationship and it generally has a lower profile. It is likely to be a long-term relationship, but the level of required community support and involvement is not as high as for a Sister City relationship. For example, the purpose may be for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a particular sporting event held on an annual basis;</li> <li>• cultural diversity;</li> <li>• a specific project;</li> <li>• specific objectives and opportunities between two cities;</li> <li>• mentoring.</li> </ul>	Generally enduring, but can be set for a specific term
<b>Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)</b>	A MoU is a document describing a bilateral or multilateral agreement between parties. It expresses a convergence of will between the parties, indicating an intended common line of action, and may not imply a legal commitment. It is a more formal alternative to a Statement of Intent, but in some cases, depending on the exact wording, lacks the binding power of a contract.	Generally entered into for a specific term.

## (8) Definitions

- 8.1 **Delegation:** A delegation is an official, in-person representation of the City, backed by City resources and a structured program of activities. The delegation's role is to actively pursue one or more of the relationship outcomes as per the City's established objectives.
- 8.2 **Visitation:** A visitation is an informal, in-person representation of the City, not supported by City staff or a detailed program of activities. Despite its informal nature, visitations contribute to the City's profile and relations with others.
- 8.3 **Inbound:** An inbound visit refers to the travel of representatives from another city or organisation to the City of Cockburn. This could be part of a delegation, visitation, or other diplomatic or professional event.
- 8.4 **Outbound Visit:** An outbound visit refers to the travel of representatives from the City of Cockburn to another city or organisation. Such visits can serve various diplomatic, economic, cultural, or educational purposes.
- 8.5 **Relationships:** A relationship is a formal or informal arrangement between the City of Cockburn and one or more cities or organisations. This can take various forms, such as a Sister City agreement, Friendship City designation, or Memorandum of Understanding, each with its own set of objectives, benefits and responsibilities.

Strategic Link:	Strategic Community Plan
Category	Business, Economy & Technology
Lead Business Unit:	Advocacy and Public Policy
Public Consultation: (Yes or No)	No
Adoption Date: (Governance Purpose Only)	11 March 2025
Next Review Due: (Governance Purpose Only)	March 2027
ECM Doc Set ID: (Governance Purpose Only)	4134016