



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.

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.

(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

1. Council will support a delegation program of its Sister Cities. Any program of delegations, both inbound and outbound, will be supplemented by an appropriate funding allocation in Council's annual Municipal Budget. The program will allow consider annual delegations (incoming or outgoing) to be reciprocated to/by the partner City in the following financial year or later date. The program will be routinely reviewed as a means of assessing the outcomes of the visits and determining their value for the future.
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.
3. Outbound delegations will be led by the Mayor and accompanied by up to a maximum of three (3) Councillors, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or nominated representative, and relevant staff as appropriate for the scale of the delegation. In the event of the Mayor not being available to attend any outbound delegation, the Deputy Mayor will be nominated to undertake this responsibility.
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 even 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.
5. All inbound and outbound delegations are to be referred to the Sister Cities Reference Group for consideration before agreement is made.

6. The principle of selecting Councillors to form an outbound delegation will be on the basis of expressions of interest and administered by the CEO as follows:
 - (a) The CEO will arrange a ballot, if required, to which all Councillors participating in the ballot will be invited to attend at a time and place nominated by the CEO,
 - (b) If a Councillor has previously joined a delegation, then that Councillor is ineligible to enter the ballot.
 - (c) When or if all Councillors have participated in a delegation, then the process recommences with all previous attendances being disregarded for the future selection process.
 - (d) A register of delegates attending outward delegations is to be established and maintained by the officer designated by the Chief Executive Officer.
7. The Mayor, accompanied by the Chief Executive Officer or his/her delegated nominee and any other person deemed to have relevance to the enhancing of the relationship, may participate in a delegation subject to appropriate provisions being made in the City's adopted budget.
8. 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.
9. 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.

(3) Travel Authorisation

1. The Chief Executive Officer is authorised to make arrangements for official travel under this policy and the expenditure of appropriate funds to meet the costs involved without further reference to the Council.
2. 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.
3. Any travel related to Sister Cities that is not in accordance with this policy is required to be formally considered by the Council.

(4) 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.

(5) International Relationship Types

Model	Purpose	Duration
Sister City	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.
Friendship City	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"> • a particular sporting event held on an annual basis; • cultural diversity; • a specific project; • specific objectives and opportunities between two cities; • mentoring. 	Generally enduring, but can be set for a specific term
Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)	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	Generally entered into for a specific term.



Model	Purpose	Duration
	cases, depending on the exact wording, lacks the binding power of a contract.	

(6) Definitions

1. **Delegation:** A delegation is an official, in-person representation of the City, backed by City’s 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.
2. **Visitation:** A visitation is an informal, in-person representation of the City, not supported by City staff or detailed program of activities. Despite its informal nature, visitations contribute to the City’s profile and relations with others.
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.
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.
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 form, such as a Sister City agreement, Friendship City designation, or Memorandum of Understanding, each with its own set of objectives, benefits and responsibilities.

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