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**1. PREAMBLE**

The City of Holdfast Bay’s participation in the Sister Cities program enables the community to establish and maintain friendships with other communities throughout the world.

The aim on the program is to encourage international goodwill where it enriches our community by broadening our understanding of other nations, their traditions, customs and cultures and for economic prosperity.

**1.1 Background**

From time to time, Council has the opportunity to form a formal Sister City relationship with a city from overseas (or nationally). This policy is intended to provide guidelines on the types of international (and national) relationships which Council will enter into to promote educational, cultural, trade and sporting exchange

Council is committed to supporting international (and national) relationships provided there is evidence that the community (including the local business community) is prepared to actively support and participate in the relationship.

**1.2 Purpose**

To foster international peace and goodwill.

To seek a wider understanding of other nations, their traditions, customs and cultures.

To provide opportunities for residents to develop international friendships in a council sanctioned program.

To promote the City of Holdfast Bay and, where appropriate, assist in fostering economic development, tourism and trade relations.

To broaden the range of existing cultural, sporting, educational, and youth exchange opportunities.

To capitalise on the activities of individual groups and organisations to the benefit of the wider community.

**1.3 Scope**

# INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS POLICY

This policy applies to the Elected Members, employees and volunteers of the City of Holdfast Bay.

Sister City Relationships will be established if they have the ability to promote shared cultural, educational, economic or humanitarian awareness.

Sister City relationships assist in leading economic growth, increased tourism, and building reliable business contacts.

## 1.4 Definitions

International (National) Relationship – a relationship with a sister city or city with a friendship agreement

Sister City Relationship –where a formal agreement has been made, outlining that a substantial program with mutual long term benefits will be maintained between two cities.

Friendship Agreement – a less formal agreement, with less administrative and financial expectations, which may be appropriate in meeting short term needs and supporting programs run by other sections of the community.

## 1.5 Strategic Reference

Community: Celebrating culture and diversity

## 2. PRINCIPLES

- 2.1 The Council seeks to promote, establish and maintain a small number of active international (national) relationships (sister city relationships and/or friendship agreements), based upon benefits which can accrue, including trade, tourism, cultural, educational and sporting activities.
- 2.2 The Council considers that the abovementioned objectives can be achieved by educational, cultural, trade, tourism and sporting exchanges or Official visits.
- 2.3 Accordingly, the Council's role will be:
  - To encourage exchanges
  - To facilitate and assist visits and exchanges (such as providing letters of introduction to the Sister City)
  - To arrange an exchange of greetings on the occasion of visits from Sister Cities
  - To facilitate exchange of educational, cultural and promotional material
  - To encourage students to learn about a Sister City by carrying out school projects on that city and participating in educational exchanges
  - To provide information to visitors from Sister Cities on places of interest.
- 2.4 Visits to and From Sister Cities

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS POLICY

- 2.4.1. The City of Holdfast Bay will warmly welcome any visitor from a Sister City in a spirit of friendship and international goodwill. However, visits to Sister Cities by members of the Holdfast Bay community, including Council Members will need to be financed by the individuals concerned.
  - 2.4.2 All official visits to the City of Holdfast Bay by international visitors are to be treated as a civic matter with due regard to the appropriate protocols. (refer Civic Functions, Awards and Ceremonies Policy)
  - 2.4.3 Individual councillors or community members who seek to represent the Council as part of the visit to a Sister City may only do so if they have received prior endorsement from the City of Holdfast Bay for their visit.
- 2.5 Principles for International (National) Relationships
- 2.5.1. When deciding whether or not to enter into a new International (National) Relationship, Council will:
    - a. Gain as much information as possible about the proposed City
    - b. Establish clearly what tangible benefits can be gained from the relationship
    - c. Decide what types of activities will be conducted under the relationship and what funding is available to support such activities
    - d. In the case of trade, aim to maintain a facilitation role, facilitating relationships between business entities
    - e. If a formal international relationship is desired, initially enter into a friendship agreement first to determine the desirability of the arrangement before a formal permanent sister city relationship is made, considering if the experience shows that this is the best course of action in terms of benefits accruing to the City of Holdfast Bay
    - f. Adopt a user pays policy for visits between cities in preference to a host pays agreement
    - g. Not commit the Council to a minimum number of visits to and from the Sister City.
- 2.6 The following criteria will be used by Council when assessing whether or not to endorse a new international relationship
- 2.6.1. Establishing relationships
    - a. Strong cultural linkages between resident communities, including opportunities for interaction in education, sporting, recreational and or religious activities
    - b. Sound economic opportunities between business communities
    - c. Similar status of cities in terms of geography, population industries etc.
    - d. No more than one sister city and one friendship affiliation will be established with any one foreign country, except in exceptional circumstances.

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS POLICY

- 2.6.2. Formalising and maintaining relationships
  - a. Capacity of respective city authorities to support and facilitate cultural and business linkages
  - b. Willingness and capacity of resident, cultural and business communities to contribute financial and human resources to respective activities
- 2.6.3. Establishing inter – city relationships
  - a. Formalise identified linkages between respective cities
  - b. Formal exchange of material between cities
  - c. Agreement between cities to relationship objectives and activities
  - d. Memorandum of friendship between cities
  - e. Sister city relationship
- 2.6.4. Council will give appropriate public notification of its existing and ongoing Sister City arrangements, so as to adequately inform the community of the Council’s Sister City activity.
- 2.6.5. Existing International relationships will be reviewed by the Council within 12 months of the general election of the council to ensure that they continue to meet the criteria above and are still appropriate and achievable. Should it be recognised that such is no longer the case, negotiations with the City authorities will be undertaken with a view to discontinuing any formal arrangements.

### 3. REFERENCES

#### 3.1 Legislation

- *Local Government Act 1999*

#### 3.2 Other References

Civic Functions, Awards and Ceremonies Policy