

PROTOCOL FOR INTERNATIONAL AND AUSTRALIAN FRIENDSHIP AGREEMENTS

Scope

This policy addresses the guidelines for defining and establishing ongoing, formal civic relationships within Australia and internationally.

Please note that this document does not relate to requests for one-off visits from international groups. This process is addressed in Council's Policy on *Visits by International Delegations*.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out the guidelines and process to assess a proposal to establish an international or Australian civic relationship, resulting in the signing of a Friendship or Partnership Agreement. This policy and protocol ensures that proposed benefits, expectations and resource requirements on City of Ryde are clearly defined.

What is a Civic Relationship?

A formal *civic relationship* is a long term, cooperative and mutually beneficial relationship between two cities. Such a relationship is formally committed to when the two Mayors (or other appropriate elected or appointed officials) sign a memorandum of agreement.

An effective *civic relationship* has objectives to bring about

- Broader understanding of other regions or nations, including characteristics, culture, perspectives and priorities
- Mutually beneficial contacts and networks that foster economic and educational development
- Mutual growth through cultural, educational, business and technical exchanges
- Support and assistance to developing cities or cities in need.

Categories of Civic Relationships

At City of Ryde, there are two categories of civic relationships that may be formalised between the City of Ryde and either an international or Australian city:

1. Friendship agreement
2. Partnership agreement

This second category is for agreements that involve greater levels of activity, committed resourcing, and the requirement for commercial, cultural and/or educational stakeholder input.

Protocol for International and Australian Friendship Agreements		
Owner: Governance, Risk and Audit	Accountability: City - Country Council Relationship Management	Policy Number: CSG011
Trim Reference: D15/22905	Review date: 24 March 2019	Endorsed: Council 24 March 2015

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Friendship agreement

An international or Australian Friendship Agreement:

- requires strong and meaningful historical, cultural, economic, industrial or educational links between the two cities
- may be initiated by members of the Community, Councillors or by Council officers and is required to be formally considered at a Council meeting
- shall involve the exchange of a formal plaque or certificate for display in the respective Civic Buildings and may extend to the exchange of information for educational purposes
- shall not require expenditure from either party apart from hospitality associated with a Mayoral reception, and minor administrative expenses such as the preparation of reports and documents for signing
- may be terminated on request by either party.

Partnership agreement

An international or Australian Partnership Agreement:

- requires strong and meaningful historical, cultural, economic, industrial or educational links between the two cities
- is a more substantial arrangement, requiring a commitment of resources from both Council and external stakeholders
- requires the submission of a detailed proposal endorsed by local external stakeholder(s)
- requires a thorough assessment by the General Manager and Executive Team which takes into account proposed funding (short and long term), expected benefits for City of Ryde and the community (and the reciprocal City and its community) and the proposed timeframe
- must be formally considered at a Council meeting
- may be initiated by members of the Community, Councillors or Council officers
- may be terminated on request by either party

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Assessing a prospective Australian or international friendship or partnership agreement

For a friendship or partnership agreement to be successful and long term, it must be built on mutual respect, understanding and commitment to shared objectives. However, due to the differing characteristics and objectives of each relationship, each relationship will be different.

Therefore when assessing a proposal to develop a friendship or partnership agreement there are a broad range of factors to consider, including

General

- Population and demographics (nationals of one City residing in the other)
- Geographic location and assets
- Comparison of key industries
- Existing linkages (eg student exchanges)
- Relevance to local community
- History of diplomatic relations and/or cooperation in political, economic, commercial and cultural fields
- Media interpretations

Economic

- Similar economic conditions
- Similar business characteristics including industries
- Trade and investment climates and opportunities
- Tourism potential

Social

- Similar social infrastructure and issues
- Consistent or similar ethical understandings
- Opportunity for broad based activity
- People to people interest, energy and commitment
- Public perception

Educational

- Shared interests across economic, social and environmental issues
- Student / teacher exchange programs
- University linkages

It is necessary to compare not only the similarities, but also the potential for these similarities to provide mutual benefit to the Cities involved.

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Proposing a Friendship Agreement

As a Friendship Agreement does not require a significant commitment of Council resources, the establishment of this relationship may be proposed through a Council report, following discussions and consideration of the proposed City and its relevance and connectedness to City of Ryde.

Developing a Proposal for an International or Australian Partnership Agreement

As it is anticipated that there will be significantly greater resource investment by both cities and external stakeholders in the implementation of a Partnership Agreement, it is necessary to closely consider what is being proposed. Therefore a two phase assessment process is described below, ensuring valuable information is gathered and assessed, and commitment confirmed.

Phase 1

1. the city must have either Business, Cultural or Education synergies and relationships with the City of Ryde, and
2. the external stakeholders – commercial, community, industry, educational etc – must be committed to the creation of a partnership agreement, and actively participating in partnership on an ongoing basis.
3. a brief description of the proposed city, its synergies with City of Ryde, participating external stakeholders and possible actions is to be developed and endorsed by external stakeholders. This document will be presented to the General Manager for consideration.

During Phase 1, Councillors will be invited to provide input informally or to participate in a steering committee, as appropriate, prior to a proposal being developed for Executive Team and Council consideration.

Phase 2

1. If the requirements of Phase 1 are satisfactorily demonstrated, the General Manager will appoint an appropriate staff member to coordinate the preparation of the proposal for an International or Australian Partnership Agreement.
2. This proposal will be assessed by the Executive Team and then be reported to Council for its consideration.

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When developing the proposal it is necessary to include the following details:

- (a) General description of the city that is proposed to partner with City of Ryde, clearly indicating whether this proposal is based on cultural, business or educational links between the two cities.
 - (b) Description of the
 - Objectives of the Partnership Agreement
 - Overview of proposed activities
 - Benefits to Council, the proposed City and external stakeholders
 - Costs
 - Sources of funding – for example grant or private funding
 - Commitment and resourcing required from Council
 - Cultural and/or Economic Impact on Ryde LGA
 - Expectations of Council
 - List of external stakeholders including primary contact details
 - (c) Supporting correspondence and documentation from both the proposed city and external stakeholders.
3. Once the Executive Team has confirmed the business case is ready to proceed, a report will be prepared for Council.
 4. Should Council resolve to implement a Partnership Agreement, the General Manager will then appoint staff to facilitate the Partnership Committee (chaired by an external stakeholder) to develop an action in accordance with the proposal and relevant Council resolutions. Councillors will be invited to participate in this Partnership Committee.

Independently funded travel by Councillors or other Council officials

It should be noted that Council officials who travel to cities that have a friendship or partnership relationship with the City of Ryde, are only to present themselves as representing Council, if this representation has been endorsed by Council prior to the visit.

Review Process and Endorsement

This Protocol will be reviewed at least every 4 years, and is to be endorsed by Council.

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