

Blue Mountains Sister Cities Annual Report 2018-2019 **Chairperson's Report**

It is with great pleasure that I present the Annual Report of the Blue Mountains Sister Cities Committee (BMSCC) for the year 2018-2019.

It is an accepted principle that cultural and people exchanges between countries are vital components in social, economic and cultural regeneration. We believe our current Blue Mountains Sister Cities Committee delivers the most appropriate contributions we can to the City of Blue Mountains.

We consider our Vision, Mission and Purpose & Scope to be extremely important in all the voluntary activities that we undertake.

Purpose & Scope

The Committee's purpose is to act in an advisory capacity to the Council and to assist the Council to perform its role as contributor to the relationship between the City of the Blue Mountains and its Sister Cities. This will include making recommendations to Council on how to best allocate budgeted funds to assist in supporting the Sister City Relationships.

Our Vision

To promote the affiliation of Sister Cities by helping towns and cities to motivate communities to extend the hand of friendship nationally and internationally

Our Mission

To provide a forum for cultural, education and economic interchange between communities and to encourage friendship, cooperation and understanding to improve the quality of life worldwide

Background of the BMCC and BMSCC

The current volunteer community Committee was formally formed in 1991. Our Sister City, Sanda City in Japan and the BMCC celebrated the 30th Anniversary of the signing of the proclamation during 2018 and is now one of the longest continuous Japanese Sister City friendships in Australia. Many representatives from Japan and Consulate officials resident in Australia have visited the Blue Mountains due to our Sister Cities arrangement. From these many more have revisited as tourists and brought more Sanda residents with them, all holidaying in the Blue Mountains as their main tourist destination.

2018-19 Projects & Activities

Sanda International Masters Marathon

Because it was the 30th Anniversary of the establishment of the Sanda – Blue Mountains Sister City Agreement, Sanda once again sponsored a runner to represent the City of Blue Mountains. The runner selected was Brad Billett. Brad had a fabulous race and a

wonderful time in Sanda with an exceptional host family. Upon his return at the February meeting, Brad gave a small portfolio of photos that recorded his trip. The runners we send to Sanda provide a high profile for the Blue Mountains. Brad was issued with the registration number 1, which placed him at the start of the race and so was included in many, many photos that were widely circulated by the media of Sanda. Our thanks to Margaret Bowen for organizing Brad's selection and trip arrangements to Sanda.

The Death of Ms Midori Nakajima

It was with shock and great sadness that we were informed of the death of Midori Chairperson of the Sanda International Association. She was a very strong believer in the Sister Cities relationship we have with Sanda. She visited the Blue Mountains many times and with her particular interest and expertise in the field of education she had a particular passion for the youth of both cities. As Colleen Kime wrote for her Memorial Service, "She was a gracious and caring lady who believed strongly in the importance of our Sister City relationship." May she rest in Peace".

Woodford to Glenbrook Running Classic

The visit of the runners and their participation in the event was a great success. Both Ms Kaori Godau and Mr Koji Adachi were excellent guests and representatives. Thanks to Margaret Bowen and her husband, Roger, and Leigh Roden and his wife, Sue, for hosting our guests. The homestays were mentioned to me by both runners for the friendliness and attention they both received. The organisation for the visit is complex and very time consuming so many thanks to Margaret Bowen for her continuing efforts with this event.

Buttenshaw Park

As the year rolled by we again had to focus our attention on the Park and our role in tending to part of the garden. We clarified which part of the park was our responsibility. This necessitated revisiting the original agreement between the BMSCC and the Council. The original agreement and a plan designating the garden beds given to us for care are outlined. A meeting with Stuart Fuller, BMCC Asset Investigation Officer Parks & Public Recreational Areas has clarified the situation. He has indicated that all alterations need to be approved by the Council. This includes the selection and removal of plants. Stuart was enthusiastic re any plans we have regarding the park but they must be submitted to Council for consideration and approval. Many thanks to Janne Bent, who co-ordinates the monthly working bees, and to the committee members who assist in maintaining the gardens.

Renewed contact with Flagstaff

During the year we had a letter from Flagstaff. The letter indicated that the City was interested in re-establishing a connection with the Blue Mountains. We are still awaiting further details regarding this.

The Junior Ambassadors selected to represent The City of Blue Mountains in Sanda.

There were four applicants and the quality was excellent. The selection committee selected two girls, Edith Winslow from Springwood High School and Amelia Dennis from Winmalee High School. I am pleased that one of the girls is a student from Springwood High as that school has not previously been represented. All the applicants were of a

high quality and I would like to thank Nadia Cameron, Councilor Shae Foenander and Mark January for their time in selecting the two Junior Ambassadors for 2019. Edith and Amelia have recently been introduced to the committee members before their trip to Japan and will report to us at a meeting on their return.

The Junior Ambassadors from Sanda

The visit by the two Japanese students, Shota Echigawa and Ryuto Okada, was coordinated by Janne Bent. This included a day tour of the Blue Mountains and a meeting with the Deputy Mayor, Councilor Chris Van der Kley at the Council Chambers. Many thanks to the host families, the two hosting schools, St Columba's and Winmalee High School, and to Janne Bent for her organisation and transportation.

New President of Sanda International Association announced

We were informed in July that Mr. Michio Nishiura has been appointed President. Mr. Nishiura has been involved with the SIA since 1988 and was a Councillor when the relationship first started he is a good friend to several of our committee members and is most interested in further developing the Sanda - Blue Mountains relationship. It is important that we have a long-standing friend in the Association. The Sister Cities Sanda group is a subset of the Sanda International Association.

The visit by the Mayor of Genkai Town and his Delegation

In August Deputy Mayor Chris Van der Kley, Council Support Officer, Gabrielle Martin, and four members of our committee were honoured to welcome the Mayor, Mr Wakiyama Shintaro, Mr. Yoshiteru Miyazaki, Town Councillor, and Mr Daizo Nakamura, Division Head, Board of Education and Ms. Barbara Fitzgerald, Principal of Korowal School. We met over afternoon tea followed by a tour of the Cultural Centre and Education exhibition and Library. I was particularly interested in the situation of Genkai Town. It is on the western seaboard of Japan and has 5000 inhabitants. The schools have now all been combined and the Education Board's main office is in the same precinct. Korowal School has a Sister City relationship with Genkai Town School. I would also wish to thank Gabrielle Martin for coordinating the Genkai Town delegation and the Council staff who assisted in the visit.

The Art Exchange

The Japanese student art arrived and was displayed at Springwood High (SHS) along with art from the students of the school. The Head Teacher of Visual Arts, Ms Buchanan at SHS, was very enthusiastic about her students having the opportunity to exhibit their work in Sanda. After the Japanese artwork was displayed at the school it was transferred to Springwood Library for a further exhibition.

Finally, I would particularly like to thank the office bearers in 2018-19. Several have only held their position for 1-2 years and their learning curves have been steep. My thanks also to all members of the committee for their contribution over the last year.

I would also like to acknowledge the contribution of our present secretary, Colleen Kime, and particularly thank her for her help and support this year. Colleen has been involved from the very start of our relationship with Sanda and has continued to dedicate many hours to the functioning of our committee and our Sister Cities relationship with Sanda.

I would like to acknowledge the assistance from Blue Mountains City Council, particularly our representative Councilors, Chris Van der Kley and Shae Foenander. A special mention also to our Council Liaison Officer, Gabrielle Martin, for all her assistance.

I look forward to continuing in 2019-20 to be a part of a very committed group of dedicated volunteers. It is only through them that the Sister Cities success continues to grow.

Allan Graham

Chairperson
Blue Mountains Sister Cities Committee 2018-19

Attachments

- Proposed Plan for 2019-20
- Proposed Budget for 2020-21
- Review & Update of Terms of Reference