

# SISTER CITY AND INTERNATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS POLICY

TBC

Non-legislative

**The City of Adelaide is the heart of the State’s civic, cultural and commercial life. First shaped by the Kaurna People of the Adelaide Plains, then by Colonel William Light, Adelaide is known for being progressive, resilient, bold, trailblazing and enterprising.**

From the Nationally Heritage Listed Adelaide Park Lands that breathe life into our city, to our culturally diverse neighbourhoods and unique and easy to get around precincts, with year-round events and activations, a vibrant dining scene and international recognition as a UNESCO City of Music, the City of Adelaide offers an unparalleled quality of life. Adelaide’s allure extends globally, attracting over two million visitors annually. The city’s vibrant atmosphere is unmistakable, nurturing inclusivity and connectivity within its diverse population. Adelaide’s appeal extends far and wide, inviting everyone to be a part of its rich tapestry of experience.

Sister City and City to City Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) relationships exist to build mutually beneficial relationships between cities with aligned cultural, social and economic interests. Sister City arrangements began after the Second World War to promote peaceful exchange across the globe through understanding and people-to-people relationship building. This purpose is as important today as it was over 50 years ago. Contemporary relationships have amplified economic development and trade ties, while the foundation of cultural, social and diplomatic exchange and symbolic solidarity has endured.

## PURPOSE

The City of Adelaide is a progressive, globally connected local government organisation with formalised sister city, friendly city and international arrangements. Engaging in international relationships based on respect and understanding can provide enormous cultural, social and economic benefit to cities and local communities. This policy governs the implementation of Sister City and International Arrangements at the City of Adelaide and outlines the principles for optimising ongoing arrangements, and for engaging in new arrangements.

**Alignment with Australia’s Foreign Relations (State and Territory Arrangements) Act 2020 (Cth) (the Act):** *This City of Adelaide policy aligns with the Act and refers to relationships established by the City prior to 2020, and from 2020 onwards.*

## ROLE OF COUNCIL

Sister City, Friendly City and City-to-City MOU arrangements at the City of Adelaide are considered a 'whole of organisation' arrangement in which the City of Adelaide endeavours to draw connections and purposeful outcomes aligned with the City of Adelaide Strategic Plan and other strategies.

The UNESCO Creative Cities designation is also considered a whole-of-organisation arrangement which is delivered by multiple programs.

The City of Adelaide may also be a third-party beneficiary to Government of South Australia led formalised international arrangements.

### **Council's role in international arrangements:**

**Leader:** facilitate international networks and connections through our formal international arrangements such as UNESCO City of Music. The City of Adelaide can lead by example the inclusion of reconciliation and truth-telling through formal international arrangements through highlighting Kurna and broader First Nations heritage and storytelling on digital communication platforms and support knowledge sharing and exchange

**Minor Funder:** Partner with others to support activity that develops art and creative exchange, cultural cross-collaboration, economic development, community wellbeing and learning and climate and other environmental solutions.

**Broker:** connecting local organisations or communities so they can collaborate directly with international entities from our Sister Cities on shared alignments and outcomes.

**Partner:** Local Government Associations in Australia are a party to the Australian Government Foreign Arrangements Scheme. The Foreign Arrangements Scheme creates obligations for local governments that propose to enter or enter an arrangement with a foreign entity. Where applicable, these arrangements must be notified to the Minister for Foreign Affairs. The City of Adelaide may partner with the State Government of South Australia (Department of State Development and Department of the Premier and Cabinet and Capital City Committee) for the benefit of leveraging additional resources and strategic direction with our formal international arrangements. The City of Adelaide may partner with local organisations and community in delivering international projects.

## PRINCIPLES

### **PRINCIPLE 1: International arrangements will be strategic, purposeful and mutually beneficial.**

- Projects and activities delivered through the Sister City Program will provide beneficial cultural; social; economic; and/or sustainability and climate resilience outcomes to the people of the City of Adelaide.
- International arrangements will reflect a commitment to deliver on the City of Adelaide strategic directions and include specific objectives relative to the focus and interests of the partnership.
- The City of Adelaide will engage in new international arrangements only where they provide strategic benefit, a resourced action plan for delivery of projects, initiatives or knowledge exchange that is measurable and aligned with the City of Adelaide Strategic Plan or an endorsed Strategy of Council.

### **PRINCIPLE 2: International arrangements will endeavour to connect people to people**

- The City of Adelaide will enable people-to-people opportunities for cross-cultural connection, knowledge sharing and professional networking with counterparts in Sister Cities.
- Exchanges will provide benefit to the City of Adelaide communities with a particular focus on cultural communities of interest and local diaspora.
- The City of Adelaide will endeavour to broker cross-cultural exchange and knowledge sharing among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representative leadership and First Nations Peoples between the City of Adelaide and its Sister Cities.

### **PRINCIPLE 3: International arrangements can raise the profile of Adelaide internationally to maximise opportunities for trade and investment.**

- The City of Adelaide and the Adelaide Economic Development Agency (AEDA) will showcase Adelaide on digital platforms for the purpose of international brand awareness.
- The City of Adelaide and AEDA will maximise business events and trade exchange opportunities
- The City of Adelaide and AEDA will partner and support the State Government to optimise international trade opportunities where they align with Council's Strategies.

### **PRINCIPLE 4: International arrangements will align the City of Adelaide cultural principles of reconciliation and truth-telling.**

- The City of Adelaide acknowledges the Kaurna people as the traditional custodians of the Adelaide Plains and fully supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-determination. We recognise the importance of addressing past injustices, centring First Nations perspectives, and promoting cultural revitalisation through language, storytelling, and creative expression.
- Formal international arrangements held by the City of Adelaide will highlight First Nations perspectives in storytelling and context setting of the City of Adelaide and the Adelaide Plains prior to colonisation through to now. This will be achieved through active information sharing and the facilitation of knowledge exchange with our international counterparts.

## APPROACH

The City of Adelaide holds arrangements with a broad range of entities including cities, forums and networks which enable mutually beneficial international relationships through knowledge sharing, cross-cultural exchange and collaboration, and storytelling. These arrangements attract international interest in the city of Adelaide and leverage this interest into practical local benefit which can harness creativity and enthusiasm for practical and meaningful action.

Sister City arrangements have been in place at the City of Adelaide since 1972. Sister City arrangements are valued by Council for their symbolic power and potential to benefit citizens.

*The definition of a City of Adelaide formal arrangement for the purpose of this policy is that it is endorsed by Council and signed by the Lord Mayor..*

<b><u>Established prior to 2020</u></b>	<b><u>Established from 2020 onwards</u></b>
These arrangements will be regularly reviewed to clarify mutual benefit, intention to continue and the ongoing nature of the relationship. These long-standing relationships may continue to be largely symbolic in nature and focused on cultural benefit.	These arrangements will be time-limited and subject to regular review. They will be established through a Memorandum of Understanding and require specific outcomes to be delivered.

- The term Friendly City arrangement will be superseded by the City of Adelaide with a preference for entering into a City-to-City Memorandum of Understanding, as the first step in a formal arrangement before a Sister City. The preferred approach is to develop, where deemed of strategic value, a three-year City-to-City Memorandum of Understanding rather than a new 'Friendly City' arrangement. Standing Friendly City arrangements remain in place until mutually reviewed and revised.
- All formal international arrangements, including Sister City relationships, are to be regularly reviewed and evaluated.
- A three-year City-to-City Memorandum of Understanding, if functioning well and meeting objectives, can be extended for a further three to five years.
- A three-year City-to-City Memorandum of Understanding can be moved to a Sister City relationship (for a specified period) which may be longer than three years, if desired by both parties.
- All arrangements post-2020 must be allocated an expiry date no longer than three years from establishment, with a mid-point review through an initial City-to-City Memorandum of Understanding.
- Administration of the Sister City Program will include the collation of an annual activity report of all international arrangements and associated activities delivered through City of Adelaide.
- The City of Adelaide will maintain up to date, public facing online information and an accessible register of all City of Adelaide formal international arrangements.

## ADMINISTRATION

### REQUESTS FOR AN INTERNATIONAL ARRANGEMENT

- All new requests will be assessed and if deemed to be of high strategic value, presented to Council for consideration.

### RELATED DOCUMENTS

City of Adelaide documents:

- City of Adelaide Strategic Plan 2024-2028
- City of Adelaide City Plan 2036
- City of Adelaide Cultural Policy 2025
- City of Adelaide Economic Development Strategy 2024-2028
- City of Adelaide Integrated Climate Strategy 2030
- City of Adelaide Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan 2024 – 2027

Relevant legislation:

- *Local Government Act 1999 (SA)*
- *Foreign Arrangements (State and Territory Arrangements) Act 2020 (Commonwealth)*

Other:

- Australian Sanctions Office Compliance Policy
- Commonwealth Foreign Arrangements Scheme
- United Nations Charter

## GLOSSARY

**International Arrangement** – An activity based mutual agreements with an entity representing a city of another country or an entity based within another country. Interchangeable with foreign arrangement for the purposes of this policy.

**Formal Arrangement** – International Arrangements signed by the Lord Mayor on behalf of the City of Adelaide and co-signed by the Mayor or appropriate representative of the partner entity. An intention to commence an activity based mutual agreement, through the City of Adelaide and other entities which may be a city, forum or network. Examples other than Sister Cities are UNESCO Creative Cities Network membership through the UNESCO City of Music Designation.

**Sister City** – Formal arrangement adopted by Council and signed by the Mayor naming two cities as Sister Cities.

**Friendly City** – Less formal than a Sister City, a Friendship Arrangement is a less resourced, historic arrangement. These historic arrangements may be maintained or reviewed and if agreed by both parties, replaced by a City-to-City Memorandum of Understanding.

**City-to-City Memorandum of Understanding** – A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is a non-binding, formal document outlining a cooperative agreement between parties, detailing their roles, responsibilities, and shared goals. It may function as a preliminary step, often preceding a legally binding contract, to establish trust and clarify expectations.

**Foreign entities** - Under the Foreign Arrangements Scheme, foreign entities include a foreign country, its national government and a department or agency of that national government. It also includes sub-national level governments in foreign countries (including its governments, departments and agencies), authorities established for a public purpose and some foreign universities.

**Foreign Arrangements Scheme** – The Scheme ensures that arrangements between state, territory and local governments (and their entities) and foreign entities do not adversely affect Australia’s foreign relations and are not inconsistent with Australia’s foreign policy.

#### REVIEW

As part of Council’s commitment to deliver the City of Adelaide Strategic Plan, services to the community and the provision of transparent information, all policy documents are reviewed as per legislative requirements or when there is no such provision a risk assessment approach is taken to guide the review timeframe. This Policy document will be reviewed every 4 years unless legislative or operational change occurs beforehand. The next review is required in **2030**.

#### Review history:

Content Manager Reference	Authorising Body	Date/ Decision ID	Description of Edits
<i>ACC2026/39183</i>	<i>Council</i>	<i>TBC</i>	<i>Creation of new Policy</i>

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