



**GREATER SHEPPARTON CITY COUNCIL  
INTERNATIONAL  
ENGAGEMENT POLICY**

Effective: **DAY MONTH YEAR**



**INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT POLICY**

<b>Version:</b>	4
<b>Business Unit:</b>	Sustainable Development
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Manager Economic Development
<b>Adopted By:</b>	Council
<b>Next Review:</b>	Day Month Year

**1. PURPOSE**

This International Engagement Policy is intended to aid Council in taking the appropriate measures when entering into a Friendship or Sister City agreement, managing delegations, deciding what international visits are most appropriate for Council representatives to attend and maintaining current Friendship and Sister City Relationships.

**2. OBJECTIVE**

To provide a framework for international engagement between Council and:

- Stakeholders
- International governments
- State and
- Federal Government bodies engaged in International relationships and trade.

**3. SCOPE**

This policy applies to:

- All Councillors and Council officers who are involved in international relations.
- All international relationship agreements, including but not limited to Sister Cities, Friendship Cities, International Memorandums of Understanding, and Statements of Intent.
- All international relationship agreements regardless of how they are initiated.
- All communication, Action Plan development, marketing, community engagement or consultation activities that relate to international relations.

#### 4. DEFINITIONS

Reference term	Definition
Council	Greater Shepparton City Council
Sister City Agreement	Where two cities from different countries establish a formal agreement which is typically more formal and structured with goals to build global cooperation at the municipal level, through promotion of cultural understanding, exchange of information and to stimulate economic development. Often involve collaboration in various sectors such as trade, tourism and civic engagement.
Friendship City Agreement	Where two cities from different countries establish a generally more informal agreement that is more flexible than a Sister City relationship which aims to build goodwill and mutual understanding rather than working towards specific collaborative projects. Often centred on cultural exchanges, celebrations and fostering personal connections between residents.

#### 5. POLICY

##### 5.1 Sister City and Friendship City Agreements

The following Selection Criteria will be considered by Council when determining whether Council should enter into a Sister City or Friendship City Agreement:

- Economic and social benefits that the relationship would create for Greater Shepparton.
- The likelihood of increasing the potential for trade between the two cities.
- Synergies that exist between the two cities and whether a clear demand exists for Greater Shepparton product or the opportunity to attract investment or imports.
- The potential to establish international student placement opportunities in conjunction with local secondary colleges, Universities and TAFEs.

Each Sister City and Friendship City Agreement should feature the following within the agreement:

- A sunset clause
- A 12 month review period

- Agreed outcomes
- The opportunity to extend the formal relationship
- A clear purpose of the agreement

*In line with the Foreign Relations (State and Territory Arrangements) Act 2020, Council will notify the Minister for Foreign Affairs within 14 days of entering into any Sister City or Friendship City agreement. Notifications should be made through the Foreign Arrangements Scheme Online Portal ([www.foreignarrangements.gov.au](http://www.foreignarrangements.gov.au)).*

## 5.2 Delegations and Business visits

The following Selection Criteria will be considered by Council when determining whether Council should host an international delegation:

- A clear intention of the visit has been articulated by the potential visitor and there is also a clear understanding of the potential outcomes that can be created as a result of the visit.
- The visit aligns with the Economic Development, Visitor Economy and Major Events Strategy.
- Visit fits within the available budget.
- The extent to which the visit aligns with Federal and State Government policies or opportunities.

## 5.3 Invitations to International Cities

The following Selection Criteria will be considered by Council when determining whether Council will accept an international invitation:

- A formal invite has been received from the City.
- The extent to which local Greater Shepparton businesses are interested in joining the delegation.
- A clear purpose of the invite has been articulated by the City or State authorities/government and there is a clear understanding of the potential outcomes that can be created as a result of the visit.
- The visit aligns with the Economic Development, Visitor Economy and Major Events Strategy.
- The visit is a priority taking into consideration other intended overseas visits for the financial year (if any).
- The extent to which the visit aligns with Federal and State Government policies or opportunities.
- Whether the visit fits within the available budget.

## 5.4 Maintaining current Sister and Friendship City relationships

- All relationships should have a focus on creating both economic and social benefits.
- All relationships should demonstrate economic progression and create opportunities for local business and industry.
- All existing relationships should align with this policy and the Economic Development, Visitor Economy and Major Events Strategy.

- Should it be determined that existing relationships are not achieving economic and social outcomes and do not align with Economic Development, Visitor Economy and Major Events Strategy the relationship should be reviewed. If a sunset clause applies to the relationship and the relationship is not achieving the desired outcomes, the relationship should not be extended unless relationship objectives are reviewed and agreed upon.
- Focus should be applied towards existing prosperous relationships and also entering into relationships with other international cities where benefits can be created between our region and the city.

**6. RELATED POLICIES**

- Councillor Expenses Policy

**7. RELATED LEGISLATION**

- Foreign Relations Act 2020

**8. REVIEW**

The International Engagement Policy is to be reviewed by the Manager Economic Development every four years. Reviews may be undertaken sooner in response to changes in legislation or Council's processes. Suggested revisions are to be submitted to Council for adoption.

**DOCUMENT REVISIONS**

<b>Version #</b>	<b>Summary of Changes</b>	<b>Date Adopted</b>
1	Policy first drafted and adopted	20 June 2017
2	Policy Review with minor change	19 February 2019
3	Updated to ensure Federal and State policies are considered when undertaking International liaison efforts.	17 August 2021
4	Policy Review with minor changes	March 2025