

# Latrobe City International Relations Plan

2011 - 2014



Chinese Festival in Latrobe City

***VISION** – For Latrobe City to engage with its international community for the cultural and economic benefit of the city.*

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Latrobe City's International Relations Program has been an integral component of Council operations since 2000 and has been very successful. Here's why.....

### ***International Investment:***

- **Over the past 15 years, over \$3 billion dollars have been invested by international firms into Latrobe City.**
- International firms provide significant employment to the residents of Latrobe City.
- **In 2010, industry with international interests in Latrobe City sponsored community festivals and events in excess of \$250 thousand.**
- Nine business delegations from China and Japan visited Latrobe City to explore investment opportunities in 2010 alone.
- **Recent international investment in Latrobe City exceeds \$750 million across the sectors of manufacturing, mining and forestry.**
- The Victorian Government Business Office advises there is over \$1.5 billion of potential investments from China and Japan into Latrobe City.
- **Our long term sister city relationships with Taizhou, China and Takasago, Japan displays trust with our Asian economic and business connections and provides us with credibility when negotiating or selling the great benefits of our city.**

### ***Cultural Exchange:***

- **Over 500 Latrobe City residents have visited our Sister Cities for cultural and education exchange since inception in 2000.**
- Over 200 Latrobe City youth have participated in Latrobe City Council initiated exchange programs since 2000. Programs have included sport, arts and education exchange.
- **Over 3,000 enthusiastic Latrobe City residents and visitors attend, participate and experience Japanese culture at the annual Japanese Day celebration.**
- Over 200 youth from Takasago in Japan and Taizhou in China have visited Latrobe City since 2000.

### ***Education:***

- **Since 1999, Traralgon College has facilitated an English teaching program with its Sister School – Taizhou Number 1 Middle School. Over 50 people representing Traralgon College – teachers, business and community members have spent three months each year working and living in Taizhou.**



- Four schools in Latrobe City have Sister School arrangements with equivalent schools in Latrobe City's Sister Cities; Lowanna Secondary College, Kurnai College, Traralgon College and Elizabeth Street Primary School in Moe.
- **Traralgon College was the first regional school in Victoria to gain accreditation by the Education Department to educate international students on a full fee paying basis as well as accreditation to operate exchange programs internationally.**
- Chinese language classes are being introduced to Latrobe City schools through a Federal Government initiative to create closer links with Asia - Kurnai, Lowanna and Traralgon Colleges are involved to date. Japanese language is already widely taught in schools throughout Latrobe City.
- **Monash University Gippsland has 370 international students in 2011. This level of student presence brings around \$11 - \$15 Million to our local economy per annum. This number is expected to increase to around 500 students over the next 3 years.**
- Monash University Gippsland attracted 270 international students in 2010 from 30 countries. The largest contingent is from China with 125 students.
- **Each year international students from Monash Gippsland, Traralgon and Kurnai Colleges engage with our local community by presenting children's workshops at Japanese Day, Chinese Festival and the Multicultural Festival.**
- These same students become members of sporting clubs and community groups and will make life long friendships with Latrobe City residents.
- **These same students have family and friends visit them from abroad, resulting in significant Tourism expenditure in our region.**

#### LATROBE CITY STUDENT REFLECTION....

*"After experiencing the China trip and having stayed in a Chinese families home, it has made me a lot more appreciative of what I have here back home and the siblings whom I live with.*

*I have a much better understanding of their culture, especially seeing the way they lived, socialised with others and how committed they were to do well in their schooling life.*

*This trip has also given me more initiative and confidence to go travel more in the future, as I officially have the travel bug. I feel honoured to have been able to take this opportunity to go on this trip, I have gotten a lot out of it and I hope the friendships I've gained last a long time."*

Beth, Lowanna Secondary College

- **Latrobe City's International Relations Program has been recognised as the 'Best Overall Program' at the 2010 Australian Sister City Awards....**

## The Importance of International Relations - The National Context.

We live in a global world. We face issues that can only be addressed internationally: sustainable futures, the changing world economy and security of people and environments.

Australia, like many countries, requires citizens who are globally engaged, comfortable with diversity and with the skills to operate effectively across cultures with different world views and belief systems. In particular we need to ensure that young Australians are prepared to engage with peoples from the Asian region. This is the part of the world to which we are most geographically connected. Our future is inextricably linked to the strength of the relationships and understandings that we forge with Asian countries. This diverse region's rapid development demands increasingly sophisticated and informed responses from Australians.

**DID YOU KNOW....** *'Asia will contain 60 per cent of the world's population by 2050. It already includes the world's two most populous nations, China and India. Over the next 50 years the Asian region is expected to become the centre of world economic development. China will be the world's second-largest economy by 2020, and probably the largest by 2050....and it is on our doorstep'*<sup>1</sup>.

### ECONOMY

*'Australian business points to the importance of an understanding of different cultures and well-developed intercultural skills as new core competencies for twenty-first century Australians. Wherever Australians live and work, be it within Australia or internationally they will increasingly experience a multinational, multicultural and multi faith setting'*<sup>2</sup>. This applies equally to people from rural and urban Australia who are already among those taking up career opportunities connected abroad, in particular to the Asian region. With the services sector predicted by many to become the biggest industry sector in the future, the necessity of cross cultural communication skills and understandings, including languages, will be essential.

### EDUCATION

*'The National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century recognise the importance of education in helping young people understand their roles and responsibilities as members of Australian, regional and global communities. A deeper understanding of the underpinning ideas and values of Asian societies will make it much easier for us to handle those occasions in the future when political, strategic or economic tensions arise between Australia and the countries of our region.*

*Four broad reasons why studies of Asia should be part of our school curriculums are outlined in the national statement. This is a national policy statement approved by the MCEETYA in 2005. The Statement provides a rationale for embedding a focus on Asia and it broadly identifies the knowledge, understandings, values and skills required to engage with Asia in the context of existing policies and practices in teaching and learning'*<sup>3</sup>.

## 1. Being good neighbours to people who live in our geographic region; and responsible global citizens

In a public lecture in 2000, army general Peter Cosgrove said: *'Good neighbours learn to*

1. National Statement for Engaging Young Australians with Asia in Australian Schools, p6  
2. AEF <http://www.asiaeducation.edu.au>  
3. National Statement for Engaging Young Australians with Asia in Australian Schools, p5

*... speak each other's languages ...*

*Good neighbours learn to respect each other's religious and cultural beliefs. Good neighbours learn to allow for differences and to be inclusive. Good neighbours spend time with each other. Good neighbours understand that contentious issues should be resolved through negotiation.' Young people especially need to be prepared for the realities of global citizenship, to understand and appreciate other cultures and so equip themselves for the future<sup>4</sup>.*

## **2. Maintaining social harmony**

Twenty-five per cent of Australians today were born overseas and about five per cent in Asia. To maximise the opportunities this brings, while at the same time nourishing community harmony, schools must help young people understand the diverse histories, values and beliefs of other societies, and how they influence Australia's identity and our future.

## **3. Enriching cultural life**

Philosophies, belief systems, medicines, technologies, art, literature, languages, cuisine, sports and popular culture originating from diverse countries enrich our lives and expand our intellectual and creative horizons. They make a vital contribution to what it means to be Australian today.

### **Did You Know.....**

***The Australian Government has committed funding of \$62.4 million over four years (2008–09 to 2011–12) for the National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program (NALSSP). The aim of the program is to increase opportunities for school students to become familiar with the languages and cultures of Australia's key regional neighbours, namely China, Indonesia, Japan and Korea<sup>5</sup>.***

## **4. Generating continued prosperity**

*'More than half of Australia's two-way trade is with Asia. China became our largest trading partner in 2007 with Japan a close second after holding this position for the past 36 years. New agreements will stimulate increases in trade with key Asian markets, as China, India and Japan join the United States among the world's four biggest economies.*

*Asia consists of more than three billion people. Improvements in education and a growing affluence throughout Asia will mean new, competing businesses and a rising global workforce. Wherever Australians live and work, whether in Australia or overseas, they will increasingly find themselves part of a multinational, multicultural and multi faith society. Cross-cultural understanding and communication skills – including languages – will become more and more important<sup>6</sup>.*

International languages and studies will equip the students of today with the skills to excel in the careers of tomorrow in our increasingly globalised economy. A greater cultural understanding and the ability to engage with our regional neighbours will help to build a more productive and competitive nation. This is beneficial for our economy, community and individuals, creating more jobs and higher wages and overall better opportunities for all Australians.

4. ABC News, 31 August 2007.

5. [http://www.asiaeducation.edu.au/for\\_parents/studies\\_should\\_be\\_included\\_in\\_schools\\_curriculum.html](http://www.asiaeducation.edu.au/for_parents/studies_should_be_included_in_schools_curriculum.html)

6. <http://www.deewr.gov.au/schooling/NALSSP>

**Latrobe City is committed to an International Relations Program for our community, for the purpose of international exchange and cooperation in the fields of economy, trade, science and technology, cultural exchange, education, sports, health and people.**

Latrobe City's involvement in international relations activities is far reaching. There has been a specific focus on the development and nurturing of our existing sister city relationships with Japan and China for the benefit of our City. Equally, there has also been and will continue to be a wide range of activities engaging our culturally diverse community through our International Relations Program aimed at maintaining social harmony, enriching cultural life and generating continued prosperity.

### **Our Community**

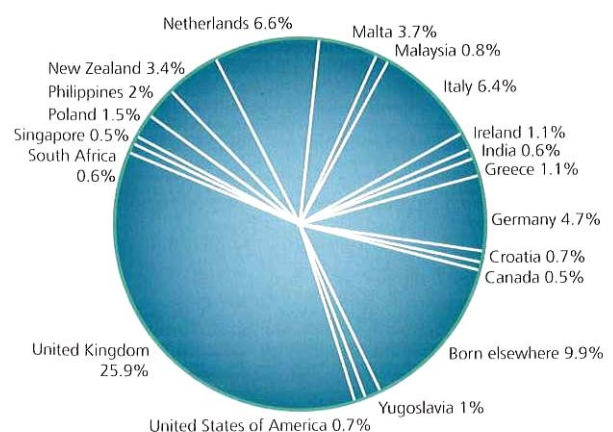
Latrobe Valley is a thriving, diverse, multicultural region. Its people have come from many parts of the world to make Latrobe Valley their home. This is expressed through a range of vibrant community festivals and events and by the formation of many cultural community groups. The Gippsland Multicultural Festival, Japanese Day, Oktoberfest, and the Filipino Festival are all great examples where our wider community can enjoy the sights, sounds and tastes of other cultures and those members from our community can celebrate their roots. Latrobe City supports these community groups and events through its annual Community Grants program and through recurrent funding and sponsorship.

Latrobe City has a strong commitment to building an inclusive and cohesive community. A harmonious community is promoted, that acknowledges the assets of diversity, engages and communicates with its citizens, and nurtures its neighbourhoods.

The development and implementation of the *Cultural and Linguistically Diverse Action Plan 2010-2013* is one of the ways in which Council realises this commitment. The Action Plan demonstrates Council's commitment to address the cultural and linguistic barriers facing many of its citizens.

*Latrobe Settlement Committee* was established in 2007 as a strategic group to develop partnerships, effective planning and responses to the settlement needs of new arrival refugees and migrants to our region.

Latrobe City Council recognises the need to ensure strategies are in place to capitalise on our proud and diverse multicultural history, while setting the scene for future economic, social and cultural development.



Source: CDATA 2001.

## Sister Cities

Latrobe City has established and managed formal sister city relationships on behalf of our community, to gain a deeper understanding of each other's culture, traditions, society and people. To this end, Latrobe City has two formal sister city relationships; with Takasago City, Japan and the City of Taizhou, China.

Latrobe City recognises that the key to achieving this deeper understanding is through young people and this is why a significant focus of Latrobe City's programs is with the youth of our community. A Sister City Program enables citizens to become directly involved in international relations in a unique and meaningful way, bringing long-term benefits to the local community and its partners abroad.

Sister city relationships allow communities to exchange experiences and ideas, gain an international perspective and increase their understanding of global issues.

In addition to encouraging international peace and goodwill, Latrobe City's sister city relationships go much further leading to economic growth, increased tourism, and reliable business contacts.

## Benefits of Sister Cities

Our Sister City Program helps promote Latrobe City as a city of global significance, through exchanges and initiatives that focus on five key areas – education, culture, trade, tourism and sport.

The program enables us to foster international peace and goodwill, enriching our community with a broader understanding of other nations, their traditions, customs and cultures. Crucially though, it also provides a multi-lateral framework for cultivating economic growth across a host of trade, industry and business sectors.

### The economic and business benefits

Our active sister city relationships have an important role to play in developing international economic partnerships. Latrobe City enjoys investment in the billions from International interests in local industry and there is a demonstrated and sustained interest in Latrobe City as a potential investment location from overseas firms.





Helping to establish reliable business contacts and thereby improve business opportunities, the program acts as a gateway to new markets and trade alliances. It acts as a springboard and catalyst for new investment and knowledge-sharing opportunities, while also promoting tourism, inbound education and providing a platform from which we can address global issues with our international partners.

**The social and cultural benefits**

Through cultural, educational and sporting exchanges, the program helps to break down intercultural barriers. It promotes diversity and encourages openness, tolerance and mutual understanding, all of which enrich our communities and those of our international partners.

The Latrobe City International Relations Plan 2011-2014 aims to capitalise on the achievements of the past ten years. We are significantly contributing in embedding within curriculum and community the goals of National and State Governments. Our international relationships have matured and now present further opportunities to realise tangible benefits for individuals, the community and the region.



Emerging Artists Exchange Program 2010



Emerging Artists Exchange Program 2010 – Takasago, Japan

## **Alignment to Latrobe 2026 – The Community Vision for Latrobe City**

Latrobe 2026 is the community's vision for the future development of the region builds on its strength as one of Victoria's key regional economies and its position as the commercial centre of Gippsland with a focus on education, health and community services and facilities.

Other major aspirations are for a community that is both liveable and sustainable, with a continued focus on healthy lifestyles supported by high quality recreational and cultural facilities and a natural environment that is nurtured and respected.

The community has expressed its desire for a future in which people are united in a common purpose whilst respecting the diversity of their heritage and cultures. To enable the vision to become reality the community identified the need for effective and proactive leadership at all levels and expressed a willingness to connect with community leaders to enrich local decision making.

Latrobe 2026: The Community Vision for Latrobe Valley:

*"In 2026 the Latrobe Valley is a liveable and sustainable region with collaborative and inclusive community leadership."*

## **Latrobe City Council Plan 2010-2014**

The Council Plan is built around the nine objectives contained in Latrobe 2026. It outlines the strategic direction of Latrobe City Council in each objective, supported by major initiatives and service delivery to be implemented during the four years of the plan.

### **Strategic Direction – Culture**

Foster greater awareness, understanding and respect for other cultures through the promotion of international relationships.

Facilitate and support events, community festivals and arts programs that reflect and celebrate cultural diversity and heritage.

Increase the accessibility of Latrobe City Council's cultural facilities, programs and events.

### **Service Provision – Culture**

Deliver International Relations programs and services in accordance with the Latrobe City Council International Relations Plan

### **Service Provision – Economy**

Facilitate the attraction of large investments to Latrobe City in conjunction with the Victorian and Australian Governments.

## International Relations Committee

The Sister City Committee comprised of 17 members was established in 1998.

Since 2000, Latrobe City has facilitated an International Relations Committee comprising Councillors, Latrobe City Council officers, key industry stakeholders and members of the community.



School visits in Taizhou 2010

The purpose of the committee is to promote and foster friendship, communication, understanding and economic development initiatives between the residents of Latrobe City and those of other nations through the establishment and management of sister cities and other international relationships.

The committee acts in an advisory role under Terms of Reference adopted by Latrobe City Council and has played a lead role in the development of the Latrobe City Council International Relations Plan 2011-2014.

## Economic Development

Latrobe City attracts significant overseas investment with current investment in the billions. For example: Japanese firms including, Mitsui (Loy Yang B), Tepco (Loy Yang A), Nippon Paper (Australian Paper) and Kirin (National Foods) each make significant contributions to the local economy and many Japanese families now call Latrobe City home.

### *Did you know.....*

***That 9 business delegations from China and Japan visited Latrobe City to explore investment opportunities in 2010 alone.***

There is currently a demonstrated and sustained interest in Latrobe City as a potential investment location from overseas firms. In particular, Latrobe Valley's coal resource attracts global attention with a number of firms presenting clean coal and advanced technologies.

The International Relations Team at Latrobe City Council plays a key role in assisting with the hosting of business delegations and often adds significant value in this area by working collaboratively with the Economic Development Division.

Utilising our sister city relationships to contribute to economic development will continue to play a significant role in developing business opportunities with China, Japan and Asia more generally.

Our long term relationships with our sister cities provides us with a level of trust and credibility when hosting Asian delegations and we will continue to leverage these opportunities as they present.

## Education

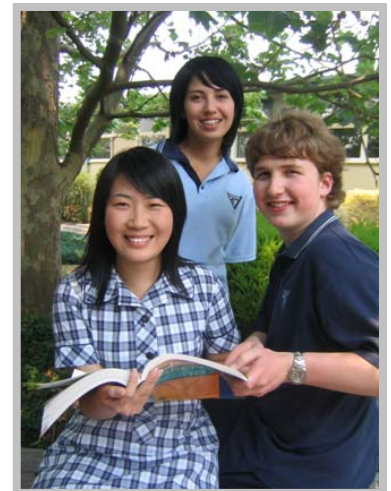
An extensive variety of international programs are now well established at Monash University (Gippsland Campus), Traralgon College, Kurnai College (Gippsland Education Precinct), Lowanna College, Lavalla College and GippsTAFE.

These include:

- Students from a number of nations, who study within Latrobe City on a full fee paying basis or as part of a student exchange program (Monash Gippsland, Traralgon College).
- Shorter term student and staff exchange programs with sister schools.
- Student cultural enrichment program.
- International student sports team.
- Educational Department to bring Chinese students for training.
- Monash University links with Jiangnan University, China and medicine (visiting doctors) Malaysia.
- Rotary exchange students.
- Courses on Japanese philosophy.
- Mandarin language classes.
- Japanese language classes.
- GippsTAFE - delivering programs in Malaysia, Papua New Guinea and seeking new opportunities in Korea, India and China.

### *Did you know.....*

**An international fee paying tertiary student pays \$30 thousand plus living costs, per annum. In 2010 this equated to over \$10 million to our local economy<sup>7</sup>.**



International Student at Traralgon College

## Cultural and Linguistic Diversity Action Plan

Latrobe City has a strong commitment to building an inclusive and cohesive community. A harmonious community is promoted, that acknowledges the assets of diversity, engages and communicates with its citizens, and nurtures its neighbourhoods.

The development and implementation of the Cultural and Linguistically Diverse Action Plan 2010-2013 is one of the ways in which Council realises this commitment.

The Action Plan demonstrates Council's commitment to address the cultural and linguistic barriers facing many of its citizens. Council recognises the need to ensure strategies are in place to capitalise on our proud and diverse multicultural history, while setting the scene for future economic, social and cultural development.

7. <http://www.monash.edu/study/coursefinder/>

## Latrobe City Youth Band

The Latrobe City Youth Band is a 30 piece concert band conducted by its Music Director, David Williams.

Bringing together talented instrumentalists, ranging in age from 14 – 21, from all socio-economic backgrounds within the municipality, it provides the City's youth with the opportunity for personal growth and enhances musicianship as members of a 30 piece concert band.

The level of the band's performance is extremely high and well renowned. The band plays a range of music from grade three levels through to equivalent to first and second year university ensemble level.



Youth Band Tour 2008 – Taizhou, China

The youth band has reaped the benefits of performing at a wide variety of concerts since it was first formed in 2002 both locally and internationally. In 2004, the band gave five performances and played to a total audience which numbered over 10,000 in Taizhou City, China. On the same tour, the band played in joint concerts with local high schools in Takasago City, Japan. A further tour of our sister cities occurred in 2008 giving a further 30 local youth the opportunity to perform abroad.

Latrobe City is the major sponsor of the Latrobe City Youth Band and provides administrative and financial support, resourced through the International Relations Unit.

## Sister Cities Australia

Sister Cities Australia (SCA) is an association of towns, shires, cities, ports and even States that have a sister city relationship.

The objective of SCA is to provide an umbrella of support and to promote these affiliations. SCA also aims to provide a forum for cultural, economic and educational interchange between communities and to encourage friendship, co-operation and understanding to improve peaceful coexistence worldwide.

Latrobe City supports the establishment of formal relationships between cities throughout the world under the auspices of the Sister Cities movement. Latrobe City is an active member of the Sister Cities Australia Association and endorses the association's aims and objectives. Latrobe City's Sister Cities program is highly regarded both nationally and internationally and this has been demonstrated through the following key achievements:

*Did you know.....*

**In 2010 Latrobe City Council was awarded the 'Best Overall Program' at the Sister Cities Australia Awards.**

## Key Achievements:

- 2003 Best Display Award
- 2004 Youth Project Award
- 2004 Community Involvement Award
- 2005 Hosted the Sister City Conference
- 2006 Best Display Award
- 2007 Commerce /Industry Award
- 2008 Youth Project Award
- 2008 Best Display Award
- 2010 Best Overall Program Award



Latrobe City hosted the Sister City conference in 2005

## Latrobe Sister City Relationships

### Takasago City, Japan

Takasago City, with a population of approximately 100,000 and an area of 34 square kilometres, is located in the middle-south part of Hyogo Prefecture. In terms of population Takasago is the tenth largest local government area in Hyogo Prefecture.



Takasago is a cultural showcase with shrines, temples and especially the Oshiko Floating Stone and the pine trees in Takasago Shrine. It is a major industrial area in the region, including paper, food, iron, steel, machinery, ceramics, chemicals and power generation. Takasago is well known as the birth place of the classical song “Youkyuku Takasago”, which is a famous wedding song that is sung at Shinto weddings throughout Japan. Takasago declared the city as “The Bridal City Takasago” in 1988 – hoping for peace and happiness for all human beings and a healthy, bright and lively city.

### Takasago & Latrobe

Our relationship with Takasago was born out of a multi million-dollar economic development project undertaken in Latrobe Valley by Japanese Company Kobe Steel in the 1980s. Over 200 families from the Takasago area resided in Latrobe Valley during this time and had a significant economic impact on the region. At the request of Kobe Steel and Takasago City, the former City of Morwell (now part of Latrobe City) commenced the process of establishing a relationship with Takasago City in the early 1990s. This ultimately led to Latrobe City Council entering into a formal relationship with Takasago City in October 2000. The agreement was signed by the then Mayor Tony Hanning and Mr Hirokazu Tamura, Mayor of Takasago. In 2010, re-affirmation of the Sister Cities agreement was signed which demonstrates the strength and commitment between the two cities.



Takasago City

## Past Exchanges

### Student Visit Program

- 2001 April - 10 Latrobe students visited Takasago City
- 2002 August - 10 Takasago students visited Latrobe City
- 2004 August - 10 Takasago students visited Latrobe City
- 2006 August - 10 Takasago students visited Latrobe City
- 2008 August - Takasago Jazz Band visited Latrobe City



ALT Catherine Reid 2006/7 & 2007/8

### Sports Exchange

- 2006 January - 12 female basketball players and 14 male soccer players with seven accompanying adults visited Takasago City.

### Artists Exchange

- 2010 March/June – To celebrate the ten year anniversary of our sister city agreement, four emerging artists visited Takasago City for two weeks and four Takasago artists visited Latrobe City for one week. The artworks were exchanged as gifts to commemorate the anniversary.

### Latrobe City Youth Band

- 2002 Establishment of Latrobe City Youth Band
- 2004 January - Latrobe City Youth Band Tour to Takasago City and Taizhou City
- 2005 Tour of Central Victoria
- 2008 January - Latrobe City Youth Band Tour to Takasago City and Taizhou City

### Mayoral Led Delegations and Community Members Visits

- 2002 August - Members of Latrobe Friendly Society from Takasago visited Latrobe City for 1 week
- 2002 December - Members of Takasago Friendly Society visited Takasago City
- 2005 September - 30 Members of Latrobe Friendly Society participated in the Japanese Day and the Australian Sister City Association National Conference in Latrobe City
- 2009 October – Latrobe City business delegation to Takasago
- 2010 October – Celebration 10 year anniversary, Takasago Mayor led a delegation participated in the Japanese day

## Other

### ALT (Assistant Language Teacher)

The following Latrobe City residents have participated in the ALT program, assisting our sister city Takasago in teaching English at junior high schools and primary schools in Takasago for 12 months:

- 2001/2002 Janine Edbrooke
- 2002/2003 Simone Fenech
- 2003/2004 Fabian Rutherford
- 2004/2005 Rebecca Stait
- 2005/2006 Joelene Thompson
- 2006/2007 Catherine Reid
- 2007/2008 Catherine Reid
- 2010/2011 Katrina Steel



ALT Joelene Thompson 2005/6 - Japan

## **Takasago Friendly Society**

Latrobe City established the Takasago Friendly Society (TFS) in 2001, comprising those people who are interested in assisting with the hospitality of International visitors within the community. The primary purpose of the TFS is to help Latrobe City host its visitors from Takasago City. Members of the Society play a key role in hosting international visitors and showing its visitors around the region, being a host family for a few nights and/or any other activities.

## **Cherry Blossom Avenue**

On 4 June 1991, fifteen Mount Fuji Flowering Cherry Blossom Trees were planted by Japanese staff of Brown Coal Liquefaction Victoria (BCLV) to serve as a constant reminder of the lasting friendships made between Japanese staff of the pilot Coal to Oil Plant and the residents of the then City of Morwell. These Flowering Cherry Blossom Trees were planted at Kernot Hall, Morwell and continue to blossom throughout spring each year bringing Kernot Hall alive with a real Japanese feel.

## **Latrobe Friendly Society**

Based in Takasago, the Latrobe Friendly Society was established in February 2003 to promote friendly ties between the people of Takasago City and the people of Latrobe City. It is comprised of enthusiastic members, with various and unique talents in the community. The members of the Society play a role in the organisation of visits from Latrobe City, including organising an itinerary, escorting the visitors around the City, assistance of Assistant Language Teacher and any other activities.

## **Japanese Day**

Since its inception in 2004, Japanese Day has proven to be a successful community event where people get together to celebrate their sister city's culture and appreciate the sister city relationship with Takasago City. This event is held annually in October and continues to attract over 3,000 people annually.



Japanese Day in Latrobe City



## Taizhou City, China

Taizhou is located on the northern bank of the Yangtze River's lower reaches, in mid-Jiangsu Region. It is a newly founded city, approved by the State Council in 1996, and is directly under the jurisdiction of Jiangsu Province of which Nanjing is the capital city. Jiangsu Province is the Sister State to our home State of Victoria.

The City of Taizhou administers four county level cities;

- Jingiang
- Taixing
- Jiangyan
- Xinghua and two districts
- Hailing
- Gaogong

The city area covers 5,793 square kilometres and has a population of approximately five million.

With a history extending more than 2,100 years, Taizhou has long been a political, economic, communication and cultural centre of mid-Jiangsu region. It is the hometown of China's current President Hu Jin Tao who was a student of Taizhou Middle School No.1, Mr Shi Nai'an – a famous littérateur, Mr Zheng Banqiao – a well known calligrapher and painter and Mr Mei Langfang, a true world class master of Peking Opera.

Taizhou's main industries are machinery, electronics, chemistry, textiles, light industries, pharmaceuticals and foodstuffs.

One of the largest enterprises, The Chunlan Group, manufactures air conditioners, vehicles, general machinery, motorcycles, electronics and refrigerators.



World Expo Gardens, Taizhou City

Other large manufacturers include the Linhai Group, Yangtze River Pharmaceutical Group and the Yatai Water Pump Group.

## Taizhou & Latrobe

This sister city relationship developed from an initial interest, by Taizhou, in identifying a region similar to itself.

Following correspondence from Mr Cao Sumin, the then Director of the Foreign Affairs Office of the City of Taizhou, a business delegation from Taizhou City first visited Latrobe on 8 May, 1998. The five delegates were interested to seek “business opportunities and build up friendly relations”.

This initial visit commenced the sister city relationship. Since then, the relationship has been maintained through regular contact, reciprocal visits and a great deal of trust, nurtured over the past years.



Renewal of MOU 2004

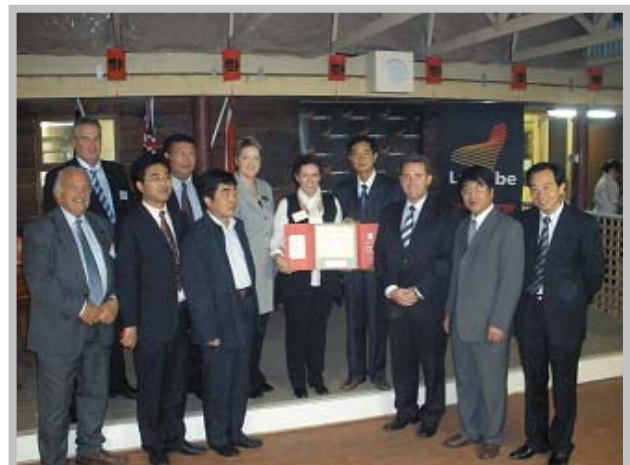
A Memorandum of Understanding was signed in April 1999.

In the same year, a delegation of Latrobe City school principals – Val Friend, Dr. John Howe and Chris Corcoran signed an Agreement to send English teachers to Taizhou for up to three months each year. This commenced a successful program of sister school relationships involving Traralgon College, Lowanna College and Kurnai College, these relationships continue to flourish.

In November 1999, La Trobe Shire Council resolved to establish a formal sister city relationship with Taizhou and the Mayor of Taizhou was invited to visit Latrobe to sign the sister city agreement.

The sister city agreement was signed on Tuesday, 7 March 2000. Latrobe City Mayor, Councillor Lorraine Bartling and Mr Chen Baotian, Director, Standing Committee of Taizhou People’s Congress, both signed the agreement that established an obligation on both cities to ensure regular contacts are maintained between the leaders and relevant departments of the two municipalities.

In 2010, a re-affirmation of the Sister Cities Agreement was signed to commemorate what has been an extremely rewarding and fulfilling 10 year relationship between the two cities.



Taizhou Business Delegation in Latrobe City 2009

## Past Exchanges

- 1999 – October – Mayoral led delegation to Taizhou to explore the possibility of a sister city relationship.
- 2000 – March – sister city agreement signed by former Mayor, Lorraine Bartling.
- September 2000 - Taizhou delegation visited healthcare facilities in Latrobe City
- September 2000 – A delegation of businesses from Latrobe City visited Taizhou City, including GippsTAFE and Traralgon College.
- August 2001 - Taizhou Children's Performing Arts Delegation. A 10-day visit by 16 performers, highly skilled in dancing, music and singing, who entertained over 1500 people in six scheduled performances.
- September 2002 - Taizhou delegation visited Latrobe City's healthcare, tertiary education and sporting facilities.
- October 2002 - Taizhou visiting Artist-in-Residence. A well known artist, Li Xuebai was hosted in Latrobe City for 10 days during which time instruction and tutorials were given to local art groups and secondary and tertiary students.
- September 2003 - Taizhou delegation focusing on healthcare and education.
- December 2003 - Taizhou delegation visited with a specific focus on tertiary education.
- January 2004 - Latrobe City Youth Band visited Taizhou. Five performances were given to an estimated total audience of 10,000. This visit also provided an opportunity for the Latrobe City Economic Development Department, who accompanied the band, to assess economic development opportunities with the City of Taizhou.
- May 2005 – Mayoral visit to Taizhou.
- May 2006 - Latrobe City table tennis team visited Taizhou to compete in several table tennis matches. The team also made visits to local schools to experience the lifestyle and educational differences in their sister city.
- May 2007 – Latrobe City business delegation visited Taizhou and China to explore business opportunities.
- January 2008 – Latrobe City Youth Band visited Taizhou. The two performances in Taizhou further promoted and advanced our sister-city friendly exchanges.
- December 2008 – Taizhou City television production team visited Latrobe City
- April 2009 – City of Taizhou officials visited Latrobe City
- September 2009 – Latrobe City business delegation visited Taizhou
- February 2010 – Taizhou Education delegation visited Latrobe City
- October 2010 – Mayoral visit to Taizhou, celebrating 10 year anniversary and re-signing of the sister city agreement.

### *Did you know.....*

**Chinese language classes are being introduced to Latrobe City schools through a Federal Government initiative to create closer links with Asia.**



Latrobe City Table Tennis Team in China 2006

## Sister School Relationships

These relationships are strengthened by teacher and student exchanges to encourage cultural and educational understanding and growth.

Since 1999, Traralgon College, Lowanna College and Kurnai College have maintained sister school relationships with regular student and teacher exchanges for specified periods whenever practicable and they are all continuing to develop and leverage off these fantastic relationships.

Traralgon College was the first Gippsland school to officially gain accreditation by the Education Department to educate international students on a full fee-paying basis as well as accreditation to operate exchange programs internationally.

### Traralgon College

- Taizhou Middle School No.1, China
- Europa– Schule Goethe Gymnasium, Ibbenbüren, Münster, Germany

### Lowanna College

- Taizhou Middle School number 2, China

### Kurnai College

- Kouan Middle School, China

### Elizabeth St Primary School

- Taizhou Experimental Primary School, China

### Lavalla Catholic College

- Istituto Comprensivo Statale "G Pallotta" located in Spinete, Italy

Latrobe City is currently working with and will continue to work with a number of other educational institutions within the municipality in the establishment of sister school relationships with schools in our sister cities and beyond.

#### *Did you know.....*

Since 1999, Traralgon College has facilitated an English teaching program with its Sister School – Taizhou Number 1 Middle School. Over 50 people representing Traralgon College – teachers, business and community members have spent three months each year working and living in Taizhou.



School visit in Taizhou 2010

## Student Reflections

Twenty-six Year-10 students and 9 staff members from Lowanna and Kurnai colleges travelled to China for a 25-day educational and cultural tour. This overseas study experience was organised by the international Division of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. The students visited Shanghai, Taizhou, Nanjing, Xian, Beijing and Hong Kong. The school visit to Latrobe City's sister city, Taizhou for ten days was the highlight of this tour. The students were involved in homestays with a Chinese family and attended school with their host student at Kouan Middle School. The feedback from students was very positive and the experience in China was one that they will never forget.

Following the trip, Lowanna, Kurnai and Traralgon colleges are working to have Confucius Classrooms to support the teaching of Chinese in their Language Centres in 2011. Lowanna has re established its sister school relationship with Taizhou Number 2 Middle School and are very pleased about this arrangement. The schools hope to have a joint trip to Taizhou each year with some student places in the group funded as scholarships. Grey Street Primary School is seeking to establish a sister school relationship with Xian High Tech International School.

***"This experience has changed my life forever. I got to do and see things I'd never get to. I had to step outside my comfort zone, making me more independent."***

– Cassie Pearce

***"I'm not afraid to be who I am. Before I left, I would just sit and not participate. I have gained new friends and certainly I have changed.....China has changed me into a much more strong and confident person."***

– Gabby Eaton

***"The China trip changed me as a person. I am now more respectful of the Asian culture and I am now more appreciative of what I have at home with regards family and friends."***

– Scott Kersten

***"For one thing I do know that is certain is that I am going to complete VCE, even if I have no life. I am going to get straight A's even if that means library and study every lunch. I am going to Monash University in Churchill to study Business after school. Then after getting my degree, all these choices are there."***

– Jack French



Overseas Study Experience 2010



# Strategic Direction moving into the future.....



The key objectives of the Latrobe City International Relations Plan are:

1. **COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES** – To further enhance the Latrobe City community’s understanding of the value of our International Relations Program.
2. **INTERNATIONAL INVESTMENT** - To continue to promote Latrobe City as an international investment location.
3. **ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL STRENGTHS** - To market the economic and cultural strengths of Latrobe City internationally.
4. **INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS** - To enthusiastically promote Latrobe City as a destination for international students.
5. **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT** – To expand and make accessible the range of existing cultural, sporting, educational and youth exchange opportunities for the residents of Latrobe City.
6. **FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES** - To pursue funding assistance opportunities that will facilitate meeting the objectives of the International Relations Plan.
7. **SISTER CITIES** – To develop, nurture and further enhance our relationship with sister cities.
8. **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT** - To positively engage with individual groups and organisations for the benefit of the Latrobe City community.



Latrobe City Youth Band Tour in Japan 2008



## Objective 1 – Communication Activities

Enhance the Latrobe City community’s understanding of the value of our International Relations Program.

*Did you know.....*

That 500+ Latrobe City residents have visited our Sister Cities for cultural and educational exchange since inception in 2000.

Key Actions	Timeline	Resources
Creation a cache of images / marketing materials which best promotes the international relations activities within Latrobe City.	Annually	\$5,000 per annum
Develop and implement Communication Plan to raise the awareness and actively promote the benefits of the International Relations Program e.g. LINK, newsletter and community group liaisons, website improvement.	Annually	\$1,500 per annum
Support and encourage development of LOTE (Language Other Than English) teaching in schools across Latrobe City.	Ongoing	Officer Resource Only
Investigate social media as a promotional and communication tool.	2011/12	Officer Resource Only
Develop an alumni program for past participants to act as ambassadors of Latrobe City’s International Relations Program.	Ongoing	Officer Resource Only



Overseas Study Experience 2010 – Lowanna & Kurnai Students in Taizhou China

## **Objective 2 – International Investment**

To promote Latrobe City as an international investment location.

*Did you know.....*

***That recent international investment in Latrobe City exceeds \$750 million across 3 industry sectors.***

Key Actions	Timeline	Resources
International Relations team continue to support the Economic Development team in international opportunities with Japan and China.	Ongoing	Officer Resources Only
Continue to host business delegations from Takasago, Taizhou and new emerging countries.	Ongoing	Officer / EDU Resources only
Continue to strengthen relationship with Regional Development Victoria, Victorian Government Business Offices, Australian China Business Council, Japan Local Government Centre and other supporting government agencies.	Ongoing	Officer / EDU Resources only
Develop assessment criteria to ensure potential international delegations are genuine and beneficial.	2011/12	Officer / EDU Resources only



Latrobe City Business Delegation in Japan 2009

## Objective 3 – Economic and Cultural Strengths

To market the economic and cultural strengths of Latrobe City internationally.

*Did you know.....*

*The Victorian Government Business Office advises there is over \$1.5 billion of potential investments from China and Japan into Latrobe City.*

Key Actions	Timeline	Resources
Work with other Government agencies to assist existing businesses in exploring investment opportunities in international markets.	Ongoing	Officer / EDU Resources Only
Assist local business in establishing international contacts and expanding their own expertise in international business.	Ongoing	Officer / EDU Resources Only
Leverage off Sister Cities relationships to capitalise on opportunities in Japan, China and Asia more broadly.	Ongoing	Officer / EDU Resources only
Work collaboratively with the Economic Development team in maintaining promotional material including DVD to market Latrobe City internationally	Ongoing	\$1,000 annually
Further develop relationships with Australia China Business Council, CLAIR (Council of Local Authorities for International Relations – Japan), Victorian Government Business Office, Consulate General Offices, relevant State / Federal and international organisations to market Latrobe City and keep abreast of current and new opportunities.	Ongoing	Officer / EDU Resources only



Latrobe City Basketball Team in Japan 2006



Latrobe City Business Delegation in Japan 2009

## Objective 4 – International Students

To promote Latrobe City as a destination for international students.

*Did you know.....*

*That Monash University Gippsland attracted 270 international students in 2010 from 30 countries. The largest contingent is from China with 125 students.*

Key Actions	Timeline	Resources
Continue to support school exchange programs and activities.	Annually	\$1,000
Continue to participate in Monash University Gippsland International Students Associations activities and events.	Annually	\$2,000
Endeavour to involve all international students in Latrobe City community events.	Annually	\$1,000
In conjunction with the Department of Education Early Childhood Development, celebrate International Education Week.	Annually	\$500
Investigate a program to enhance part time employment opportunities for International Students.	12/13	Officer Resources Only
Continue to work with VGBO, educational institutions and other providers to keep abreast of trends and opportunities for the attraction of international students to Latrobe City.	Ongoing	Officer Resources Only
Conduct an annual flag raising ceremony to welcome international students to Latrobe City.	Annually	\$5,000
Work collaboratively with the Economic Development team and education providers in maintaining current marketing and promotional material.	Annually	\$1,000
Facilitate the establishment of further sister school relationships. These include St Paul's Anglican Grammar with a Takasago school and Grey Street Primary School with a Taizhou school.	Ongoing	Officer Resources Only



Flag Raising Ceremony at Monash Gippsland 2009

## Objective 5 – Community Involvement

To broaden and make accessible the range of existing cultural, sporting, educational and youth exchange opportunities for the residents of Latrobe City.

*Did you know.....*

*Over 200 Latrobe City youth have participated in Latrobe City Council initiated exchange programs since 2000. Programs have included sport, arts and education exchange.*

Key Actions	Timeline	Resources
Conduct an overseas / sister cities exchange biennially. In 2011/12 a Sports Exchange program will take place.	11/12	\$25,000
Conduct an overseas / sister cities exchange biennially. In 2013/14 a Music exchange program will take place.	13/14	\$25,000
Coordinate a cultural acceptance campaign program to enhance cultural awareness, combat racism and spread cultural acceptance through participation in Harmony Day and other international cultural activities within Latrobe City.	Annually	\$3,000
Continue to coordinate international festivals for the benefit of the community – Japanese Day and Chinese Festival.	Annually	\$20,000
Participate in community Multicultural Festivals and events.	Annually	\$2,000
Provide a Latrobe City Council international exchange scholarship for a deserving indigenous student.	Annually	Sponsorship of \$3,000



Latrobe City Soccer Team in Japan 2006

## Objective 6 – Funding Opportunities

To pursue funding assistance opportunities that will facilitate meeting the objectives of the International Relations Plan.

*Did you know.....*

*That in 2010, industry with international interests in Latrobe City sponsored community festivals and events in excess of \$250 thousand.*

Key Actions	Timeline	Resources
Continue to engage with industry stakeholders for financial support to assist International Relations initiatives and programs.	Ongoing	Officer Resource Only
Explore grant / funding opportunities through engaging with Federal/State and relevant government agencies to capitalise on trends and opportunities.	Ongoing	Officer Resource Only



Emerging Artists Exchange 2010

## Objective 7 – Sister Cities

To develop, nurture and further enhance our relationships with sister cities.

*Did you know.....*

*That in 2010, Latrobe City celebrated the 10 year anniversary with our sister cities Taizhou, China and Takasago, Japan*

Key Actions	Timeline	Resources
Develop new Sister Cities assessment criteria, to assist in the evaluation of new international relationship opportunities.	2012/13	Officer Resource Only
Investigate the viability of developing friendship sister city relationships.	2012/13	Officer Resource only
Continue to support and coordinate the ALT (Assistant Language Teacher) program – 12- months teaching in Takasago, Japan.	Annually	\$1,000.00 per annum
Continue to be an active member of SCA (Sister Cities Australia) and participate in annual national conference and regional networks.	Ongoing	\$1,600 per delegate
Continue to host international delegations in Latrobe City.	Annually	\$8,000
Establish a Latrobe City Homestay Register for visiting delegations.	2011/12	Officer Resource Only
Work with educational providers to establish <i>Confucius Classroom</i> across Latrobe City to facilitate Mandarin (Chinese) language teaching.	2011/12	Officer Resource Only
Support the Federal Government initiative for the implementation of Asian languages within schools.	Ongoing	Officer Resource Only
Support DEECD with the development and implementation of the Gippsland Chinese Language Project.	2011/12	Officer Resource Only
Investigate the viability of a staff exchange program with City of Takasago and City of Taizhou for the purpose of sharing knowledge and improvements in work practices.	2012/13	Officer Resource Only

## Objective 8 – Community Engagement

To engage with individual groups and organisations for the benefit of the Latrobe City community.

*Did you know.....*

That each year international students from Monash Gippsland, Traralgon College and Lowanna engage with our local community by presenting children’s workshops at Japanese Day, Chinese Festival and the Multicultural Festival.

Key Actions	Timeline	Resources
Continue to encourage international students to participate in local community groups (sport, music, cultural groups etc).	Ongoing	Officer Resource Only
Continue to facilitate the International Relations Committee.	Ongoing	Officer Resource Only
Maintain representation from educational providers, key industry stakeholders and community members on the International Relations Committee.	12/13	Officer Resource Only
Continue to play an important role in the coordination of international visits to Latrobe City and encourage overseas local government delegations to visit Latrobe City.	Ongoing	Officer Resource Only
Continue to play an important role in the coordination of activities and packages for international visitors to ensure maximum local business benefits and community participation is achieved.	Ongoing	Officer Resource Only
Create an ‘Ambassador Program’ where those involved in international exchange engage with the Latrobe City community, groups and organisations in International Relations Program activities and events.	Ongoing	Officer Resources Only
Coordinate and Exhibit “Our Cities In The Eyes Of Our People” or “Faces Of Our Cities”– Photographic Exhibition of a snapshot in time captured by the people of Latrobe City, City of Taizhou and City of Takasago.	12/13	\$3,000 / Arts Unit



Japanese Day 2005 in Latrobe City



## ***Budget Implications***

The activities outlined under each objective have been spread across the four years of the Plan and are consistent with previous budget allocations for International Relations activities.

In the instance of a youth delegation being conducted biennially, a budget allocation of \$25,000 will be required. This is consistent with allocations made for these activities in the previous Plan.

In addition to this, there are a number of activities that have been identified as needing to have their viability/feasibility assessed prior to them being implemented. In these instances, the relevant budgetary process will be considered by Council for adoption.

It is important to note that the community helps fund the International Relations Program. Fundraising is undertaken to subsidise Youth Delegations, parents contribute when their child is selected and Latrobe City businesses sponsor many of the events and programs.

## ***Implementation***

Actions identified in the International Relations Plan will commence implementation in 2011 and conclude in 2014.

## ***Evaluation and Control***

Actions will be detailed in annual business plans and progress will be reported on monthly in Latrobe City Council's integrated planning and performance reporting software.

The Latrobe City International Relations Committee will act as the primary coordination and review mechanism for this plan and will review the plan and implementation of actions annually.



Emerging Artists Exchange 2010 – Takasago, Japan

