

Minutes

International Relations Advisory Committee Meeting

Thursday, 23 October 2025



**MINUTES OF CITY OF DARWIN
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD AT THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS DARRANDIRRA, LEVEL 1, CIVIC CENTRE, HARRY
CHAN AVENUE, DARWIN
ON THURSDAY, 23 OCTOBER 2025 AT 11:00 AM**

PRESENT:

The Right Worshipful, the Lord Mayor Peter Styles (Chair)
Councillor Jimmy Bouhoris
General Manager, Tourism Top End Samantha Bennett
Executive Director, Port of Darwin Ben Cheng
Chair, Sister City Advisory Committee Kate Heelan
General Manager Innovation, City of Darwin Alice Percy
Director, Dept. of Foreign Affairs and Trade NT Suzy Wilson-Uilelea
Senior Director, Dept. of Trade, Business and Asian Relations David Orr

OFFICERS:

Emma Struys, Executive Manager Growth and Economic Development
Jessica Fry, Manager International Relations and Sponsorship

APOLOGY:

Vice Chancellor, Charles Darwin University Shannon Holborn
Chief Executive Officer, Larrakia Nation Michael Rotumah
Chief Executive Officer, Chamber of Commerce NT Glen Hingley

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1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

City of Darwin acknowledges that we are living and working on Larrakia Country.

We acknowledge the Larrakia people as the Traditional Owners of the Darwin region. We pay our respects to the Larrakia elders past and present and support emerging Larrakia leaders now and into the future.

City of Darwin is committed to working together with all Larrakia to care for this land and sea for our shared future.

General Manager, Tourism Top End Samantha Bennett was not present at the commencement of the meeting at 11:04 am

2 MEETING DECLARED OPEN

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION IRACC017/25

Moved: Councillor Jimmy Bouhoris

Seconded: Chair, Sister City Advisory Committee Kate Heelan

The Chair declared the meeting open at 11:04 am.

CARRIED 7/0

General Manager, Tourism Top End Samantha Bennett joined the meeting at 11:07 am.

3 APOLOGIES AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE

3.1 APOLOGIES

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION IRACC018/25

Moved: Councillor Jimmy Bouhoris

Seconded: Chair, Sister City Advisory Committee Kate Heelan

THAT apologies from the following members be received.

- Vice Chancellor, Charles Darwin University Shannon Holborn
- Chief Executive Officer, Larrakia Nation Michael Rotumah
- Chief Executive Officer, Chamber of Commerce NT Glen Hingley

CARRIED 8/0

3.2 LEAVE OF ABSENCE GRANTED

Nil

3.3 LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUESTED

Nil

4 ELECTRONIC MEETING ATTENDANCE

4.1 ELECTRONIC ATTENDANCE GRANTED

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION IRACC019/25

Moved: Councillor Jimmy Bouhoris

Seconded: Director, Dept. of Foreign Affairs and Trade NT Suzy Wilson-Uilelea

THAT the Committee note that pursuant to Section 95 (43) of the *Local Government Act 2019*, the following member(s) was granted permission for Electronic Meeting Attendance:

- Senior Director, Dept. of Trade, Business and Asian Relations David Orr

CARRIED 8/0

4.2 ELECTRONIC ATTENDANCE REQUESTED

Nil

5 DECLARATION OF INTEREST OF MEMBERS AND STAFF

5.1 DECLARATION OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS

Nil

5.2 DECLARATION OF INTEREST BY STAFF

Nil

6 CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION IRACC020/25

Moved: Chair, Sister City Advisory Committee Kate Heelan

Seconded: Councillor Jimmy Bouhoris

THAT the minutes of the International Relations Advisory Committee Meeting held on 18 June 2025 be confirmed.

CARRIED 8/0

7 MOVING OF ITEMS

7.1 MOVING OF ITEMS INTO CONFIDENTIAL

Nil

7.2 MOVING OF CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS INTO OPEN

Nil

7.3 MOVING CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS TO OPEN AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE MEETING**20.1 CONFIDENTIAL GENERAL BUSINESS****COMMITTEE RESOLUTION IRACC010/25**

Moved: General Manager, Tourism Top End Samantha Bennett

Seconded: Executive Director, Port of Darwin Ben Cheng

THAT the following Confidential General Business be received and noted.

- Members Verbal Updates

CARRIED 8/0**8 DEPUTATIONS AND BRIEFINGS****8.1 DEPUTATIONS AND BRIEFINGS**

Nil

9 OFFICER REPORTS**9.1 SISTER CITIES SOIREE****COMMITTEE RESOLUTION IRACC021/25**

Moved: Chair, Sister City Advisory Committee Kate Heelan

Seconded: Director, Dept. of Foreign Affairs and Trade NT Suzy Wilson-Uilelea

THAT the report entitled Sister Cities Soiree be received and noted.

CARRIED 8/0**9.2 2025 SISTER CITIES STORYTELLING COMPETITION UPDATE****COMMITTEE RESOLUTION IRACC022/25**

Moved: Councillor Jimmy Bouhoris

Seconded: Chair, Sister City Advisory Committee Kate Heelan

THAT the report entitled 2025 Sister Cities Storytelling Competition Update be received and noted.

CARRIED 8/0**9.3 SISTER CITIES ACTION PLAN UPDATE****COMMITTEE RESOLUTION IRACC023/25**

Moved: Chair, Sister City Advisory Committee Kate Heelan

Seconded: General Manager, Tourism Top End Samantha Bennett

THAT the report entitled Sister Cities Action Plan Update be received and noted.

CARRIED 8/0

10 MEMBER REPORTS

Nil

11 GENERAL BUSINESS

11.1 GENERAL BUSINESS

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION IRACC024/25

Moved: Councillor Jimmy Bouhoris

Seconded: Chair, Sister City Advisory Committee Kate Heelan

THAT the following General Business be received and noted.

MEMBERS VERBAL UPDATES

General Manager, Tourism Top End Samantha Bennett

- Tourism is going well with a small uptake in revenue and visitation
- 550 members represent a large workforce in tourism in the Top End
- Provided an update on the tourist bus and cruise ships
- Tourism Top End supporting the Visitor Economy Strategy and will continue to liaise and cooperate with NTG to ensure that there will be funding requirements attached to the strategy
- Verified how Tourism Top End and City of Darwin can continue to work together and minimise any possible duplications
- Councillor Jimmy Bouhoris explained the relationship and synergy between Tourism Top End and City of Darwin in connection to this Committee and the possibility of having a consolidated events calendar where there will be one source of truth around the NT
- There are new China Southern Airlines flights to Darwin and it would be ideal to promote for the inbound market as well to help boost tourism
- Provided additional information regarding flights to and from China Southern Airlines with connections to London, Amsterdam, Paris, France, Frankfurt, Budapest, Istanbul and Madrid in Europe, three main cities in Japan, South Korea, South Asia and the Middle East. Lay-overs not more than three hours

Chair, Sister City Advisory Committee Kate Heelan

- Congratulated the team for the Sister City Soiree which was a fantastic event with outstanding results
- Thanked Councillor Jimmy Bouhoris for doing the photo unveiling

Executive Director, Port of Darwin Ben Cheng

- Darwin Port delegation going to Shanghai for the China International Import Expo from 5-10 November

General Manager Innovation, City of Darwin Alice Percy

- Informed the group about the application for an ASEAN grant mainly for the Darwin Fusion and Sister City Cup and letters of support would be highly welcome
- Kate Heelan confirmed that AIBC will provide a support letter for the Australia-Indonesia

Institute grant application

Senior Director, Dept. of Trade, Business and Asian Relations David Orr

- Minister Maley will be undertaking his first international trip as Agriculture Minister travelling to Jakarta, Indonesia to commence engagements with inbound cattle partners, together with heads of NT's peak bodies
- Minister Cahill will likewise be going on official travel to Denpasar for the AIBC Conference wherein NTG has been a gold sponsor for the last three years underpinning the government's commitment not only to the conference and the organisation but its relationship with Indonesia
- Looking to work with AIBC to put together a Team Territory event, with Minister Cahill wanting to engage with Territorians participating in this trip
- David Orr and Chris Mouat from the Investment Attraction team, will join the Darwin Port delegation in Shanghai for the China International Import Expo
- In addition, they have been invited to join the delegation with the AusTrade CEO during his visit to Guangzhou and there would be an engagement with China Southern focusing on routes into Australia as a whole and newest route to Darwin
- Promote Darwin as a tourism destination during said visit, which will be supported by Tourism Australia
- Tourism Australia is using two Territory destinations as hero images in their latest campaign, Uluru and Kakadu, which will be used for international marketing campaigns
- The mention of China Southern Airlines international flights brings forth exciting opportunities and correlates with the DTBAR's international relations' area with particular focus on inbound numbers considering Darwin's population size, hence, continuously working across government on ways to ensure that all flights are maintained
- An international engagement strategy from the previous government is no longer current, hence, in line with the creation or re-introduction of the Office of Asian Relations by the new government, a series of market plans is being developed focusing on individual plans which would go out broadly across a variety of industries for external consultation once the internal consultations have been completed
- Congratulations to City of Darwin for the successful culmination of a number of events

Director, Dept. of Foreign Affairs and Trade NT Suzy Wilson-Uilelea

- Thanked the group for accommodating meetings whenever possible
- Recent trade visit from the Australian Ambassador to Beijing and thanked Kate Heelan for convening a round-table breakfast meeting focused on discussions on two-way trade flows and investments
- Head of Post to Shanghai coming on 20 November
- Cyber Affairs and Critical Technology Ambassador may visit by end-of-year
- Head of Post to Bali may visit next year
- Congratulated the team for the success of Darwin Fusion

CARRIED 8/0

12 DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING

RECOMMENDATIONS

THAT the next International Relations Advisory Committee be held on Wednesday, 18 February 2026, at 11:00 AM (Open Section followed by the Confidential Section), Council Chambers Darrandirra, Level 1, Civic Centre, Harry Chan Avenue, Darwin.

13 CLOSURE OF MEETING TO THE PUBLIC**RECOMMENDATIONS**

THAT pursuant to Section 99 (2) of the *Local Government Act 2019* and Regulation 8 of the *Local Government (General) Regulations* the meeting be closed to the public to consider the Confidential Items of the Agenda.

14 CLOSURE/ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING**RECOMMENDATIONS**

THAT the open section of the meeting be adjourned at 11:57 am.

THAT the chair declared the open section of the meeting closed at 11:57 am.

The minutes of this meeting were confirmed at the International Relations Advisory Committee Meeting held on 18 February 2026.

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CHAIR