

Agenda

International Relations Advisory Committee Meeting

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I hereby give notice that an International Relations Advisory Committee Meeting will be held on:

Date: Thursday, 23 October 2025
Time: 11:00 AM
Location: Council Chambers Darrandirra
Level 1, Civic Centre
Harry Chan Avenue, Darwin

Simone Saunders

Chief Executive Officer



INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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

Vice Chancellor, Charles Darwin University Shannon Holborn

General Manager Innovation, City of Darwin Alice Percy

CEO, Larrakia Nation Michael Rotumah

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

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

Chief Executive Officer, Chamber of Commerce NT Glen Hingley

OFFICERS

Emma Struys, Executive Manager Growth and Economic Development

Vanya Bosiocic, Manager Economic Development

Jessica Fry, Manager International Relations and Sponsorship

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1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

2 MEETING DECLARED OPEN

3 APOLOGIES AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE

3.1 Apologies

3.2 Leave of Absence Granted

3.3 Leave of Absence Notified

4 ELECTRONIC MEETING ATTENDANCE

4.1 Electronic Attendance Granted

4.2 Electronic Attendance Requested

5 DECLARATION OF INTEREST OF MEMBERS AND STAFF

6 CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

International Relations Advisory Committee Meeting - 18 June 2025

7 MOVING OF ITEMS

7.1 Moving Open Items into Confidential

7.2 Moving of Confidential Items into Open

8 DEPUTATIONS AND BRIEFINGS

9 OFFICER REPORTS

9.1 SISTER CITIES SOIREE

Author: Manager International Relations and Sponsorship
Authoriser: Executive Manager Growth and Economic Development
Attachments: Nil

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Sister Cities Soiree Event

BACKGROUND

Darwin Sister Cities Soiree was held on Saturday 16 August 2025 as part of the Darwin Festival 2025.

- The event included a Sister City themed trivia game, performances from local cultural groups representing Darwin's Sister Cities and the presentation of the Grand Final winners of the 'Darwin Sister City Award – Storytelling Competition 2025'.
- The Sister Cities Soiree was an action within the 2024-2026 Sister Cities Action Plan endorsed by Council for delivery.

DISCUSSION

Darwin Sister Cities Soiree was delivered as a priority under the City of Darwin's Sister Cities Action Plan 2024-2026. The event achieved the objective of promoting Darwin's international relations program and celebrating the Sister Cities culture with the Darwin community during the Darwin Festival through food, performances and live music.

The event was held on Saturday 16 August 2025 as part of the Darwin Festival. It was delivered through a partnership agreement between City of Darwin and the Darwin Festival.

The program included five cultural performances, trivia game (focused on education and promoting Darwin's Sister Cities), and the unveiling of the Grand Prize winners of the 'Darwin Sister City Awards – Storytelling Competition 2025'.

The event was attended widely by the public as part of the Darwin Festival Program at the Darwin Port Bandstand.

Performances from local Sister City representatives included:

- **Chung Wah Society Lion Dance** -. Representing Haikou
- **Ngarukuruwala Group – Tiwi Islands** – Representing Milikapiti.

- **Tunas Mekar Culture Collective** – Representing Denpasar, Indonesia
- **Nisiotiko Ksefanfoma** – Representing Kalymnos, Greece

One of the award winner's that attended the Soiree with his wife and daughters commended the event and thanked the City of Darwin Teams for a lovely evening.



Chung Wah Society Lion Dance



Councillor Jimmy Bouhoris unveiling the Photography Grand Prize Winners.



Children enjoying the Ngarukuruwala Group – Tiwi Islands – Milikapiti performance.



Tunas Mekar Culture Collective - Denpasar, Indonesia performers.



Tunas Mekar Culture Collective - Denpasar, Indonesia performers.



Nisiotiko Ksefanfoma – Kalymnos performance

9.2 2025 SISTER CITIES STORYTELLING COMPETITION UPDATE

Author: Manager International Relations and Sponsorship
Authoriser: Executive Manager Growth and Economic Development
Attachments: Nil

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the recently concluded 2025 Sister City Awards - Storytelling Competition.

BACKGROUND

The Darwin Sister City Awards – Storytelling Competition is an annual activity run by the City of Darwin to promote cross cultural engagement, knowledge sharing and creativity between amateur and professional creatives across Darwin and our Sister/Friendship Cities. Historically the competition was focused on photography, however in 2025 the competition was expanded to include two new categories – Poetry and Film.

This year's Darwin Sister City Awards – Storytelling Competition achieved the following objectives:

- Featured creative talent from Darwin's Sister Cities that connect, inspire, inform, and create awe.
- Inspired creativity amongst Darwin's seven Sister Cities and promoted the unique bond share with Darwin.

COMPETITION OUTCOME BRIEFING

The competition was open to amateur and professional photographers, poets and film producers, running from December 2024 – March 2025. City of Darwin received 69 eligible submissions across the four categories. Entries were submitted across Darwin and our Sister Cities: Ambon, Denpasar, Dili, and Haikou. Grand prize winners were acknowledged via the Discover Darwin website and at a formal ceremony during the Darwin Festival – City of Darwin's Sister Cities Soiree event.

Submissions from each Sister City:

- Haikou – 52%
- Denpasar – 20%
- Darwin – 15%
- Ambon – 9%
- Dili – 4%

The submissions per category were broken down into the following categories:

- Photo – Landscape – 42%

- Photo – People – 28%
- Poetry – 26%
- Short Film – 4%

The Grand Prize Winners for each category included:

Photography – Landscape: Zhonghua Shi, Haikou

Description: Mr Shi describes his photo as capturing Haikou Bay's unique and adapted conditions and ecological features which have become a landmark for citizens and tourists to relax, play, dine, and shop.



Photography – People: Ni Putu Bunga Kaniska Sanubari, Denpasar

Description: This portrait depicts a couple dressed in traditional Balinese songket and endek weaving, with the artist explaining that it symbolises the King and Queen of Denpasar, united in love and tradition.



Grand Prize – Poetry: Chenghan Tang, Haikou

Description: This engaging poem stood out as having a unique theme and approach, juxtaposing Haiku and Darwin's natural ecology with that of technological development.

Sister Ports: Binary Code of Tides

At 20°N and 12°S,
two ports hum in mirrored syntax—
Haikou's docks parse monsoon data,
Darwin's terminals decrypt dry winds.

We splice our latitudes with fiber-optic kelp,
submarine cables thrumming coral algorithms:
your mangrove roots compile silt into firewalls,
my volcanic bedrock hosts cloud archives.

Cranes stack containers like coral polyps,
steel reefs blooming in shared currents—
your saltwater crocodiles blink with satellite tags,
my coconut palms broadcast Wi-Fi pollen.

At dawn, your frigatebirds ping my skyscrapers,
encrypted nests in glass spires;
by dusk, my fishing fleets stream live coordinates,
pulsing through Darwin's arterial bays.

We speak in hybrid glyphs:
boiling tea steams with outback dust,
didgeridoo vibrations tessellate Qiong opera scales—
fireworks detonate twin auroras over the Arafura Sea.

Sister cities don't weep—we debug typhoons,
rebooting horizons when cyclones glitch the code.

Tides rise as executable waves,
compiling moonlit .exe into dawn's silent shore.

Grand Prize – Short Film: Putu Bagus Windhi Santika, Denpasar

Description: The talented film maker provides a beautiful depiction of Darwin and Denpasar's cultural and community connections through the story of a young Denpasar student who is grappling with the emotional turmoil of leaving her home and family in Denpasar to travel to Darwin to study.

<https://youtu.be/i-4A6p4vZCg>

City of Darwin would like to acknowledge and thank the following competition judges:

Photography Category

- Kate Heelan, Chair of Darwin City Council's Sister City Advisory Committee
- Michael Walker, President of Australian Photographic Judges Association
- Lindsay Murihead, Member of the Australian Photographic Judges Association

Poetry Category

- Jessica Lightowler, Library & Archives NT
- Hannah Illingworth, Director Darwin Fringe Festival
- Nerida Hart, Committee member, Darwin City Council's Sister City Advisory Committee

Short Film

- James Parker General Manager, Deckchair Cinema
- Paddy Mohan, Committee member, Darwin City Council's Sister City Advisory Committee

9.3 SISTER CITIES ACTION PLAN UPDATE

Author: Manager Economic Development
Authoriser: Executive Manager Growth and Economic Development
Attachments: Nil

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

BACKGROUND

City of Darwin's Sister City Program is an important component of Darwin's international relations. The purpose of this program is to foster and develop international relationships with Sister Cities and promote international understanding through education, cultural exchanges and economic development activities that benefit the community.

City of Darwin's international relations efforts contribute to:

- **Community and culture** - people who visit and settle in Darwin support City of Darwin's vision for a creative, connected, and inclusive city.
- **Economy** - access to markets, commercial opportunities, international students, and tourists all contribute to Darwin's economic prosperity.

The Sister Cities Action Plan 2024-2026 was endorsed by Council on 27 August 2024. It is an updated two-year implementation plan developed to ensure projects and initiatives align with economic development strategy and broader strategic priorities. The current Action Plan follows on from the previous Sister Cities Action Plan 2023-2024.

The purpose of the Action Plan is to:

- identify initiatives collectively
- gain formal budgetary approvals to facilitate the implementation of initiatives or projects
- establish and coordinate key success indicators in place
- measure progress and delivery.

SISTER CITIES ACTION PLAN 2024-2026 - UPDATES

Item	Tasks/ Projects Scope/Deliverables	Timeframe	Status
1	Support and deliver the 2025 Darwin Fusion	FY 2024/25	Completed
2	Darwin Welcome Pack for New businesses	FY 2025/26	Planned for 2026
3	Develop metrics to measure and report on the Sister City relationship activities	FY 2024/25	Completed in the SCAC Action Plan and PMP for each project.
4	2025 International Women's Day Walk participation	FY 2025/26	Delivered for 24/25. In planning process for 25/26
5	2024 Darwin Sister City Committee Christmas Walk and sponsorship for the community representing the Sister City countries to make a float or walk based on the request	FY 2024/25	Completed
6	2025 Darwin Ambon Yacht Rally or similar event hosted in Darwin	FY 2025/26	2025 Darwin Ambon Yacht Rally did not go ahead, a carry forward was sought for the action and budget from City of Darwin for next FY 25/26 to support the 2026 Darwin Ambon Yacht Rally. Carry forward of funds approved.
7	2025 Darwin Dili Yacht Rally	FY 2024/25	Completed.
8	2025 Darwin Sister City Award – Storytelling Competition.	FY 2024/25	Completed.
9	Darwin and Sister Cities' marketing & promotion Continue to promote Darwin and Darwin's Sister Cities programs via the Discover Darwin LinkedIn and Website	FY 2025/26	Ongoing - Discover Darwin LinkedIn. Content for next FY is being drafted.

Item	Tasks/ Projects Scope/Deliverables	Timeframe	Status
10	Darwin Sister Cities Soiree	August 2025	Completed. Planning for 2026 will start in the new year.
11	Darwin Sister City Cup 2026	June 2026	Active planning: • Funding application submitted to National Foundation for Australia-China Relations 2025-26 – awaiting outcome • Partnership secured with Football NT
12	Sister City business delegation and meetings facilitation	2025/26	Ongoing

10 MEMBER REPORTS

11 GENERAL BUSINESS**11.1 MEMBERS VERBAL UPDATES**

Author: Manager Economic Development

Authoriser: Executive Manager Growth and Economic Development

Attachments: Nil

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THAT the report entitled Members Verbal Updates be received and noted.

12 DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING

THAT the next International Relations Advisory Committee Meeting be held on Wednesday, 26 November 2025, at Council Chambers Darrandirra, Level 1, Civic Centre, Harry Chan Avenue, Darwin (Open Section followed by the Confidential Section).

13 CLOSURE OF MEETING TO THE PUBLIC

THAT pursuant to Section 99 (2) of the *Local Government Act 2019* and Regulation 51 of the *Local Government (General) Regulations 2021* the meeting be closed to the public to consider the Confidential Items of the Agenda.

14 CLOSURE/ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING



MINUTES

International Relations Advisory Committee Meeting Wednesday, 18 June 2025

Date: Wednesday, 18 June 2025

Time: 11:00 AM

**Location: Council Chambers Darrandirra
Level 1, Civic Centre
Harry Chan Avenue, Darwin**

**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 WEDNESDAY, 18 JUNE 2025 AT 11:00 AM**

PRESENT:

Councillor Jimmy Bouhoris
Deputy General Manager, Tourism Top End Jason Yule
Chair, Sister City Advisory Committee Kate Heelan
Executive Director, Port of Darwin Ben Cheng
Vice Chancellor, Charles Darwin University Shannon Holborn
General Manager Innovation, City of Darwin Alice Percy
Director, Dept. of Foreign Affairs and Trade NT Suzy Wilson-Uilelea
CEO Dept. of Trade, Business and Asian Relations Hayley Richards

OFFICERS:

Emma Struys, Executive Manager Growth and Economic Development
Vanya Bosiocic, Manager Economic Development

APOLOGY:

Lord Mayor, Kon Vatskalis
Interim General Manager, Chamber of Commerce NT Glen Hingley
CEO, Larrakia Nation Michael Rotumah

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Executive Director, Port of Darwin Ben Cheng was not present at the commencement of the meeting

1 MEETING DECLARED OPEN

The Chair declared the meeting open at 11:08 am.

2 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.

3 APOLOGIES & LEAVE OF ABSENCE

3.1 Apologies

Lord Mayor Kon Vatskalis

Interim General Manager, Chamber of Commerce NT Glen Hingley

CEO, Larrakia Nation Michael Rotumah

3.2 Leave of Absence

3.3 Leave of Absence Notified

Nil

4 ELECTRONIC ATTENDANCE

Executive Director, Port of Darwin Ben Cheng

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 IRACC009/25

Moved: Chair, Sister City Advisory Committee Kate Heelan

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

THAT the minutes of the International Relations Advisory Committee held on 12 March 2025 be confirmed.

CARRIED 7/0

7 ACTIONS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

Nil

8 PRESENTATIONS

Nil

9 OFFICER REPORTS**9.1 WELCOME TO THE NEWEST MEMBER OF THE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE 2024-2026****COMMITTEE RESOLUTION IRACC010/25**

Moved: Chair, Sister City Advisory Committee Kate Heelan

Seconded: Deputy General Manager, Tourism Top End Jason Yule

THAT the report entitled 'Welcome to the Newest Member of the International Relations Advisory Committee 2024-2026' be received and noted.

CARRIED 7/0

Executive Director, Port of Darwin Ben Cheng joined the meeting at 11:20 am

9.2 2025 DARWIN FUSION UPDATE**COMMITTEE RESOLUTION IRACC011/25**

Moved: Vice Chancellor, Charles Darwin University Shannon Holborn

Seconded: CEO Dept. of Trade, Business and Asian Relations Hayley Richards

THAT the report entitled 2025 Darwin Fusion Update be received and noted.

CARRIED 8/0

9.3 SISTER CITIES ACTION PLAN UPDATE**COMMITTEE RESOLUTION IRACC012/25**

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 Action Plan Update be received and noted.

CARRIED 8/0

10 MEMBER REPORTS

10.1 MEMBERS VERBAL UPDATES

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION IRACC013/25

Moved: CEO Dept. of Trade, Business and Asian Relations Hayley Richards

Seconded: Vice Chancellor, Charles Darwin University Shannon Holborn

THAT the report entitled Members Verbal Updates be received and noted.

CARRIED 8/0

Port of Darwin, Ben Cheng

- Mentioned that there are a lot of cruise ships arriving in Darwin
- Likewise mentioned that to his knowledge, there was a meeting that occurred between Darwin Airport and Southern Airlines regarding flights to China

Sister City Advisory Committee, Kate Heelan

- On behalf of the Australian Indonesian Business Council, wanted to congratulate City of Darwin for the successful culmination of Darwin Fusion 2025, which provided significant traction for Indonesian businesses

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

- Ambassador of Athens arriving in July and keen to engage with the Greek community in Darwin
- Timor Leste delegates arriving between August and September
- Ambassador for First Nations People has recently completed visits

Dept. of Trade, Business and Asian Relations, Hayley Richards

- Minister Cahill travelling to Malaysia next week and taking a delegation of international education to Sarawak. She will be flying on the first Air Asia flight back to Darwin
- More talks regarding Air Asia flight options
- Minister Cahill announced an EOI from interested parties from the business sector to visit Osaka, Japan as part of its official delegation

City of Darwin, Alice Percy

- Noted that City of Darwin is currently seeking a Friendship City relationship with Joetsu, Japan where a City of Darwin delegate visited 2 years ago and it would be great if the NTG delegates could discuss the relationship if the opportunity presents itself in Osaka
- Thanked Minister Cahill for hosting a reception for Darwin Fusion

Charles Darwin University, Shannon Holborn

- Previously hosted an Indonesian think tank that was a successful event and one of the outcomes was to look at further engagement with universities and businesses in Indonesia with focus on language teaching, tourism and student programs
- Appointment of an Associate Vice Chancellor for Indonesia to strengthen relationships
- CDU is bringing a delegation to South Asia in September, particularly in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India and Nepal
- Continuous lobbying and advocacy to consistently promote Darwin as a great destination for international studies
- The first cohort of international students from Timor Leste has successfully completed studies under the teaching program

11 GENERAL BUSINESS

Nil

12 NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 1 October 2025 at 11:00 am

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 Regulations the meeting be closed to the public to consider the Confidential Items of the Agenda.

RECOMMENDATIONS

THAT Council considers the confidential report(s) listed below in a meeting closed to the public in accordance with Section 99(2) of the Local Government Act 2019:

16.1 MEMBERS VERBAL UPDATE

This matter is considered to be confidential under Section 99(2) - 51(e) of the Local Government Act, and the Council is satisfied that discussion of this matter in an open meeting would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest as it deals with subject to subregulation 51(3) – information provided to the council on condition that it be kept confidential and would, if publicly disclosed, be likely to be contrary to the public interest.

14 ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING**COMMITTEE RESOLUTION IRACC014/25**

Moved: Chair, Sister City Advisory Committee Kate Heelan

Seconded: Vice Chancellor, Charles Darwin University Shannon Holborn

THAT the open section of the meeting be adjourned at 11:44 am

CARRIED 8/0

The Meeting closed at 11.44 am.

The minutes of this meeting were confirmed at the International Relations Advisory Committee held on 01 October 2025.

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CHAIR