

## **Gladstone Saiki Sister City Advisory Committee**

### **President's Report 2019**

I would like to make three general comments about the Gladstone Saiki Sister City Advisory Committee during 2019, before I conclude with brief suggestions for possible future directions:

1. The Committee itself has experienced significant changes.
2. Traditions have been maintained and expanded.
3. New directions have been explored.

#### **1. The Committee itself has experienced significant changes.**

Changes in the structure of the Committee have resulted in a strong, focussed membership. The review of the Constitution of the Gladstone Saiki Sister City Advisory Committee has been highly beneficial. It has ensured that the Committee's procedures and activities are transparent and accountable and has clarified communication with the Gladstone Regional Council. In particular, the Constitution emphasises the role of the Committee in facilitating, organising and encouraging exchanges and activities between the Gladstone and Saiki regions.

The membership of the Committee has grown to include individuals with expertise and passion. The regular attendance of Cr Desley O'Grady and Cr Glenn Churchill has provided invaluable expertise. The recent attendance by a member of the Gladstone Youth Council has injected a student's perspective that is highly respected by the Committee. Lee Griffith was an energetic secretary until he relocated and we are fortunate to have Kate Dinou as a very capable replacement. We are keen to welcome the new Curator and Manager of the Gladstone Regional Art Gallery and Museum, following the departure of the incredibly talented and hard-working Jo Duke. The President of the Gladstone Multicultural Festival, Richas Srivastava, cheerfully contributed to the Committee prior to leaving the region.

The Committee members work extremely well together to ensure the success of all activities. Maureen Mason, Liz Steel, Chris Moore, Andrew Horton, Bev Fellows and Howard Marsh each bring particular skills. The success of the Committee in 2019 is attributable to the energy and enthusiasm of all of the individual members, both Council staff and volunteers. Each one is congratulated and sincerely thanked.

In addition, it is my privilege to also acknowledge the essential and generous support of the Mayor and the Gladstone Regional Council. Their vision and practical support demonstrate their commitment to our Sister City relationship.

#### **2. Traditions have been maintained and expanded.**

Many recent highlights have included the Mayoral Visit to Saiki, the Exchange Program of students from Toolooa and Tannum Sands State High Schools, the Book Exchange Program, EcoFest and the Multicultural Festival. The wonderful staff and volunteers at the Gladstone Regional Art Gallery and Museum once again organised and inspired the Saiki Children's Art Display, Intercity Images and Saiki Children's Day activities. In addition to specific events, regular communication through the exchange of emails, greeting cards and token gifts have strengthened the bonds of friendship. Although small in number, it is to the credit of the Mayor, Councillors and Committee members that they have maintained all of these traditions to perpetuate deepening friendship between the residents of the regions of Gladstone and Saiki.

### **3. New directions have been explored.**

The recent policy of a representative from the Gladstone Youth Council attending Committee Meetings has facilitated stronger interaction between the Committee and the teenagers of our region. It is anticipated that the Youth Representative's future input will further enable the Committee to better communicate with teenagers.

Liz Steel is thanked for her initiative in translating the books received from Saiki in the Book Exchange, ensuring that they can also be read in English.

At the Multicultural Festival, a performance on the stage showcasing Saiki is a possible option.

The Saiki page on the Council's website has been expanded to include copies of the Agenda and Minutes of Meetings, information about Saiki and upcoming events.

There have been discussions to assess the possibility of contributing towards a sculpture at the Gladstone Botanic Gardens and of sponsoring an artist from Saiki. Recent heightened interest in bonsai is an additional possible focus.

The feasibility of making a new film of the Gladstone Region to share with our friends in Saiki is being investigated.

Understanding the importance of face-to-face contact, invitations have been sent to Saiki to attend significant events in our region, including the Boyne Tannum Hook Up and events organised by the Cycle Club. A host family volunteer list is being compiled to accommodate visitors from Japan.

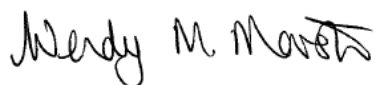
At the Annual General Meeting, there will be a presentation of photographs and information from their visits to Saiki by the Mayor and by Chris Moore and the students of Tannum Sands and Toolooa State High Schools. At the Meeting, the calendar of events for 2020 will be confirmed.

#### **Three areas of future growth could include:**

1. An emphasis upon additional communication through social media to inform and inspire.
2. Nurturing on-going conversations with our Youth, specifically through the Gladstone Youth Council and their representative and
3. A major celebration in July of the tenth anniversary of the official opening of the Japanese Garden at the Gladstone Toondoon Botanic Gardens.

In conclusion, I congratulate all involved in the Gladstone Saiki relationship on their hard work and warmly thank them for their genuine commitment. They have ensured the success of this year. Their exciting plans and proposals for the future will continue to foster our Sister City friendship which began on the 4<sup>th</sup> September 1996.

Yours sincerely



Wendy Marsh

President  
Gladstone Saiki Sister City Advisory Committee.