

**Gladstone Saiki Sister City Advisory Committee
President's Report 2022**

The Shorebirds Artwork continues to be a symbolic reminder of the strength of the relationship between the Gladstone Region and Saiki City. Celebrating the 25-year anniversary of friendship, the Artwork shows different birds flying high, beginning their flight to Japan, ready to face the constantly changing conditions.

The only major disappointment this year has been that the student exchanges, and other visits, have not taken place due to Covid-19 concerns.

The Gladstone Saiki Sister City Advisory Committee consists of Gladstone Regional Councillors, a Gladstone Regional Youth Council Representative, Gladstone Regional Council staff members and volunteers. It is pleasing to see that this active Committee has grown in number through the retention of members and the welcome addition of new participants. All Members are congratulated on their contribution and thanked for their commitment and I know I speak on behalf of all Members when I highlight the enormous contribution our Secretary, Rebecca, has made to the achievements of the Committee. The Phillip Street Precinct, especially with the available internet facilities, is an excellent venue for Meetings.

The essential, ongoing support of the Mayor and Gladstone Regional Council is appreciated and it is hoped that a Mayoral Visit can be organised in the near future. The Book Exchange and other correspondence are important but no substitute for physical presence.

The Gladstone Regional Art Gallery and Museum has continued to facilitate many key events in the calendar, including the InterCity Images Photographic Exhibition, Celebrate Australia Primary Schools Art Competition, Saiki Children's Art Competition and Children's Day Activities. The staff and volunteers are invaluable in their promotion of the Gladstone Saiki Sister City Friendship. With the many staffing changes, it is important that communication is timely and that the staff and volunteers are given every support.

Barry Meiring and the staff and volunteers at the Gladstone Toondoon Botanic Gardens are thanked for not only maintaining the Japanese Garden but also for planning improvements, including additional water features.

The Committee's active participation in Flourish was an excellent opportunity to engage with a wide range of people and will hopefully become a key annual event on our calendar. There are plans to engage more closely with the organisation of next year's Gladstone Multicultural Festival. In addition, representatives from many key organisations in the Gladstone Region, especially schools, have been invited to attend the Annual General Meeting. This communication will include the distribution of resources about the Gladstone Saiki Sister City Friendship.

The shorebirds are creatures of habit. In the Gladstone Saiki Sister City relationship, traditions have been maintained. The shorebirds are tenacious. Our Committee Members have adapted to changing times and followed through with plans. Like the shorebirds and the Shorebird Artwork, we look to the future with specific plans and a vision of international cooperation.

Wendy Marsh
17 November 2022