

ITEM-21 LMM 22/11/2022 - City of Newcastle and Ube City Sister City 42nd Anniversary

MOTION

That City of Newcastle:

1. Notes that on 21 November 1980, the City of Newcastle signed a Sister City agreement with Ube City, Yamaguchi Prefecture, Japan, thanks to significant relationship building by the then Lord Mayor, Joy Cummings;
2. Recognises that Monday 21 November 2022 marks the 42nd anniversary of this treasured relationship between Newcastle and Ube, with ongoing ties in education, youth exchange, economics, sport and art;
3. Acknowledges this auspicious occasion with an online meeting between Lord Mayor Nuatali Nelmes and Deputy Lord Mayor Declan Clausen, and the Mayor of Ube, Keiji Shinozaki, and senior officials, to reconnect after the COVID-19 pandemic and share the wonderful progress being made in both cities;
4. Resolves to explore opportunities to partner with Ube on its GIGA School Concept, National e-Sports Championships, and carbon neutrality initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions;
5. Extends an invitation to Mayor Shinozaki and delegates to visit Newcastle in 2023 with the reopening of international borders, where the City of Newcastle would warmly welcome the delegation with a civic reception.

BACKGROUND:

On 21 November 1980, the City of Newcastle signed a Sister City agreement with Ube City, Yamaguchi Prefecture, Japan as a gesture of goodwill, mutual understanding and friendship. Sister Cities foster cultural, educational and economic relations between communities and promote peaceful co-existence worldwide.

The declaration was signed by the City's first female Lord Mayor, the late Joy Cummings, and Mayor of Ube City, the late Mr Hideo Futatsugi. There was a symbolic exchange of gifts at the ceremony, with the City of Newcastle presenting Ube an inscribed plaque bearing the City's coat of arms, while Ube gifted Newcastle a Kabuto (Samurai Helmet).

Joy was instrumental in the establishment of the Sister City link, believing our two burgeoning port harbour cities, of similar population size and industrial background in coal exports and steel manufacturing, had much in common.

Over the decades, Newcastle and Ube have developed strong connections in education, youth exchange, economics, sport and art. Local high schools, Newcastle, Merewether, Kotara and Wallsend High enjoy annual student exchanges with Ube, which afford an immersive cultural experience, while the University of Newcastle's Language Centre embraces Japanese language, art and culture.

Newcastle Art Gallery holds one of the largest collections of Sodeisha ceramics outside of Japan, with 58 of the 62 original works of art featured in the *SODEISHA: Avant-Garde Japanese Ceramics* exhibition gifted to the Gallery at the conclusion of the national touring exhibition in 1981. Some of these were featured in the Gallery's curated exhibition, *SODEISHA: connected to Australia* in March 2019, and will soon be on permanent display following the Gallery's \$40 million redevelopment.

On 21 November 2020, the City of Newcastle and Ube City celebrated the 40th anniversary of the Sister City signing. The City recognised the occasion and the ongoing significance of the relationship with a commemorative book, titled *Sister Cities Newcastle and Ube: celebrating 40 years*, with Lord Mayor Nuatali Nelmes presenting a copy to the Consul-General of Japan in Sydney, Mr KIYA Masahiko. The City also launched a curated, interactive digital story-wall exhibition at the City Administration Centre's Digital Library, showcasing some of the unique pieces of our Sister City history with Ube.



It was an honour to present the commemorative book to the Consul-General of Japan in Sydney, Mr KIYA Masahiko, in front of the digital story-wall exhibition at the Digital Library, on behalf of the Council and Citizens of the City of Newcastle.