

ITEM 4. INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL – CHINA – 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SYDNEY-GUANGZHOU SISTER CITY RELATIONSHIP**FILE NO: S125323****SUMMARY**

In May 2016, the City celebrates the 30th anniversary of our sister city relationship with Guangzhou, China.

Founded in 1986, the Sydney-Guangzhou sister city relationship is one of the City's most important and enduring city partnerships. Spanning 30 years, it has provided the opportunity for furthering relations and mutual understanding across civic, cultural, people-to-people, economic and trade sectors.

Our sister city partnership with Guangzhou has benefited from a complementary and active sister state relationship between the NSW Government and Guangdong province.

The City's 10-year Economic Development Strategy identifies long-term, sustainable connections with China as a priority to deliver greater benefits to the local community and to the economy generally. Our connections with China are integral to our economic competitiveness and to future trade and investment outcomes.

China is Australia's largest export market for goods and services accounting for nearly a third of Australia's total exports. In 2015 alone, there was more than \$150 billion of trade between China and Australia. The China-Australia Free Trade Agreement was signed in June 2015 and came into effect in December 2015.

China is also the source of a large proportion of our international students who contribute more than \$1.6 billion per year in economic activity in the City of Sydney Local Government Area (LGA). It is estimated that at least a third of the 35,000 international students living in the City LGA are from China.

In the year ending June 2015, almost 20 per cent of international visitors to Sydney came from China, and Chinese visitors to Sydney are forecast to double in the next decade. The economic value of this is estimated to be \$1.5 billion across the Sydney metropolitan area and almost \$1 billion to the local city economy every year.

Our sister city relationship was highlighted during the 2016 Chinese New Year Festival. The City welcomed Guangzhou performers who provided entertainment for the Festival Launch, and Guangzhou also donated a lantern for the Lunar Lanterns exhibition that was exhibited in Dixon Street Mall.

In 2015, the new Chinese New Year Advisory Panel, chaired by Councillor Robert Kok, has looked at ways to maximise involvement by the business sector and enhance all celebrations of the Lunar New Year in the City LGA.

In 2014, the Lord Mayor and the Mayor of Guangzhou agreed in principle to hold a "Sydney week in Guangzhou" and a "Guangzhou week in Sydney" to mark the 30th anniversary. The City of Guangzhou is preparing a program of events for mid-May, with the Sydney events in Guangzhou scheduled from Monday 30 May to Thursday 2 June (four days).

On 29 June 2015, Council resolved to invite Expressions of Interest from potential collaborators, including peak industry and business organisations, educational institutions and the cultural community, to take part in the official 30th anniversary program in Guangzhou.

On 14 September 2015, Council endorsed five successful Program Partners - Sydney Symphony Orchestra, the University of Sydney, the University of Technology, Sydney, the Australia China Business Council and the 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art.

The Program Partners are each hosting an event in Guangzhou in late May/early June, designed to showcase Sydney and our cultural, education and business sectors.

The program enables the City and partner organisations to showcase Australia's leading services economy and highlight the innovation, expertise and excellence within a range of local industries, including international education, sustainability, the creative and cultural sectors, and the broader city business community.

It is proposed that the Lord Mayor and Councillor Robert Kok, Chair of the Chinese New Year Advisory Panel, represent the City of Sydney at these 30th anniversary events in Guangzhou.

The Lord Mayor has also received requests to visit other cities in China, particularly invitations from Mayors to strengthen the City's relationship with former Chinese New Year partners and other cities seeking to build cultural and economic ties with Sydney.

Should time permit, it is proposed that the Lord Mayor and Councillor Kok also develop an itinerary of visits to other relevant Chinese cities in response to these requests, for a period up to about 14 days.

It is proposed that up to two Lord Mayoral/Councillor support staff and an interpreter travel with the Lord Mayor and Councillor Kok.

RECOMMENDATION

It is resolved that Council:

- (A) endorse the Lord Mayor, Councillor Robert Kok, two Lord Mayoral/Councillor support staff and an interpreter to travel to Guangzhou to participate in the 30th Anniversary Sister City Program in May/June 2016, as well as visit other cities in China if the itinerary allows;
- (B) note that the visits to other cities within China will be confirmed when available; and
- (C) note that the Lord Mayor and Councillor Kok will provide a report to Council after the travel.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil.

BACKGROUND

1. In May 2016, the City of Sydney will celebrate the 30th anniversary of its sister city relationship with Guangzhou, in Guangdong Province, China.
2. The recent free trade negotiations with China have opened up opportunities for Sydney businesses to build closer ties with Guangzhou collaborators, and support greater trade, investment, tourism and education opportunities.
3. The Lord Mayor's presence in Guangzhou during the 30th anniversary celebrations is of strategic importance for our sister city relationship. The Lord Mayor has established strong connections with the City of Guangzhou, including the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding in June 2014 strengthening the ties between the City and Guangzhou, and agreeing to work more closely in relation to education, trade, culture, business and sustainability.
4. Our sister city relationship is also central to the NSW Government's sister state relationship with Guangdong province, which aims to advance the State's trade, investment and business agenda in the region.
5. Described as China's economic powerhouse, Guangdong province has an estimated GDP of US\$1,104 billion and is the largest provincial economy within China. It includes the important technology industry city of Shenzhen.
6. Guangzhou, with a population of around 14 million people, is the capital and largest city of Guangdong province. It is the third largest Chinese city, southern China's largest city, and a key national transportation hub and trading port. Guangzhou has an estimated GDP of US \$250 billion.
7. China is Australia's largest export market for goods and services accounting for nearly a third of Australia's total exports. In 2015 alone, there was more than \$150 billion of trade between China and Australia. The China-Australia Free Trade Agreement was signed in June 2015 and came into effect in December 2015.
8. China is also the source of a large proportion of our international students who contribute more than \$1.6 billion per year in economic activity in the City LGA. It is estimated that at least a third of the 35,000 international students living in the City LGA are from China.
9. In the year ending June 2015, almost 20 per cent of international visitors to Sydney came from China, and Chinese visitors to Sydney are forecast to double in the next decade. The economic value of this is estimated to be \$1.5 billion across the Sydney metropolitan area and almost \$1 billion to the local city economy every year.
10. Our sister city relationship was highlighted during the 2016 Chinese New Year Festival. The City welcomed Guangzhou performers who provided entertainment for the Festival Launch, and Guangzhou also donated a lantern for the Lunar Lanterns exhibition that was exhibited in Dixon Street Mall.
11. The importance of these international relationships at a State and City level was confirmed in 2008 when the Lord Mayor was invited by the then NSW Premier to participate in a Mission to Guangdong, as part of a delegation to strengthen these connections across governments, universities and the business community.

12. Since that time, the City of Sydney has actively promoted Sydney's role as Australia's leading global city and advocated for the need to remain competitive within Asia, and China in particular, to support the city's continued economic prosperity. There continues to be a strong need to enhance relationships and partnerships within the Asian region.
13. Events in Guangzhou in May and June 2016 include a program of civic, economic, cultural and other events to further strengthen the City's business, cultural and environmental connections to Guangzhou, and China.
14. If the itinerary allows, visits to other cities in China with which the City has established connections may also be undertaken, particularly those developed through the City's Chinese New Year Festival.
15. Any other visits will be confirmed, dependent on finalisation of the itinerary and the availability of relevant representatives from other cities at the time.

Schedule of events in Guangzhou

16. To mark the 30th anniversary of our sister city relationship with Guangzhou, the City has partnered with five key organisations to deliver a series of events to showcase a cross-section of Sydney's education, cultural and business sectors.
17. The schedule of events in Guangzhou is proposed as follows:
 - (a) Monday 30 May 2016 - Opening ceremony jointly organised by the City of Sydney and City of Guangzhou;
 - (b) Monday 30 May 2016 - Opening concert by Sydney Symphony Orchestra – An orchestral concert to mark the opening of the week's activities in Guangzhou. Sydney Symphony Orchestra will also be delivering a day of outreach activities in music training to young musicians at the Xinghai Conservatory of Music in Guangzhou.
 - (c) Tuesday 31 May 2016 - Universities sustainability symposium – Together, three of the most prominent Australian universities (University of Sydney, University of NSW and University of Technology Sydney) will deliver a one-day symposium bringing together academics, government and industry representatives in Guangzhou to showcase their collaborative research and expertise in sustainability.
 - (d) Tuesday 31 May 2016 - Universities alumni event – The University of Technology Sydney, University of Sydney, University of NSW, Macquarie University, Western Sydney University and the Australian Catholic University will partner to host an alumni event for university graduates. This event will showcase Sydney as a world-class international education destination and increase Sydney's reputation as an innovative and creative city.
 - (e) Wednesday 1 June 2016 - Sydney-Guangzhou Business Summit 'Green, Global, Connected', presented by the Australia China Business Council – This summit will assist businesses in exploring new opportunities for partnerships in trade and investment. Drawing on successful business case studies and expert panel discussions, the summit will demonstrate how trade between our two cities can increase global competitiveness.

- (f) Wednesday 1 June 2016 - Gala dinner presented by the Australia China Business Council – A networking event bringing together delegates from Sydney and Guangzhou to highlight synergies and help build new trade and investment partnerships.
- (g) Thursday 2 June 2016 - 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art exhibition by prominent Sydney-based artist Lucas Ihlein – 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art (Sydney) is collaborating with the Observation Society (Guangzhou) to commission new artworks reflecting on the trade and migration links between our cities. The artworks will be exhibited during the celebration program, and in Sydney in late 2016.

KEY IMPLICATIONS

Strategic Alignment – Sustainable Sydney 2030

18. *Sustainable Sydney 2030* is a vision for the sustainable development of the city to 2030 and beyond. It includes 10 strategic directions to guide the future of the city, as well as 10 targets against which to measure progress. This program is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
 - (a) Direction 1 - A Globally Competitive and Innovative City – the City's 10-year Economic Development Strategy identifies long-term, sustainable connections with Asia as a priority for the City to deliver greater benefits to the local community and to the economy generally. The City's connections with China are integral to the city's economic competitiveness.
 - (b) Direction 10 - Implementation through Effective Governance and Partnerships – recognises the City's role in partnerships across government, industry bodies and business as well as leadership in sister city relationships globally.
19. *Sustainable Sydney 2030* and the Economic Development Strategy articulate Sydney's future as a dynamic, progressive, diverse, inclusive, sophisticated, forward-looking and world-class city. An international profile and perspective in Asia is necessary to enable Sydney to successfully compete in the global economy.
20. The City is committed to developing and implementing an international action plan that can deliver lasting benefits to the community, deepen and extend the City's connections with Asia, and further position Sydney as Australia's leading global city and economic gateway. It is important we maintain and extend our bilateral ties in Asia, particularly with China.

Economic

21. The City is committed to developing closer ties with Guangzhou to promote Sydney as a flourishing international business and cultural gateway for the benefit of the local community.
22. The 30th anniversary program in Guangzhou will support international knowledge exchange and showcase Sydney industries, business organisations, sustainability initiatives, and cultural and creative entities in this important city in southern China.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

23. It is proposed that the Lord Mayor, Councillor Robert Kok, two Lord Mayoral/Councillor support staff and an interpreter travel to Guangzhou, China and other cities in China, with the costs of flights, other accommodation and meals being met by the City of Sydney, at an estimated cost of approximately \$16,000 per person.
24. Funds are available within existing operational budgets to cover the cost of the Lord Mayor, Councillor Kok, two support staff and an interpreter to travel to China.

CRITICAL DATES / TIME FRAMES

25. Subject to finalising the program event schedule, the 30th anniversary celebrations will take place in Guangzhou from Monday 30 May to Thursday 2 June 2016.

KIM WOODBURY

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