

# International Engagement &

## INVESTMENT STRATEGY

2019-2023









# Executive Summary

**The previous International Relations strategy was for the period 2011-2014.**

**It set out a series of strategies, primarily directed towards the Sister City relationships with Taizhou (China) and Takasago (Japan) and cultural exchanges.**

This strategy is for the period 2019-2023 and the strategies contained within reflect a new direction in our international relations. Whilst acknowledging the history and importance of the strong cultural relationships with Taizhou and Takasago, Council would like to see a greater focus on the development of trade and investment opportunities for businesses in Latrobe City. Future outbound business delegations need to provide strong justification for the delegation and the proposed benefits to the local economy by the delegation.

To enable a new direction this strategy provides for a change in structure and member composition of the International Relations Committee. It will be renamed to the *International Engagement and Investment Committee*. This change of name reflects the new direction. A change of structure will create split terms for members and provide for export orientated business representatives to be able to participate. A quarterly report will be provided to Council detailing the activities of the Committee and any recommendations.

The continuance of the cultural activities is supported in this strategy. The relationships that have been built up over the past twenty years with Taizhou and Takasago are very important culturally to Latrobe City. Whilst recognising the history and previous delegation structure, this strategy changes the Sister City program to one outbound delegation every two years that encompasses both Sister Cities, or only one as appropriate. The Committee will make recommendations to Council as to the focus area for the delegations, such as STEM, sport, arts or student exchanges, so that Council can deliberate the merits of the delegations and make the final decisions.

Council will continue to support the very successful Assistant Language Teacher (ALT) program with Takasago.

The Committee will provide support to Council for all cultural inbound delegations. This support will include helping to organise homestay, functions and events during the visit. The Committee will also continue to assist Latrobe City Council's events team in the organisation of the Sister Cities Festival.

It is apparent that there is a significant amount of historical records, gifts, photographs and memorabilia from the Sister City relationships stored in various locations. There is also a significant amount of knowledge and history known by the early participants in the Sister City (and pre Sister City) international relationships that is not recorded. A book detailing all of this history will be produced before all of the knowledge and collections are lost. Appropriately, this book will be produced for launch during the 20th anniversary celebrations of the relationships.

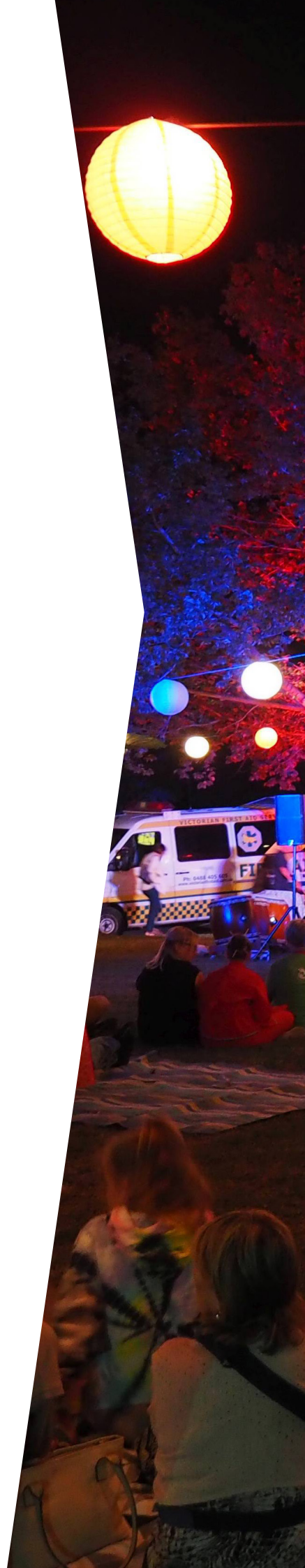
All requests for new Sister City or Friendship City relationships will be referred to the Committee for assessment. The Committee will determine whether the request should be supported and a recommendation submitted for Council to consider and make the final decision. All recommendations will include a rationale for the recommendation.

A greater focus on trade and investment is reflected in strategies that will support international trade by Latrobe City businesses. It is important that Council works closely with other government and industry agencies to assist local industry and not duplicate support mechanisms. The strategies include helping businesses that are interested in export get support for planning, in-market experience and introductions. Council outbound trade/business delegations should be on an as needs basis and subject to a justification and benefits analysis. The Committee should undertake the initial assessment and make recommendations to Council for deliberation and the final decision as to whether the delegation should proceed.

**Latrobe City Council  
will open doors to  
the World!**

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# Introduction

**Latrobe City Council (LCC) has had a strong international relations program operating since 2000. This program is a formal structured program to promote and enable international relations. However, Latrobe City's involvement in international relations commenced much earlier.**

In the 1980's, the City of Morwell hosted more than 200 Japanese families as part of a project initiated by Kobe Steel to utilise the brown coal in Morwell. These families assimilated into the community and many enduring friendships were established. The strength of these relationships led to the development of a Sister City proposal between the City of Morwell and Takasago City, home to many of the families that stayed in Morwell. A formal Sister City agreement was signed between the two cities in October 2000.

In 1998, a delegation from the City of Taizhou (China) visited Latrobe City to investigate the potential for a relationship – their intent was to determine whether there were 'business opportunities and the potential for friendly relations.' In November 1999, Latrobe City Council determined that a Sister City relationship would be mutually beneficial and invited the Mayor of Taizhou to visit Latrobe City to formalise a Sister City agreement. In March 2000, a Sister City agreement was signed by both cities.

Since the establishment of the Sister City agreements, there have been many exchanges between Latrobe City and Takasago and Taizhou. These have included student exchanges, official business delegations, sporting exchanges (e.g. soccer, table tennis, tennis, basketball) and cultural exchanges (e.g. music, bands, arts).

The economic return of these exchanges can be significant. For example, one local school has calculated the value over the past ten years of inbound student and teacher delegations, long term teacher exchange, international fee paying students and visiting parents to be \$2.5 million.

In addition, Latrobe City and Takasago have established an Assistant Language Teacher program that has enabled young Latrobe City residents to teach basic English in Takasago schools. The program is fully subsidised by the City of Takasago.

An International Relations Committee was established by Council to oversee the activities of the international relations program. This committee is an advisory committee of Council and provides oversight and guidance on Sister City activities and any other international activities. Community membership of the Committee has predominantly come from people with an interest in exchange activities (e.g. education, sports, music), with a number of these people serving on the committee for many years.



In recent years, Latrobe City Councillors have expressed a desire that trade and investment activities be given greater prominence in delegation and exchange activities. Whilst trade and investment have always been an objective, the cultural activities have consumed most of the officer time, budget and activities between the Sister Cities. Whilst maintaining a commitment to the cultural activities, trade and investment activities need to have equal prominence.

The Latrobe City International Relations Plan 2011-2014 was prepared in 2011 to provide direction for international relations. A review of this plan indicates that most of the actions were completed. It is now time to prepare a new strategy to set the direction for international relations and engagement for the next four years. This strategy encompasses new direction and objectives to Open Doors to the World!

**VISION:**

**Latrobe City will be a globally connected economy in trade and culture for the benefit of the community**

# Guiding Principles



**Benefit Latrobe City  
ratepayers, residents and  
businesses**



**Strengthen trade  
connections**



**Link key decision-makers  
and businesses in  
international markets**



**Attract foreign  
investment**



**Focus on international  
promotion of Latrobe City**



**Position Latrobe City as a  
great place to live, work,  
study, visit and do business**



**Develop closer  
relationships with other  
international cities**



**Add to the exchange  
of cultural awareness,  
knowledge, skills and  
experiences**



**Engage and influence  
key decision makers**

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# International Engagement & Investment

## IN LATROBE CITY

From inception, the International Relations Committee has had a focus on cultural activities in Sister City exchanges and expanding the relationships. To quote one of the founding committee members,

**“The intention was to provide young people with the opportunity to experience another country – meet different people and have different experiences. Hopefully, that will broaden their horizons.”**

Most of the Sister City exchanges have focused on student exchanges, sporting, music and arts related exchanges and official government exchanges.

This strategy will take Latrobe City in a new direction. There will be a greater emphasis on trade and investment in international engagement activities, but not to the detriment of the existing Sister City relationships and cultural activities. This change in direction will be achieved by creating two streams of activity in the strategy – Cultural (incorporating Sister City relationships) and Trade and Investment.

### What’s in a Name?

The committee has been known as the *International Relations Committee* since it commenced in 2000. At that time, this name reflected the activities and direction of the committee.

To better reflect the activities that will be undertaken over the next four years, the committee name will be changed to the *International Engagement and Investment Committee*. This strategy will provide guidance as to the type of activities and exchanges that will be undertaken by the *International Engagement and Investment Committee* (IEIC).

### Sister City or Friendship City or International Alliance

The choice of the type of relationship has implications for both parties. Council needs to consider implications before proceeding to establish a formal relationship. The distinctions are:

#### Sister Cities

Sister Cities are a form of legal or social agreement between towns, cities, counties, prefectures, provinces, regions, states, and even countries in geographically distinct areas to promote cultural and commercial ties. There is an implicit agreement that activities will be undertaken in accordance with the conditions contained within the agreement.

#### Friendship Cities

Friendship Cities can be between the same types of geographically distinct areas as Sister Cities. The key difference is that there does not need to be such a formal agreement and the conditions can be less onerous on the parties and arrangements can be more flexible.

There is another category that the *International Engagement and Investment Committee* should consider when investigating the potential for a relationship. Similar to the Friendship City, Council could consider an **International Alliance**. A flexible agreement can be prepared with minimal conditions on either party. The notion of an International Alliance is more apt for a trade/investment related arrangement rather than cultural activities however, it could be applied to a new cultural relationship. Whilst many potential trading partners would have no need for such arrangements, when investigating relationships with those that do, particularly the Asian countries, Council should consider the International Alliance type of arrangement.

The IEIC needs to develop a matrix to assess which of the categories are appropriate when considering an agreement.

# International Engagement & Investment COMMITTEE

**The first international relations committee established by Latrobe City Council was the Sister City Committee, established in 1998, with 17 members.**

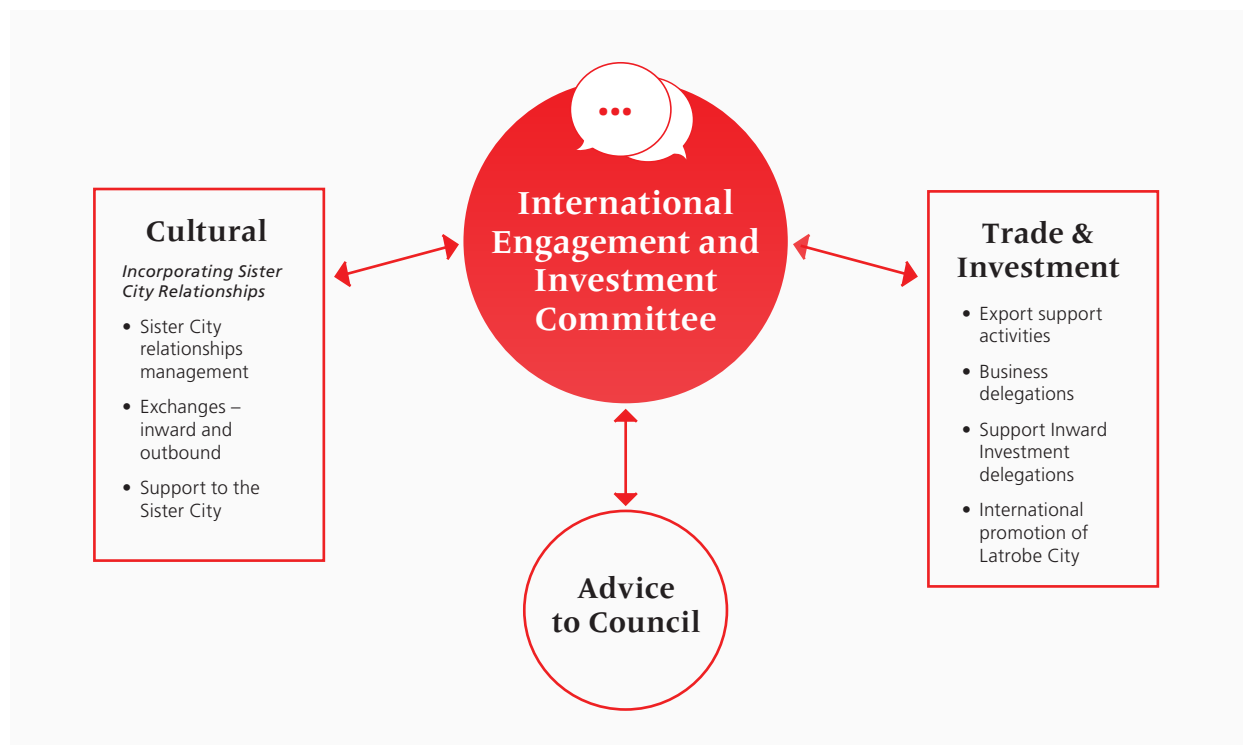
In 2000, Latrobe City Council established the International Relations Committee. The purpose of the committee was to promote and foster friendship, communication, understanding and economic development initiatives between the residents of Latrobe City and those of nations through the establishment and management of sister cities and other international relationships.

The current Committee membership includes up to four Councillors, up to nine community members and up to eight co-opted members (eg. education and industry). The current Terms of Reference for the International Relations Advisory Committee appoint all community members for three years. This can result in total changeover of members, resulting in a loss of 'corporate memory' and stability. The Terms of Reference should be altered so that a percentage of memberships expire at different times to the other memberships.

Presently, there is no direction as to the type of skillsets required for membership. Given the direction of the strategy, the IEIC Community membership should reflect a mix of members with an interest in the cultural activities and plans and members with an interest and knowledge in trade and investment and education. As vacancies arise, this mix of skillsets should be promoted to attract new members. When appropriate, special working groups should be established for specific tasks (e.g. cultural or business delegation).

The Committee meets monthly and this should continue through this strategy. Activities in the meetings will be widened to include interesting presentations that are relevant to international engagement (e.g. JPower presenting on the Hydrogen Project).

Regular reports need to be prepared and presented to Council (quarterly) to ensure Council is kept abreast of IEIC activities and an annual review conducted to ensure the Committee is performing to expectations.





## STRATEGIC ACTIONS

# Committee Structure & Operation

**Ensure the Committee reflects the current direction.**

NUMBER	ACTIONS	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY	BUDGET
<b>1.1</b>	<b>Review the Terms of Reference</b>	30/09/2019	Officers	\$0
1.1.1	Change name of Committee to 'International Engagement and Investment Committee'	30/09/2019	Officers	\$0
1.1.2	Introduce split terms so that the Community Membership of the Committee is not appointed at the same time	30/09/2019	Officers	\$0
1.1.3	Consider skillset requirements of Community Membership – Cultural & Trade and Investment	30/09/2019	Officers	\$0
1.1.4	Special working groups from the membership established to undertake defined tasks (e.g. Sister City Festival)	Ongoing	Committee	\$0
<b>1.2</b>	<b>Committee meetings to be conducted monthly</b>	Ongoing	Committee	\$2000 p/a
<b>1.3</b>	<b>Committee Agenda to include 'What advice does the Committee want to give to Council?'</b>	Ongoing	Committee	\$0
<b>1.4</b>	<b>Arrange for appropriate presentations to Committee</b>	Ongoing	Officers	\$0
<b>1.5</b>	<b>Quarterly reports of international engagement activities to be provided to Council</b>  <i>** When appropriate, report directly to Council</i>	End of each quarter	Officers	\$0
<b>1.6</b>	<b>Committee to consider issues referred by Council and develop actions where appropriate</b>	Ongoing	Committee	\$0
<b>1.7</b>	<b>Review the Committee activities and structure to ensure it is meeting Council and community expectations</b>	Annually	Committee and Officers	\$0
<b>1.8</b>	<b>Develop an assessment matrix to assess the desirability of establishing new cultural relationships; e.g. Sister City, Friendship City, other model. Make recommendations to Council.</b>	Ongoing	Committee	\$0

# Cultural

## INCORPORATING SISTER CITY RELATIONSHIPS

### Background

Latrobe City Council has a strong history in supporting the cultural development opportunities for the community through the ongoing support of the Sister City program. This support is reflected in the results of activities, including:

- Over 520 Latrobe City residents have visited the Sister Cities for cultural and educational exchanges;
- Over 230 Latrobe City youth have participated in Latrobe City initiated exchange programs since 2000. Programs have included sport, arts and education exchanges;
- Over 210 youth from Takasago in Japan and Taizhou in China have visited Latrobe City;
- Four schools in Latrobe City have sister school arrangements with equivalent schools in Takasago and Taizhou: Lowanna Secondary College, Kurnai College, Traralgon College and Liddiard Road Primary School in Traralgon;
- An Assistant Language Teacher program in Takasago that has been operating continuously since 2001;
- Federation University is finalising negotiations to bring students from Taizhou to Gippsland in 2019 to study a range of disciplines. Latrobe City has used the sister city relationship to assist Federation University.

In recent years, the accepted protocol for exchanges with Takasago and Taizhou has been delegations visiting the Sister City every second year and delegations coming from the Sister Cities in alternate years. This has resulted in an outbound delegation every year with corresponding inbound delegations each year. Council has provided adequate budget to support the inbound and outbound delegations.

### Future Activities

The continuance of the cultural activities is supported in this strategy.

However, it is very important that the community understand and support the program. Any future international exchange or delegation should be supported by a communications strategy that clearly articulates the benefit of the cultural activity and why Council is involved. It is the role of the IEIC to help develop and disseminate the communications strategy. Where possible testimonials should be used to support the importance of the exchanges/delegations and detailed reports should be presented to Council and the community upon return.

The IEIC should develop an agreed process to determine whether it is in Latrobe City's interest to establish a relationship with an international region, state or Country. The key options are:

- Sister City;
- Friendship City;
- New name for relationship – e.g. International Alliance.

It will be the responsibility of the IEIC to determine the appropriate relationship and make a recommendation to Council. The recommendation should include a cost/benefit analysis.

Rather than having Council organise and participate in Sister City cultural exchanges annually, an outgoing delegation should be organised every two years that will include one or both Sister Cities. Council will only support one outgoing delegation every two years. It will be the responsibility of the IEIC to develop a schedule for the exchanges/delegation and determine the benefits of the exchange/delegation.



If a special exchange is proposed (for example, external funding for a delegation or an invitation by another country), the IEIC will review the proposal and make a recommendation to Council.

Latrobe City Council also hosts inbound cultural exchanges from the Sister Cities and other international cities. Inbound delegations expectations need to be managed through communication with Sister City representatives. Young people and students will be invited to stay in a homestay arrangement with people that Council has 'pre-approved' as suitable homestay hosts. This process will meet Council's risk matrix requirements. Council will maintain a homestay register.

The IEIC will arrange the program for the exchange and assist in the hosting activities where possible (e.g. a barbeque, tourism opportunities) through the exchange. If the exchange delegates are a specialist group (e.g. athletes) an appropriate organisation will be asked to assist (e.g. Traralgon Harriers).

In addition to the exchange programs, the Committee has overseen the annual Sister Cities Festival. This festival brings together Japanese and Chinese exhibitors, performers and entertainment to highlight the different cultures. Often inbound delegations participate in this festival. The operation of the festival has moved to the Latrobe City Council Events Team with the Committee supporting the program. The Committee will assist in the development of future festivals.

Council will continue to support the ALT program in Takasago. This program has provided many opportunities for young Latrobe City residents to experience the cultural aspects of Takasago.

There is a significant amount of historical information, photographs and testimonials that has built up since the commencement of the international program in the 1980's. This information should be recorded and published to document the relationships to coincide with the 20th anniversaries of the two Sister City Relationships.



## STRATEGIC ACTIONS

# Cultural Activities Outbound

NUMBER	ACTIONS	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY	BUDGET
2.1	<b>Develop a program for cultural exchanges to Sister Cities. One exchange every two years commencing in 2019/2020</b>	31/07/2019	Committee	\$0
2.1.2	Present to Council for consideration. Rationale and benefits must be included	30/09/2019	Officers and Chair	\$0
2.1.3	Implement exchange program	01/10/2019	Committee and Officers	2019/2020 - \$30,000  2021/2022 - \$30,000
2.2	<b>Prepare Communications Strategy for each exchange</b>	Ongoing	Committee, Officers, Comms team.	\$0
2.3	<b>Continue to support the Assistant Language Teacher program</b>	Ongoing	Committee, Officers	\$2,000 p/a
2.4	<b>Participate in a joint working group to conduct the Sister Cities Festival</b>	Ongoing	Events team, Committee, Officers	\$4,000 p/a*
2.5	<b>Continue with membership of Sister Cities Australia and attend the annual conference</b>	Ongoing	Committee, Officers	\$3,500 p/a
2.6	<b>Coordinate 20th Anniversary Sister City Celebrations</b>	2020	Committee, Officers, Events team	\$10,000
2.7	<b>The IEIC shall determine the recommendation for a relationship:</b> - Sister City - Friendship City - Another name, e.g. International Alliance - No recommended relationship	Ongoing	Committee	\$0

\* The I.E. and I.C. contributes to the Sister City Festival conducted by the Latrobe City Council Events team. The total budget for this festival is \$40,000.



## STRATEGIC ACTIONS

# Cultural Activities Inbound

NUMBER	ACTIONS	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY	BUDGET
<b>2.8</b>	<b>Support inbound cultural exchanges from Sister Cities</b>	Ongoing	Committee, Officers	\$5,000 p/a
2.8.1	Coordinate a homestay register for students/young people with local families	Ongoing	Officers	\$0
2.8.2	Ensure any proposed exchange program complies with Council's risk matrix	Ongoing	Officers	\$0
2.8.3	Organise a program of events and activities for delegates	Ongoing	Committee, Officers	\$10,000
2.8.4	Arrange appropriate communiques and media to promote the relationships	Ongoing	Officers, Comms Team	\$0
<b>2.9</b>	<b>Support inbound business delegations and delegations from countries other than the Sister Cities</b>	Ongoing	Officers. Eco dev team	\$0
<b>2.10</b>	<b>Collate and publish a history of the Sister City relationships to preserve and protect the history</b>	31/03/2020	Officers	\$10,000



# Trade & Investment

## Background

Given the investment in the local economy by international businesses, such as Nippon Paper, Energy Australia and Alinta Energy, the local community understands the importance of international businesses to the local economy. Latrobe City Council has always considered trade and business engagement as a key component of its international strategy.

In recent years the focus of outbound exchanges and delegations has focused more on the cultural activities than trade. When in Japan, delegations have visited senior management at companies such as Nippon Paper, Kawasaki and JPower. These visits have been greatly appreciated by the companies as Local Government is viewed as a very important level of government in Asian societies.

There have been minimal business to business introductions arranged by Council internationally.

In relation to inbound delegations, there have been significant numbers of inbound delegations visiting Latrobe City and meeting with Council. The International Engagement and Investment Officer works with the Economic Development team to coordinate these meetings, in conjunction with the Mayor, CEO and nominated Councillors. Council's international relationships are viewed very favourably by government and have assisted with inward investment.

## Where Does Latrobe City Council Fit?

It is important for Latrobe City Council to understand where it fits in the international engagement space. Many government agencies and industry groups provide support and activities to assist business in international engagement. These include:

### Federal Government:

Austrade, Australian Trade and Investment Commission

### State Government:

Invest Assist, Invest Victoria, Global Victoria

### Industry Associations:

Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Australian China Business Council

In addition, there are specialist, niche organisations (e.g. Defence Materials Technology Centre) and business to business and business to consumer platforms (e.g. Alibaba) that provide support and assistance for export.

It is important for Council not to duplicate these services and support agencies but work with them to achieve outcomes that

support businesses in Latrobe City.

## Key Trade and Investment Strategic Directions for Council

### Get Connected:

- Work with State and Federal Government agencies to connect local businesses to global opportunities;
- Establish relationships with in-market experts (e.g. Victorian Government Business Offices, Alibaba);
- Produce quality marketing materials to promote international trade for Latrobe City.

### Focus Activities:

- Assess best sectors and markets to work with;
- Identify strategic allies to help Latrobe City businesses;
- Help build business capability (e.g. specific workshops);
- Identify best access to market opportunities.

### Use Competitive Strengths:

- Work closely with the Economic Development Team to capitalise on key strengths;
- Help businesses to access support (e.g. government funding);
- Showcase Latrobe City's capability and liveability;

### Be Inclusive:

- Work closely with local businesses;
- Work with other Gippsland municipalities (and outside Gippsland where appropriate – e.g. Dandenong);
- Work with other sections of Latrobe City Council where appropriate.



## STRATEGIC ACTIONS

# Trade and Investment Outbound

NUMBER	ACTIONS	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY	BUDGET
<b>3.1</b>	<b>Identify businesses in Latrobe City to get export ready</b>	31/10/2019	Officers	\$0
3.1.1	Conduct survey through E Newsletter database to identify businesses interested in export	31/10/2019	Officers	\$0
3.1.2	Identify export ready needs and engage expertise	30/11/2019	Officers, Government Agencies	\$5,000
3.1.3	Run workshops/forums/seminars to raise awareness of export ready opportunities	31/03/2020	Officers, Government Agencies	\$5,000
<b>3.2</b>	<b>Promote Latrobe City Capabilities through Victorian Government Business Offices internationally, Invest Assist and Austrade</b>	30/09/2019 + ongoing	Officers	\$0
3.2.1	Prepare appropriate marketing materials for online and hardcopy distribution	30/09/2019	Committee, Officers	\$8,000 p/a
3.2.2	Launch and distribute marketing materials	30/09/2019 + ongoing	Committee, Officers, Comms team	\$2,000 p/a
<b>3.3</b>	<b>Conduct international business delegations as determined</b>	Ongoing	Committee, Officers	\$15,000 (Provision for delegation support if needed)
3.3.1	Prepare cost/benefit analysis for Council consideration	Ongoing	Officers	\$0
3.3.2	Prepare clear communications strategy prior to delegation and after completion of delegation	Ongoing	Officers, Comms team	\$0
<b>3.4</b>	<b>Establish and maintain networks with people and organisations that can assist Latrobe City to increase inward investment</b>	Ongoing	Officers	\$0
<b>3.5</b>	<b>Work with Federation University to advance the international education relationship with Taizhou and other international student cohorts</b>	Ongoing	Officers, Federation University	\$0
<b>3.6</b>	<b>Work with local secondary colleges and TAFE Gippsland to advance the international education relationships with Taizhou and Takasago and other international student cohorts</b>	Ongoing	Officers, Secondary schools, TAFE Gippsland	\$0
<b>3.7</b>	<b>Implement Staff Exchange program with Taizhou Foreign Affairs Office</b>	2019/20	Officers, Taizhou Foreign Affairs Office	Staff time and travel costs to be determined

## STRATEGIC ACTIONS

# Trade and Investment Inbound

NUMBER	ACTIONS	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY	BUDGET
<b>3.8</b>	<b>Support inbound delegations</b>	Ongoing	Committee, Officers	\$14,000 p/a
3.8.1	Organise meetings, gifts and communiques for delegation visits	Ongoing	Committee, Officers	\$0
3.8.2	Organise media releases and publicity from meetings	Ongoing	Officers	\$0
<b>3.9</b>	<b>Arrange industry tours for Invest Assist, Trade Victoria staff</b>	Bi Annual	Officers, Government representatives	\$5,000 p/a
<b>3.10</b>	<b>Work with investors to establish businesses in Latrobe City</b>	Ongoing	Officers, Government representatives	\$0
<b>3.11</b>	<b>Maintain membership of Australia China Business Council and other appropriate organisations</b>	Annual	Officers	\$2,000
<b>3.12</b>	<b>Establish and maintain networks that can assist Latrobe City to attract investment and international students</b>	Ongoing	Officers	\$0

The International Engagement and Investment Strategy has been produced by Latrobe City Council.

**For further information contact  
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