

International Relations Policy

Group Responsible: Chief Executive

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1. Purpose

The purpose of Southland District Council's International Relations Policy is to bring the world to Southland and Southland to the world, through cultural, educational, knowledge-sharing and people-to-people links, as well as economic ties.

2. Priorities

Southland District Council's involvement in establishing and maintaining international relationships should contribute to:

- a. Extending the hand of friendship nationally and internationally on a person-to-person and/or community-to-community basis, utilising the tools of local government.
- b. Perpetuating an understanding between people at all levels and of different countries and cultures.
- c. Bringing together like interest groups in each district or region.
- d. Providing a forum of exchange of experiences.
- e. Promoting the sharing of knowledge and understanding and extend the level of contacts throughout all sectors of the community.
- f. Developing economic, trade, cultural, educational, sporting and other beneficial exchanges.

3. Principles

Any relationship Southland District Council enters into will be well researched to ensure that generally:

- a. There exists significant historical, cultural, social, economic or geographic similarities between Southland District and the prospective international relationship.
- b. The prospective community is, or is moving towards, express good governance and rule of law values in a democratic fashion.
- c. The prospective district or region is, or is moving towards, a reasonable human rights record.

- d. The establishment of the proposed relationship will provide specific and demonstrable benefits to strategic, national and/or district interests.
- e. There exists demonstrable community support for the proposed relationship.
- f. There is funding available for the relationship.

4. Policy Outline

- 4.1 Southland District Council will pursue a range of relationships to ensure opportunities are maximised. The range of relationships will be determined by the type, location, and purpose of the relationship.
- 4.2 Four different types of relationship (outlined in Appendix 1) have been identified that allow for different outcomes, management processes, resource commitments, and review processes, and helps clarify expectations.

Council notes that it should only have a role in international relations where Council's input can encourage cultural, educational and person-to-person links. Council recognises that while economic development is the role of commerce and industry and not of local government, where international relationships between Southland District and other cities/regions can produce a by-product of economic development for Southland, Council will support links between businesses and industry to encourage any international economic benefit to the region.

Council recognises that cultural, educational, knowledge-sharing, and people-to-people and/or community-to-community links underpin all of Council's international relationships, and must be established before other aspects of the relationship can be put in place. Cultural, educational, knowledge-sharing and people-to-people links remain at the forefront of the International Relations Policy and at the heart of all of Council's international relationships.
- 4.3 Council will provide guidance regarding the nature, type, purpose and location of international relationships. Council will also lead any relationship on behalf of the District.

Council's International Relations Committee will establish the necessary foundations through friendship, and continue to promote cultural and public diplomacy aspects of Council's international relationships.

Venture Southland will be called upon to assist Council in the delivery of any relationship, and attend meetings of the International Relations Committee. This approach allows for the incorporation of the Tourism, Community, Events, and Economic Development teams' input into maximising the benefit to Southland from the relationship, where necessary.

Similarly, a member of the Southland District Council Strategy and Policy Team will also attend meetings of the International Relations Committee, and further the delivery of any relationship.
- 4.4 Council will ensure that any ratepayer funds spent on international relationships are used in the most responsible, prudent and effective way to benefit Southland.
- 4.5 When Council is hosting international delegations, Council will work with local communities, industry, volunteer groups, not-for-profit groups, government and iwi to ensure formal delegations

receive the best possible understanding of Southland and New Zealand's unique cultural dimensions.

- 4.6 Council will look at opportunities to leverage off other international relationships to deliver its strategic international goals as well as participating with organisations with aligned objectives such as Sister Cities New Zealand.
- 4.7 Council, through its Human Resources Department, will encourage staff exchanges where they can be justified as part of professional or organisational development. Preference will be given to those exchanges that are reciprocal in nature. Any exchange recipient will report to the Committee within three months of their return.
- 4.8 Any delegation sent or received by the Southland District Council, will have local member(s) of equivalent status to those of the complementing international delegation.

5. Monitoring and Review

- 5.1 Review periods will be incorporated into all agreements governing international relationships, with an opportunity to re-classify or exit the relationship should it no longer meet its objectives.
- 5.2 Monitoring will include:
 - A report in an appropriate publication aimed at Southland residents, about the actions of the International Relations Committee over the previous 12 months.
- 5.3 This policy to be reviewed again no later than three years after Council agrees to it.

Appendix 1 – Types of Relationships

TYPE OF RELATIONSHIP	PURPOSE AND NATURE	TIMEFRAME	ACTION POINTS
FORMAL RELATIONSHIPS			
STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City/region will share some sort of similarity, be it community, locality, geographic composition, etc. • Based on an overarching joint task, such as education. • Relationship must have actual or potential local community interest and support. • Opportunities for partnering with the private sector will be identified and encouraged. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term. • Can become ongoing for sectoral knowledge-sharing. • Assessed annually. 	
FRIENDSHIP RELATIONSHIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City/region will share some sort of similarity, be it community, locality, geographic composition, etc. • Relationship must have actual or potential local community interest and support. • Based on friendship due to the ethnic and cultural links between Southland and this community (eg, where large migrant communities have originated). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium/Long-term. • Assessed annually. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate cultural understanding • Facilitate people-to-people links. • Focus on migrant sector.
FOSTERING RELATIONSHIPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City/region will share some sort of similarity, be it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium-term for duration of 	

TYPE OF RELATIONSHIP	PURPOSE AND NATURE	TIMEFRAME	ACTION POINTS
	<p>community, locality, geographic composition, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship is based on a niche link, particularly for knowledge-sharing in a specific area or sector. • Likely to benefit both partners involved. 	project/sectoral interest.	
AD-HOC VISITS/DELEGATIONS			
ONE-OFF CO-HOSTING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visiting groups request a civic reception of some kind. • Basis of visit could be technical, commercial, educational, social. • Because of the need to keep within budget constraints, requests may be declined or charges applied. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short-term. • Can be connected to other regions' hosting. 	