

Councillor Report

20th July 2010

1.0 Gail Sellers

1.1 NAIDOC celebrations

Councillors attended several NAIDOC events, the first was a breakfast followed by the annual Flag Raising Ceremony at the GRC chambers. The theme for the NAIDOC celebrations this year was *Unsung Heroes, Closing the Gap by Leading their Way*. On Monday evening, I opened the Arts NAIDOC 2010 exhibition, which included contemporary artworks by local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, some works from the permanent collection, some borrowed works and for the first time several schools contributed. A highlight of the evening was the presentation of a tribute to their own Unsung Heroes by five young members of the community. Following a week of activities, a street parade concluded NAIDOC week.

1.2 Sister Cities Australia National Conference Pre-Tour

A group of fourteen delegates from the Sister Cities Australia National Conference visited the Gladstone Museum and Art Gallery on Sunday 11th July. They met with Councillors and enjoyed a tour of the gallery and morning tea. They travelled to the Tondoon Botanic Gardens and joined the community for the opening of the Japanese Garden. They were given a tour of the Gardens and the city before travelling back to Yeppoon for the Annual Conference.

1.3 Opening of the Japanese gardens

Sunday 11th July saw the official opening of the Japanese Garden at the Tondoon Botanic Garden. The Garden was designed by Nick Alderson and the theme was *Stillness in Movement*. The garden was a commitment to the Sister City Relationship with the Saiki Region of Japan. Mayor Nishijima sent gifts of *Iriko (Dried Sardine) Strap* for the people who attended the opening. Congratulations to the Sister City Committee for their work in planning the opening and our thanks to Mrs Wendy Marsh and the students of Chanel College for providing the calligraphy, painting and craftwork. A special mention to Mr Brent Braddick and the Garden staff for the work they did to prepare the garden for opening.

Next year will be the 15th year of the Gladstone and Saiki Sister City Relationship and planning needs to be commenced.

1.4 Sister Cities Australia National Conference

Mrs Maureen Mason, Mrs Tennille Dyskstra and I attended the 2010 conference held at Yeppoon. During the conference, we received numerous compliments about our Japanese Gardens. The conference theme was *Real..Relevant..Rewarding* and one of the keynote speakers was the Governor of Queensland Penelope Wensley, who spoke on the history of Sister Cities. She stated that it is one of the largest volunteer organisations in the world and in Queensland there are 28 sister city relationships. She spoke about how it is difficult to put a value on Sister Cities but that it builds trust and goodwill and that it enhances and enriches the communities. The Rockhampton Region and Ibusuki Region of Japan are celebrating 30 years. Next year the conference will be held in Toowoomba.