

# Mayoral Statement

15<sup>th</sup> November 2011

## Saiki - Gladstone Sister City 15th Anniversary

A Gladstone delegation visited Japan to celebrate the fifteen years of the Saiki City and Gladstone Sister City Relationship. There is much in common - a busy harbour with an economic focus on its port facilities and fishing industry, a dynamic industrial sector, and a similar geographic size and population.

The delegation left Gladstone on the Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> November and returned on Saturday at 12<sup>th</sup> November. The group was a very good mix in that there was gender balance, a variety of ages, talent, occupations and experiences.

The members of the party were:

Gail Sellers	Mayor
Cale Dendle	Proxy for CEO
Craig Ross	Media Officer
Pamela Whitlock	Art Gallery Director/Curator
Wendy Marsh	President - Sister City Advisory Group
Izumi Kearns	Official Interpreter
Kurt Heidecker	CEO -Gladstone Industry Leadership Group
Jason Faint	Owner/Chef Rocksalt Restaurant/ Bar

Gladstone City Council signed the formal declaration of friendship on **September 4, 1996**. Gladstone Regional Council conducted a Re-signing Ceremony on the 6<sup>th</sup> September 2011 and the Mayor of Saiki resigned on the **9<sup>th</sup> November 2011**.

Over the past 15 years, we have learnt so much from each other through the exchange of art, including the annual photographic competitions, triathlon competitions, and, most importantly, reciprocal student visits.

Although our entire communities benefit from the exchange of knowledge and ideas across many facets of our respective societies, it is the experience of a foreign culture gained by our youth on their exchange visits which promises to be of greatest benefit. Today's youth are tomorrow's leaders and new friends made and knowledge gained through the youth exchange program between Saiki City and Gladstone are not only fruitful in keeping our relationship strong into the future, but ensure both communities also reap the benefits individually.

The purpose of this visit is not only to celebrate what we have achieved during the past 15 years but also to identify what improvements can be made to ensure that both Saiki City and Gladstone continue to benefit from our friendship. The trip certainly was very successful and we have secured friendships, relationships and contacts with members of the Saiki Community and can now see a renewed path forward.