



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF SISTER CITIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

held on Thursday 23 July 2026 commencing at 5:30 PM
in the Council Chambers, 43-51 Tanunda Road, Nuriootpa.

M I N U T E S

Welcome by Mayor Bim Lange declared the meeting open at 5:30 PM.

1. ATTENDANCE RECORD

1.1 Members Present

Mayor Bim Lange, Janine Harding, Rolf Binder, Rick Lane, Sandie and Bill Simons, Scott Hazeldine, Louise Hickinbotham, Vanesa Lambert, Milly Hoffmann

Apologies

Elaine Burrridge, Amber Perry

Not Present

Nil

Leave of Absence

Nil

Guests

James March

The Mayor introduced James March to attend the meeting as a guest.

2. CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

2.1 Minutes of previous meetings – for confirmation:

MOVED Rick Lane

That the Minutes of the Adjournment of the Sister City Advisory Committee due to be held on Thursday 28 May 2026 at 5:30 PM, as circulated, be confirmed as true and correct records of the proceedings of those meetings.

That the Minutes of the Sister City Advisory Committee held on Thursday 26 March 2026 at 5:30 PM, as circulated, be confirmed as true and correct records of the proceedings of those meetings.

That the Minutes of the Sister City Advisory Committee held on Thursday 25 September 2025 at 5:30 PM, as circulated, be confirmed as true and correct records of the proceedings of those meetings.

SECONDED Milly Hoffmann

CARRIED SCACC/7

2.2 Matters arising from previous minutes

Nil

3. MATTERS FOR INFORMATION

3.1 SISTER CITIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE – MEMBER SURVEY RESULTS

The Sister Cities Program Manager thanked everyone for their contribution to the member survey and noted that the key highlights for the group were collaboration, connections and the student study tour, with discussion around strengthening these outcomes.

Discussion also included:

- what we can learn from Grapevine whilst bringing a Barossa element to it
- how we can shape our agenda for the relationship that we want with Grapevine?
- reciprocal Grapevine visit in April 2027
- student/worker exchange to develop training opportunities
- are we missing opportunities to sell product in Grapevine? TradeStart and introductions to distributors
- Barossa Australia has good connections with Grapevine (Grapefest, Wine Pouring Society, North American Program)
- Opportunities of the connection with Qantas

3.2 SISTER CITY AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE BAROSSA COUNCIL AND KUMENAN TOWN, JAPAN

Mayor Lange confirmed The Barossa Council had received a letter from Mayor Atsushi Katayama confirming the cessation of the Council's Sister City Agreement with Kumenan Town, Japan.

3.3 RECIPROCAL STUDENT VISIT

The Sister Cities Program Manager advised that the reciprocal student visit of students from Grapevine-Colleyville in September 2026 would not proceed, due to the schools inability to appoint a superintendent as no international travel can be approved.

There was discussion around Rick Lane and Milly Hoffmann reigniting the conversation to continue the student exchange program.

It has been suggested that a model similar to RAW Impact, which has been utilised for student projects in Cambodia, could give some guidance in terms of:

- Applications
- Governance
- Risk
- Fundraising
- Chaperones/Teachers
- Service Clubs (Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions)
- Students/Schools
- Parents
- Selection Process

ACTION

Milly and Catherine to investigate the RAW Impact model.

3.4 UPDATED APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE SISTER CITIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Sister Cities Program Manager noted that Council had endorsed Milly Hoffmann and Lorna Schiller as Community Representatives on the Sister Cities Advisory Committee.

Since that time, Lorna Schiller has tendered her resignation which was accepted by Mayor Lange.

The Sister Cities Program Manager noted that as there is a position available, James March has expressed an interest in joining the committee as Community Representative. The Sister Cities Advisory Committee agreed so that this recommendation can be presented to Council for endorsement.

3.5 TRADE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WITH GRAPEVINE, TEXAS

The Sister Cities Program Manager highlighted the recent connection between Heidi Helbig, Economic Development and Strategic Lead and the City of Grapevine Economic Development Team.

The Sister Cities Program Manager also noted that Rowena Sloan, Team Leader Arts and Culture has been in contact with City of Grapevine, Texas with the intention of creating a connection between the Barossa Council's Sister Cities relationship with Grapevine Texas at the soon to be completed Barossa Creative Arts Centre (BCIC).

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 VERBAL UPDATE – MAYOR WILLIAM D. TATE'S 50 YEARS CELEBRATION, GRAPEVINE TEXAS

James March provided a verbal update on his visit to Grapevine, Texas to celebrate Mayor William D. Tate's 50 Years Celebration from 13 – 20 May 2026, representing the Barossa Council, Mayor Lange and the Sister Cities Advisory Committee, highlighting the wonderful events to honour such a significant achievement. It was a fantastic opportunity to fly the Barossa flag and re-kindle our Sister City relationship.

A detailed report follows.

REPORT TO THE SISTER CITIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Visit to Grapevine, Texas – May 2026

Executive Summary

In May 2026, I travelled to Grapevine, Texas, as a guest of the Grapevine Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) and as the sole representative of The Barossa Council. The primary civic purpose of the visit was to represent Mayor Michael 'Bim' Lange OAM and The Barossa Council at official events marking Mayor William D. Tate's Golden Jubilee – 50 years of mayoral service – held in conjunction with the 42nd Annual Main Street Fest.

The visit was important because it maintained Barossa's visible participation in a defining civic milestone for Grapevine and reinforced the personal relationships underpinning the Sister City Accord. The official itinerary included the Mayor's Sponsor and Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast, the Mayor's Awards Breakfast, the Texas Wine Tribute Gala, the unveiling and dedication of a statue honouring Mayor Tate, a private luncheon, Rotary engagement, and the Golden Jubilee Community Picnic. At the Community Picnic, I read the official proclamation on behalf of Mayor Lange and participated in the Sister City program, wearing the Barons of Barossa robe and tastevin. These engagements placed Barossa within Grapevine's civic, volunteer and community networks, rather than limiting the relationship to formal correspondence.

The visit also advanced practical objectives for Barossa Australia and the broader regional relationship. I met with Grapevine CVB staff, including Tara Hippensteel, and presented Barossa's destination proposition. I renewed relationships with members of the previous Grapevine delegation to the Barossa and discussed how the CVB could support Ruby Stobart's work promoting Barossa in the United States travel market. I also secured commitments from Brad Sledge and the Grapevine Wine Pouring Society to participate in a virtual Barossa Wine Rare & Distinguished tasting, now confirmed for 27 July 2026 and to be hosted by me with Soul Growers winemaker Stuart Bourne.

Further commercial and industry outcomes are being developed ahead of the 40th Anniversary of GrapeFest in September 2026. These include scoping a dedicated Barossa masterclass for wine professionals, broadening trade engagement in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex, and initiating dialogue with the Gaylord Texan Resort about a potential hospitality and trade activation. I have also facilitated introductions and preparatory discussions to support Ruby Stobart's late-July visit, ensuring her engagement builds on relationships strengthened during the May visit rather than starting from first principles.

The visit therefore delivered value on three levels. First, it fulfilled the civic duty to represent Mayor Lange and the Barossa at an important Sister City event. Second, it strengthened relationships with the Grapevine CVB, volunteers, wine ambassadors and community leaders. Third, it converted goodwill into

practical follow-up activities in wine education, destination promotion, trade engagement and event planning. This aligns with the Committee's emerging priorities: stronger strategic direction, measurable outcomes, tourism and industry partnerships, broader community participation and ongoing two-way exchange.

The next significant opportunity is the proposed Grapevine delegation's visit to the Barossa in April 2027, aligned with the Barossa Vintage Festival. Grapevine's hospitality in May was generous, well-organised and deeply personal. Barossa should reciprocate with a program that combines civic recognition, community participation, wine and tourism immersion, professional exchange and authentic local hosting.

This report provides the Sister Cities Advisory Committee with a concise account of the May 2026 visit to Grapevine and the outcomes that have followed. It focuses on the visit's relevance to the Committee's purpose: maintaining an effective international relationship that delivers mutual community, cultural, educational, tourism and economic benefits.

The Barossa-Grapevine Sister City relationship was formalised in September 2023. The original delegation report describes the relationship as founded on shared values, cultural identity, wine, tourism, education and community exchange. The Committee's 2026 member survey has since reinforced the need to move beyond symbolic engagement by improving communication, strengthening strategic direction and establishing practical pathways for tourism, industry, education and community participation.

Main Itinerary Highlights and Civic Representation

	Official engagement	Relevance to the Sister City relationship
15 May	Mayor's Sponsor and Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast; Mayor's Awards Breakfast; 42nd Annual Main Street Fest; Texas Wine Tribute Gala	Established Barossa's presence across Grapevine's civic, volunteer, festival and wine-sector networks.
16 May	Grapevine Rotary breakfast; Mayor Tate statue unveiling and dedication; private luncheon; Main Street Fest program	Demonstrated respect for Grapevine's civic leadership and created high-value relationship-building opportunities.
17 May	Golden Jubilee Community Picnic and Sister City presentations	I read the official proclamation on behalf of Mayor Lange and represented the Barossa in the formal Sister City program.
18-20 May	Follow-up dinners and meetings with Paul W. McCallum and CVB staff	Provided time for debriefing, GrapeFest planning, destination promotion and relationship development outside formal events.

The host itinerary was extensive and deliberately integrated Sister City representatives into public celebrations, volunteer recognition, Rotary hospitality, festival programming and official civic ceremonies. This approach demonstrated that Grapevine treats Sister City relationships as active community partnerships rather than ceremonial arrangements.



Outcomes Achieved and Work Now Underway

1 Grapevine Wine Pouring Society and Barossa Wine School

During the visit, I secured Brad Sledge's commitment to deliver an introductory Barossa Wine School tasting for the Grapevine Wine Pouring Society. Brad previously visited the Barossa as part of Grapevine's official volunteer delegation and remains a valuable advocate for the relationship. The virtual tasting is confirmed for 27 July 2026 and will be hosted by me alongside Stuart Bourne, winemaker at Soul Growers. This activity offers an immediate, low-cost way to maintain contact, educate local wine ambassadors and build a more informed base of support ahead of GrapeFest.

2 Support for Ruby Stobart and Barossa Destination Promotion

I introduced and presented Barossa's destination proposition to Tara Hippensteel at the Grapevine CVB and reopened discussions on how the CVB could assist Ruby Stobart in promoting Barossa to the US travel market. Since returning, I have facilitated further meetings and dialogue in preparation for Ruby's late-July visit. This continuity is important because the CVB combines destination marketing, leisure and international sales, media support, major events and Sister City administration within one organisation.

3 GrapeFest 40th Anniversary and Trade Activation

The visit helped lay the groundwork for Barossa's stronger participation in the 40th Anniversary of GrapeFest in September 2026. Current plans include a dedicated masterclass for wine professionals and a broader trade activation to reach decision-makers and influencers in retail and on-premise channels across the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex. The aim is to complement GrapeFest's significant consumer reach with a more focused professional engagement program.

4 Gaylord Texan Resort Opportunity

Discussions are also underway on a broader trade and hospitality activation involving the Gaylord Texan Resort. This could connect Barossa wine and destination promotion with one of Grapevine's major convention and hospitality assets. The opportunity requires further scoping, but it demonstrates how the Sister City relationship can provide introductions that would otherwise be difficult to make from Australia.

5 Relationship Renewal

A less visible but equally important outcome was the renewal of relationships with members of the previous Grapevine delegation to the Barossa. Reconnecting in person reinforced goodwill, built confidence that commitments would be honoured, and helped ensure the relationship remains broad-based rather than dependent on one or two officials.

Relevance to the Sister Cities Advisory Committee

The visit directly addresses the priorities identified by Committee members in the 2026 survey. Members valued authentic personal and municipal connections with Grapevine, student exchanges, GrapeFest participation, and opportunities across tourism, hospitality, wine and agriculture. They also called for clearer strategic direction, more measurable outcomes, stronger communication and broader stakeholder involvement.

The outcomes of the visit demonstrate a practical model for future activity: formal civic representation creates access and trust; personal relationships are then converted into focused projects; and those projects are assigned to relevant organisations and individuals for delivery. The Wine Pouring Society tasting, support for Ruby Stobart, GrapeFest trade planning and Gaylord discussions exemplify this progression from relationship to outcome.

Planning to Reciprocate Grapevine Hospitality – April 2027

The May visit highlighted the care Grapevine invests in hosting Sister City delegates. Transport, accommodation, volunteer support, official recognition and community access were coordinated to ensure each delegate felt personally welcomed. The Barossa should reciprocate at a comparable level when the Grapevine delegation visits during the 2027 Barossa Vintage Festival.

Program element	Recommended approach
Civic welcome	A formal Mayoral reception, Council welcome, acknowledgement at a major Vintage Festival event and structured opportunities to meet elected members and community leaders.
Barossa immersion	A balanced itinerary across wine, food, heritage, agriculture, landscape and townships, including meaningful hosted experiences rather than only site inspections.
Industry and professional exchange	A wine masterclass, meetings with Barossa Australia and tourism operators, and exchanges with event, economic development, education and hospitality professionals.
Community participation	Involvement of schools, Rotary and service clubs, young ambassadors, musicians, volunteers and host families where appropriate.
Reciprocal hospitality	Clear host responsibilities, transport arrangements, welcome packs, local guides and time for informal relationship-building.
Legacy outcomes	At least two agreed collaborative projects arising from the visit, with named owners, timeframes and reporting back to the Committee.

Conclusion

The May 2026 visit was successful because it combined respectful civic representation with purposeful relationship-building. Barossa was present at an important milestone for Grapevine, existing relationships were strengthened, and practical outcomes were achieved in wine education, destination promotion, trade engagement and future event planning. The Sister City relationship now has an opportunity to move into a more mature

phase, with goodwill supported by regular activity, measurable outcomes and well-planned reciprocal hospitality. The April 2027 visit provides the next major opportunity to demonstrate that commitment.











4.2 **DISCUSSION – 2027 BAROSSA VINTAGE FESTIVAL – PEOPLE'S CHOICE WINE EVENT**

The Sister Cities Program Manager opened discussion around the 2027 Barossa Vintage Festival and the People's Choice Wine Event. The 2027 Barossa Vintage Festival Program is yet to be finalised so until there is surety where this event may sit in the program, the Sister Cities Advisory Committee will re-visit this discussion at our next meeting in September 2026.

Rolf Binder and Amber Perry have indicated that they have capacity to work in the event but are not able to facilitate the event.

5. **DEBATE REPORT**

5.1 **ESTABLISHMENT OF A TEMPORARY WORKING GROUP - PLANNING OF THE GRAPEVINE DELEGATION ITINERARY FOR APRIL 2027** **26/42250**

MOVED Rolf Binder

That the Sister Cities Advisory Committee establish a temporary working group for the purpose of planning of the City of Grapevine Delegation itinerary for April 2027.

SECONDED Rick Lane

CARRIED SCACC/8

The following Sister Cities Advisory Committee Members have volunteered to be members of this working group:

*Janine Harding
Louise Hickinbotham
Vanessa Lambert
James March*

PURPOSE

To seek the Committee's endorsement of the establishment of a temporary working group for the planning of the Grapevine Delegation itinerary for April 2027.

REPORT

Background

The Barossa Council hosted a delegation of sixteen from Grapevine, Texas during the Barossa Vintage Festival 2025. Since hosting our counterparts from Texas and in supporting the delegation Mayor, Martin McCarthy, Janine Harding, Sister Cities Advisory Committee Members Rolf Binder and Louise Hickinbotham and the Nuriootpa High School Study Tour, we have identified a number of learnings to enhance the experience.

Discussion

Under Council's Sister City Relationships and Engagement Policy, Section 3.5 - Council Missions to Sister Cities of the Council will support a program of formal delegation missions for each of its Sister Cities on the following basis.

- 3.5.1. Any delegates, both inbound and outbound, will be supplemented by an appropriate funding allocation in Council's annual budget.
- 3.5.2. The program will allow for an annual delegation (either incoming or outgoing) to be reciprocated to/by the partner City in the following financial year or at a later date. The program will be routinely reviewed by the Sister City Advisory Committee and a report submitted to Council as a means of assessing the outcomes of the missions and determining their value for the future.
- 3.5.3. Council will encourage all delegates (both inbound and outbound) to be supplemented with representatives who may be able to assist in furthering the objectives of these relationships.

We are currently seeking confirmation from Grapevine, Texas on their delegation to The Barossa Council during the Barossa Vintage Festival 2027. The Committee will play an integral in the successful hosting of our Sister City delegates with further details to be provided to the Committee members once available.

Events

The Committee will have an opportunity to develop events and activities during the Vintage Festival 2027 that promote our Sister City relationship with The City of Grapevine and investigate ways in which the community can actively participate.

To look at ways to build connection and celebration of each other's unique cultural experiences and our communities.

Summary and Conclusion

The Committee is asked to discuss the purpose of the establishment of a temporary working group to provide support for the planning and hosting opportunities for the delegates of Grapevine, Texas, incorporating their visit with the Barossa Vintage Festival through their committee.

ATTACHMENTS OR OTHER SUPPORTING REFERENCES

Attachment 1 Grapevine Visit 2025 - Itinerary 

Supporting references

Nil

COMMUNITY PLAN / CORPORATE PLAN / LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

Community Plan

Implementing economic development strategies to support future growth opportunities and a diversified and resilient economy showcasing the Barossa rural and regional character.

Strategic Outcome

- We strive to support income and job stability and growth for the future in support of quality of life outcomes.
- We partner with and support local business.
- We are a destination of choice.
- We look to maximize community economic return.

Corporate Plan

- CS20 Tourism - Provision of a range of tourism services, including; managing the nationally accredited Barossa Visitor Centre, development and maintenance of tourism resources both digital and printed, customer service delivery encouraging longer stays, dispersal throughout the region, and maximising visitor yield and investment in our region, Tourism Business Support, capacity building, training, product development, marketing
- CS10 Economic Development - Facilitating the economic well-being and quality of life of the local businesses and the community
- CS11 Events - Management of community development projects and events, including enquiries and logistics. Event management supporting a variety of internal service areas and community that support the delivery of successful, community focused events.

Legislative Requirements

Nil

RISK MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS
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These statements are qualitative in nature and designed to provide an indication of Council's general position when deciding to take or retain risk in pursuit of its objectives.

1. SERVICE DELIVERY

Refers to the delivery of services to the community, which includes the systems and physical assets that enable provision of these services, including structures (such as roads, buildings and facilities) as well as IT infrastructure, plant, vehicles & other equipment.

Nil

2. SUSTAINABILITY & ENVIRONMENT

Relates to measures to preserve, protect and minimise impact on the natural environment, including sacred and indigenous lands, flora, fauna, heritage, water, waste, hazardous materials and pollution.

Nil

3. FINANCIAL

Refers to planning and control of Council's budget to align with the sustainable achievement of the desired outcomes articulated in its Community Plan.

To be discussed at a future meeting.

4. PEOPLE

Relates to recruitment, retention, wellbeing and safety of employees and volunteers and engagement and management of contractors as well as the wellbeing and safety of the community.

Nil

5. REPUTATION

Relates to policy, decisions, actions and circumstances that may cause Council to lose credibility with the community, ratepayers, key stakeholders, other levels of government and its own employees and contractors.

Nil.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

It would be envisaged that the Committee would engage with the Barossa Vintage Festival Committee, Barossa Young Ambassador Committee, Barossa Australia and other community members to support the delegation through its events and formal engagements during April 2027.

6. CONFIDENTIAL AGENDA

Nil

7. URGENT OTHER BUSINESS

Nil

8. NEXT MEETING

Thursday 24 September 2026 at 5:30 PM

9. CLOSURE

Mayor Lange declared the meeting closed at 6.40pm.

Confirmed at Sister Cities Advisory Committee Meeting on 24 September 2026

Date:.....

Chairperson:.....