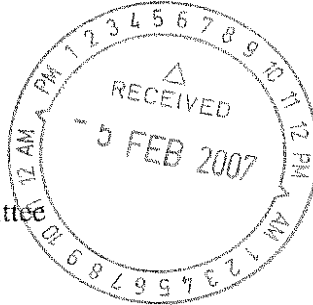




30 January 2007

Dr Kathleen Dermody  
Secretary  
Senate Foreign Affairs Trade Committee  
SI. 57  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600



Dear Dr Dermody

**INQUIRY INTO THE NATURE AND CONDUCT OF AUSTRALIA'S  
PUBLIC DIPLOMACY**

The City of Melbourne has received the attached correspondence from Professor Graeme Sansom, Associate Professor and Director, Centre of Local Government, University of Technology Sydney in support of the City of Melbourne's submissions previously forwarded to the Senate Foreign Affairs Trade Committee on 24 January 2007.

We would be grateful for your cooperation in allowing this material to be included as a further addendum to the City of Melbourne's submission to the Senate Inquiry.

Should you have any questions related to this material the relevant contact at the City of Melbourne is Ms Jane Sharwood, Manager Melbourne International, Ph: 9658 9854 or email [jane.sharwood@melbourne.vic.gov.au](mailto:jane.sharwood@melbourne.vic.gov.au).

Yours sincerely

**David Pitchford**  
Chief Executive

CoM reference #4024103

**UTS: CENTRE FOR  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT**



**SENATE FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE COMMITTEE**

**Inquiry into the Nature and Conduct of  
Australia's Public Diplomacy**

The UTS Centre for Local Government is pleased to provide this addendum to the submission by Melbourne City Council. The Centre is assisting Council with the formulation of its international strategy.

The Centre has an extensive international network and has undertaken a wide range of projects for AusAID, other donors, UN agencies and international local government organizations. Its Director is a former CEO of the Australian Local Government Association and currently a member of the Board of the Commonwealth Local Government Forum. Its Deputy Director is Vice President of the Asia-Pacific Network of Local Government Training and Research Institutes.

**Context**

As the Council's submission points out, local government across the world is playing an increasing role in international relations. This reflects the patterns of globalisation and the resulting trend for cities and regions to deal directly with each other rather than rely exclusively on connections via national and/or provincial governments.

Melbourne is just one of many Australian local governments that are following this trend, which is by no means confined to large capital city councils (as indicated below). Like Melbourne, a substantial number of local councils have moved on from Sister City links to much more robust technical and economic partnerships.

In addition, Australian local government is part of numerous international networks such as United Cities and Local Governments (recognized as the premier global body by the UN), the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (recognized by the Commonwealth Secretariat and now represented at CHOGM), the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (a leader in addressing climate change, also recognized globally by the UN), and the Asia-Pacific CityNet.

The Australian Local Government Association represents Australia in a number of these international networks and forums. Generally, Australian local government is well regarded across the Asia-Pacific region: although it is relatively small-scale compared to local government

## ADDENDUM – CITY OF MELBOURNE

in Japan, China, Korea and elsewhere, it is seen as demonstrating high standards of governance and professional expertise.

### International Comparisons

It is becoming increasingly apparent that Australia lags behind other advanced economies in its approach to utilizing the potential of local government as an adjunct to other avenues of diplomacy and trade promotion. For example:

- The Japanese government supports a Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR) that has substantial offices in Beijing, Sydney, Singapore, Seoul, London, Paris and New York (see <http://www.clair.or.jp/e/index.html>).
- Korea has a similar organization known as KLAFIR (Korean Local Authorities Foundation for International Relations, see <http://www.klafir.or.kr>).
- China makes extensive use of city-to-city links.
- The UK and Canadian governments all channel substantial proportions of overseas aid through specific local government programs, and support partnership programs.
- The European Union supports an Africa-Caribbean-Pacific Platform for local governance and development.
- The New Zealand government is hosting the biennial Commonwealth Local Government Conference in Auckland in March, with the Prime Minister and other ministers playing leading roles and taking the opportunity to invite presidents, prime ministers and senior ministers from a number of Commonwealth countries.
- New Zealand is funding a major local governance development project across the Pacific through the Commonwealth Local Government Forum.

Whilst AusAID and AusTrade provide some support for local government projects, their involvement and assistance tends to be ad hoc and/or country-specific rather than systematic. Moreover, there appears to be little interest in federal government circles in exploring a broader policy or program framework to identify and exploit the potential benefits of building on current international activity by local governments. No doubt this reflects in part the specific nature of the Australian federation and the historic role of the States. However, there would not appear to be any constitutional obstacle to closer engagement between federal and local governments on international issues.


A noteworthy feature of the Pacific local governance project is the use of partnerships between local governments. For example, the City of Maryborough is providing technical assistance to Honiara City Council (which is in effect the second largest province of the Solomon Islands); several other medium-sized Australian councils have established technical partnerships with counterparts in PNG (part-funded by AusAID); there are also opportunities for partnerships with local governments in Fiji, Vanuatu and elsewhere. Such partnerships offer considerable potential to build and consolidate relationships in a region of increasing geo-political concern, and to support other diplomatic and aid initiatives aimed at promoting stable good governance. But it would seem that this potential goes largely unnoticed in Australia.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, and responding directly to the Committee's terms of reference, it is argued that:

- a. The Australian government should systematically explore the potential for enhancing current public diplomacy programs by engaging more effectively with local government's international activities, and set clear objectives for the contribution local government could and should make to national efforts.
- b. Similarly, the Australian government should identify a range of specific opportunities for local government involvement in priority regions such as the Pacific.
- c. Enhanced arrangements for public diplomacy should include local government wherever appropriate and should recognize the role played by the Australian Local Government Association. There needs to be a direct relationship between the Australian government and local government, given that the States offer little support for local government's international activities and may in some cases see local government as a competitor rather than ally.
- d. Additional resources should be directed to local government programs in priority regions, recognizing that funding needs to be maintained for extended periods to achieve sustainable outcomes. As the Melbourne experience shows, in the area of trade and economic development, there are also opportunities to capitalize on expanded private sector involvement at local and regional levels, in partnership with local government.

The Centre would be happy to provide further input if required.



**Graham Sansom**  
Associate Professor and Director

25 January 2007