

14. NEW BUSINESS OF AN URGENT NATURE INTRODUCED BY DECISION OF COUNCIL

15. MOTIONS OF WHICH PREVIOUS NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN

**15.1: NOTICE OF MOTION BY COUNCILLOR BROUGH-AMENDED
VOTING REQUIREMENT: SIMPLE MAJORITY**

THAT:

- 1. The City of Albany undertake the necessary administrative actions to respectfully conclude the Sister City relationship with Linyi, Shandong, Peoples Republic of China before the Ordinary Council Meeting on 26 October 2023.**
- 2. The City of Albany undertake a comprehensive review of the Civic Affiliations Policy with elected member involvement in order to clarify the City’s position with regard to our other sister city arrangements.**

**15.1: NOTICE OF MOTION BY COUNCILLOR BROUGH
VOTING REQUIREMENT: SIMPLE MAJORITY**

THAT the City of Albany undertake the necessary administrative actions to respectfully conclude the Sister City relationship with Linyi, Shandong, Peoples Republic of China before the Ordinary Council Meeting on 26 October 2023.

Councillor Reason:

1. I have personally spoken with a majority of elected members on the Linyi matter. In my discussions not a single elected member has spoken in favour of revivifying the Albany-Linyi relationship.
2. Elected members have expressed concerns that the optics of concluding the no-value Albany-Linyi relationship outside of a broader policy review may be perceived as being undiplomatic, and that a comprehensive review would mitigate against negative perceptions.
3. I am grateful for the feedback from elected members in this regard, and therefore propose a comprehensive civic affiliations policy review of sister city relationships in general.
4. However, a comprehensive policy review is not necessary to identify the specific problems associated with the Albany-Linyi relationship, which have been previously documented in the report: “Chinese Communist Party sister city relationships as a sophisticated enabler of foreign influence: a City of Albany case study”.
5. Since the publication of my report, new information has come to light:
 - a) the CCP has placed bounties on eight exiled Hong Kong pro-democracy activists, two of whom are sheltering in Australia and one of whom is **an Australian citizen**. This demonstrates an appetite for transnational repression, extension of law enforcement beyond territorial borders, and a brazen violation of human rights;
 - b) on 1st July 2023, two days before the bounty hunt on Australians began, a new “Law of Foreign Relations of the People’s Republic of China” came into effect. This legislation gives President Xi Jinping supreme control over all of China’s diplomatic affairs including CCP sister city relationships;
 - c) in response to this new law, family members of the pro-democracy activists have been taken away for questioning, serving as a form of familial/relational repression aimed at isolating and intimidating dissidents, a strategy already practiced by the CCP on mainland China.

6. In light of these additional facts, it is clear that there is a **fundamental difference in values** between many residents and ratepayers of the City of Albany who have been in communication with me and other elected members, and that of Xi Jinping's CCP. Albany's relationship with Linyi must therefore be considered through the broader perspective of a repressive authoritarian regime, whose resume also includes:
 - a) **Enslavement** of minority populations including the Uighers as recognised by a UN special rapporteur. This would be The Australian equivalent of white Australians enslaving Aboriginal Australians (<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-08-18/xinjiang-forced-labour-china-un-slavery-expert/101347992>)
 - b) **Illegal organ harvesting** of minority populations and religious groups as reported by the United Nations Officer of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2021/06/china-un-human-rights-experts-alarmed-organ-harvesting-allegations>)
 - c) **Anti-democratic actions** against Australian electoral matters (multiple examples and references incl. Nick O'Malley and Alex Joske, "Mysterious Bennelong letter urges Chinese Australians to 'take down' the Turnbull government," *The Sydney Morning Herald* (13 Dec. 2017))
 - d) Persecution of people who identify as **LBGTQIA+**, ([https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpub/article/PIIS2468-2667\(19\)30153-7/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpub/article/PIIS2468-2667(19)30153-7/fulltext)) and religious communities including **Christians and Buddhists** (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jan/13/china-christians-religious-persecution-translation-bible>).
 - e) Politically silencing and cancelling of **His Holiness, the 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet** on visits to Australia.
 - f) Maintaining a politically intimate relationship with Vladimir Putin's dictatorship. PRC President Xi Jinping has described this relationship as a "**friendship that knows no limits**". President Putin currently has an arrest warrant issued by the International Criminal Court in relation to his illegal invasion of Ukraine (<https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/situation-ukraine-icc-judges-issue-arrest-warrants-against-vladimir-vladimirovich-putin-and>). Contrary to the position staked by the CCP, Prime Minister Albanese's visit to Kyiv on 3 July 2023 sent a clear message that democratic nations like Australia will stand side-by-side with the Ukrainian people in their time of need. The **Australian Government has urged local governments to put on hold** existing bilateral cooperation with the Russian governments, including subnational government entities (<https://www.dfat.gov.au/crisis-hub/invasion-ukraine-russia>). Members of the Albany community have expressed to me and other elected members the perspective that whilst the CCP remains a "**no limits-friend**" of Vladimir Putin, an Albany relationship with CCP subnational government entities is untenable.
7. With respect to concerns about risks of potential adverse political or economic outcomes arising from this motion being successfully passed, City of Albany staff have been in direct communication with the Australian Government Foreign Arrangements Scheme within the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.
8. In DFAT's correspondence with City of Albany they stated that although the Chinese government would be irritated by this motion, there would be **no significant diplomatic or economic consequences** that could not be mitigated by the department.
9. With respect to concerns about loss of access to tea-cup diplomacy with international consulates, respectfully concluding the Albany-Linyi sister city relationship will not impose restrictions or limitations on the opportunity for international diplomats from any country, including Mr Long Dingbin of the People's Republic of China, to be hospitably and respectfully welcomed by the City of Albany.
10. Western Australia may be China's gravel pit, but when financial wealth is placed at the apex of a value hierarchy over freedom, democracy, rule of law and a fair go, institutional and societal decay ensues.
11. In the absence of additional mitigating circumstances, I urge elected members to show courage on behalf of our community and end this association with a minority-enslaving regime that viciously hunts Australian citizens committed to the cause of democracy, lest we remain in shabby company.

12. Although elected members may contend that local government should not discuss these matters as they pertain to broader issues, by virtue of the fact that an international relationship is already in place between Albany and Linyi I contend that it is essential these issues be debated publicly in the spirit of open government and the public interest.
13. My comprehensive argument in favour of this Councillor Motion is contained within the attached report "*Sibling Rivalry - Chinese Communist Party sister city relationships as a sophisticated enabler of foreign influence: a City of Albany case study*". This report should be read prior to determining a position to take in this matter. A superficial and condensed reasoning is as follows:
- a) Linyi, People's Republic of China (PRC) has not met City of Albany Civic Affiliations Policy criteria for at least three years and is highly unlikely to meet any of the criteria in the foreseeable future.
 - b) Continuing the civic relationship with Linyi maintains a para-diplomatic bridgehead for the PRC, exposing City of Albany staff and elected members to foreign influence and interference by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), running counter to the interests of our Albany community as well as the Australian community.
 - c) Local government staff and elected members are neither briefed nor trained to adequately prepare for, or respond to interactions with senior diplomats of nations who are in direct strategic competition against Australian interests.
 - d) Since its inception the Linyi-Albany civic affiliation has brought no meaningful benefit to the residents or rate-payers of Albany.
 - e) With no runs on the board, the Linyi-Albany civic affiliation nevertheless has been carrying an administrative burden for City staff, especially with regard to compliance with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade reporting requirements.
 - f) CCP diplomats have said that democracy and Chinese Communism are as irreconcilable as fire and water.
14. In response, I urge Council to consider the wise teaching: trees bearing thorns and no fruit should be removed from the orchard.

Officer Comment:

Subnational links are part of the fabric of Australia's broader bilateral relationships with foreign countries, including with China. From time-to-time representatives of those jurisdictions will see fit to consider new arrangements or review existing arrangements.

The Australian Government has measures in place to ensure such foreign arrangements accord with the national interest.

The arrangement with the City of Linyi, dated and signed 24 December 2013 is registered with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Foreign Arrangements Portal reference, FRA-000081).

It is for Council to decide if they wish to review existing arrangements under the Civic Affiliations Policy.

15.2: NOTICE OF MOTION BY COUNCILLOR THOMSON

THAT the council instructs the Chief Executive Officer to arrange for a report to be presented at an ordinary meeting of council before December 2023 outlining:

- **A timeline and implementation plan to plant street trees as per the concept plan for Grey Street East that was unanimously endorsed by the council in February 2019; or**
- **Options and rationale for an alternative course of action to that endorsed by the council in February 2019 with regard to street trees in the segment of Grey Street East between York and Aberdeen Streets.**

Councillor Reason:

In February 2019, the council unanimously endorsed a concept plan for Grey Street East, between York Street and Aberdeen Street.

Designs and perspectives endorsed by the council depicted a tree-lined boulevard that included eight street trees (see Attachments A and B). The designs and perspectives were uploaded to the City website for public information, and perspectives were reprinted in the *Great Southern Weekender* and *Albany Advertiser* newspapers that published articles about the Grey Street East concept plan.

Despite civil works having been completed some years ago pursuant to the council's endorsement, no trees have been planted.

In stark contrast to the promised tree-lined boulevard, Grey Street East is now a concrete jungle (see my photographs at Attachments C, D and E).

I have raised delays to provision of the street trees with the administration a number of times, including in the presence of elected members at a strategic workshop.

Lest the City be accused of green-washing, I now request that the administration, as a matter of high priority, either:

- provide a timeline to plant appropriate trees, as per the Council-endorsed concept plan; or
- report as to why the endorsed number and/or location of street trees might not be possible and in that instance suggest suitable alternatives to the number and/or location of street trees that were endorsed.

This motion is consistent with recent work done by Centennial Park resident Frank Ruggera who at the June 27 council meeting eloquently outlined recent consultation he had undertaken in the Albany community toward increasing the number of street trees in Albany.

In co-operation with the City administration, Mr Ruggera on his own time conducted a combined four consultation sessions at two Albany shopping centres, and a mail-drop to 1500 letter boxes.

The administration's openness toward working with Mr Ruggera is highly laudable. His collaborative grassroots action should be rewarded with results, and this motion is a small step in that direction.

Officer Comment:

The planting of street trees on Grey St East is considered an important component of the CBD streetscape.

At the time of road and path construction, it was identified that there were several clashes with services in the tree locations identified on the concept plan that would have caused damage to infrastructure and constrained tree growth.

There will however be some locations where trees are able to be planted and officers are happy to and planning to reconsider available options.

There were also not sufficient eligible funds available within the project and these funds have not been subsequently allocated.

The planting of street trees in the CBD necessitates additional infrastructure such as planters or kerbs that are often not necessary in a suburban environment. Unless additional budget is granted to the specific project, at Council's request those on Grey St East could however be prioritised over other projects.

16. REPORTS OF CITY OFFICERS

17. MEETING CLOSED TO PUBLIC

18. CLOSURE