

# Draft Memorandum of Understanding with Athens, Greece

Strategic Alignment - Our Community

Public

**Tuesday, 2 September 2025**  
**City Community Services and Culture Committee**

**Program Contact:**  
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**Approving Officer:**  
Jo Podoliak, Director City  
Community

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report seeks Council endorsement of the draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City of Adelaide (CoA) and the Municipal Council, the City of Athens, Greece.

On 23 May 2023, Council authorised the Administration to enter into discussions with the City of Athens, Greece to determine the nature and themes of a proposed MOU.

In May 2025 a draft MOU, developed by the City of Athens, was sent to the CoA for review.

A formalised relationship with the City of Athens would represent a commitment to leverage the existing strong links between the two cities for mutual cultural and economic benefit.

A MOU is the first step for any agreement between CoA and any new international city partnership. It is proposed for a three-year term, to then be reviewed before considering any potential extension or progression to a more formal Sister City agreement.

## RECOMMENDATION

The following recommendation will be presented to Council on 9 September 2025 for consideration

THAT THE CITY COMMUNITY SERVICES AND CULTURE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS TO COUNCIL THAT COUNCIL

1. Approves the Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Adelaide and the City of Athens, Greece as contained in Attachment A to Item 7.1 listed on the Agenda for the meeting of the City Community Services and Culture Committee held on 2 September 2025.
2. Notes that the City of Athens has advised the City of Adelaide that the Memorandum of Understanding must be approved first by its municipal council and subsequently by the Greek Ministry of the Interior, before it can be signed by both parties.
3. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer or delegate to make any necessary editorial or administrative amendments to the Memorandum of Understanding as contained in Attachment A to Item 7.1 listed on the Agenda for the meeting of the City Community Services and Culture Committee held on 2 September 2025, in response to feedback from the City of Athens municipal Council or the Greek Ministry of the Interior, providing it does not alter its intent.

## IMPLICATIONS AND FINANCIALS

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|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| City of Adelaide<br>2024-2028<br>Strategic Plan                        | Alignment – Our Community<br>Vibrant, connected and inclusive.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Policy                                                                 | The proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will align with the CoA Cultural Policy 2025-2036 and Economic Development Strategy 2024- 2028.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Consultation                                                           | Not as a result of this report.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Resource                                                               | Not as a result of this report.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Risk / Legal /<br>Legislative                                          | Council's intent to enter an international relationship has been registered with the Commonwealth Government's Foreign Arrangements Scheme. This is a requirement of the <i>Australia's Foreign Relations (State and Territory Arrangements) Act 2020</i> .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Opportunities                                                          | Entering into the MOU will formalise a cultural relationship between The City of Adelaide and The City of Athens and present opportunities for knowledge sharing between the two cities, leveraging existing community relationships, and encouraging collaboration and exchange in a number of areas.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 25/26 Budget<br>Allocation                                             | Provisional allocation from the Sister Cities Program budget to enable the signing of the MOU and practical commencement of the partnership, subject to further discussion with the City of Athens.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Proposed 26/27<br>Budget Allocation                                    | Not as a result of this report.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Life of Project,<br>Service, Initiative<br>or (Expectancy of)<br>Asset | The recommended process for the development of potential Sister City partnerships is for the City of Adelaide and the international counterpart City to enter into a time-limited and activity based partnership for three years. The success and value of the partnership is to be reviewed during that time. At the end of the partnership, the parties may choose to extend the MOU or allow the partnership arrangement to end. The partnership may also be considered to be strong enough at this time to enter into a Sister City Agreement, which are ongoing. |
| 25/26 Budget<br>Reconsideration<br>(if applicable)                     | Not as a result of this report.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Ongoing Costs<br>(eg maintenance<br>cost)                              | International relationships require investment to active and leverage to provide value to both parties. Expenditure can include recognition of key milestones or events of significance, diplomatic travel and internal resourcing to service the relationship.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Other Funding<br>Sources                                               | Not as a result of this report.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

# DISCUSSION

## Background

1. At its meeting of 10 May 2022, Council noted the following as part of the decision of [Item 10.6](#):
  - 1.1. “That any new international partnerships would take the form of an MOU, and would need to be individually assessed in detail, including key success metrics, and prior to entering into any such arrangements, and then registered through the Commonwealth Government’s Foreign Arrangement Scheme.”
2. On 23 May 2023, Council authorised the Administration to enter into discussions with the City of Athens, Greece to determine the nature and themes of a proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).
3. The Hon. Minister Andrea Michaels MP, Minister for Consumer and Business Affairs, wrote to the Lord Mayor on 2 May 2023 [\[Link 1\]](#) to formally propose the City of Adelaide (CoA) investigate a Sister City relationship with Athens, Greece.
4. The Hon. Frank Pangallo MLC, and the Hon. Connie Bonaros MLC, wrote to the Lord Mayor [\[Link 2\]](#) on 2 May 2023 to formally propose the CoA investigate a Sister City relationship with Athens, Greece,
5. The Hellenic Australia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (HACCI) SA Chapter has previously provided a letter [\[Link 3\]](#) supporting a Sister City relationship and outlining their commitment to collaboration within the business and professional community.
6. As a mandatory requirement, notice of the proposed formalised relationship between Athens and the CoA has been submitted through the Commonwealth Government’s Foreign Arrangement Scheme.
7. No other Australian capital city has a current formalised diplomatic relationship or Sister City relationship with the City of Athens.
8. The CoA has previously entered into a time-limited MOU with the City of Edinburgh, which focused on cultural learning and exchange, specifically in relation to the arts and festivals; and with the City of Jaipur. These time-limited MOUs have not resulted in Sister City relationships.
9. The signing of the MOU with the City of Athens is proposed for a three-year term and does not present any financial obligations on Council.
10. At the conclusion of the three-year MOU term, a review would be undertaken to assess the outcomes and the possibility to consider an extension or a Sister City agreement.

## Strategic Alignments and Opportunities

11. International relationships may provide diplomatic, social, cultural, and economic benefits to CoA, and support strategic plan outcomes.
12. The draft MOU proposes the following alignments between CoA and City of Athens:
  - 12.1. Cultural Cooperation
  - 12.2. Tourism Cooperation
  - 12.3. City Resilience and Smart City Solutions- Digitalization of Services
  - 12.4. Cooperation in the field of environmental protection
13. The Athens Resilience Strategy for 2030 [\[Link 4\]](#) has pillars including:
  - 13.1. An open city
  - 13.2. A green city
  - 13.3. A proactive city
  - 13.4. A vibrant city
14. The City of Athens has developed a Climate Action Plan [\[Link 5\]](#) which has alignments to the CoA Integrated Climate Strategy 2030. The MOU lists point IV as ‘Cooperation in the field of environmental protection’. Athens’ objectives include emissions reductions and increasing green spaces and canopy, which align with CoA strategic objectives.
15. Athens has several world heritage sites. CoA is in the process of bidding for heritage listing of the Adelaide Park Lands and there may be an opportunity for CoA to learn from Athens.
16. The CoA Cultural Policy 2025-2036 principle; ‘Preserving Cultural Heritage, Embracing Progress’ is reflected through a commitment to ‘celebrate our local character, food culture, customs, social practices and

traditions, places and spaces'. Council plays a role in promoting and sharing cultural heritage and building links to capitalise on cultural synergies through international relations.

17. Greece has developed a Strategic Plan for Greeks Abroad 2024 – 2027. This plan, focussed on the diaspora, has developed the formulation and implementation of actions and synergies with other Ministries, local government, ecclesiastical, educational and cultural institutions.
18. A free trade agreement was previously pursued in 2023 between Australia and the European Union but this did not eventuate.

### **The Greek Diaspora in Adelaide**

19. The bond between Adelaide and Greece strengthened in the 1950s and 1960s when thousands of Greek migrants sailed to Australia, many settling in Adelaide.
20. There are regular visits to South Australia by the Greek Government via Ministerial delegation, and the Presidential Guard (Evzones).
21. The Hellenic Australia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (HACCI) SA Chapter was formed in 1985 to promote and strengthen the economic and cultural ties between Australia and Greece. The HACCI SA branch offers a platform for its members to connect, interact and exchange knowledge and ideas.
22. Adelaide has been called the 'Athens of the South' since foundation, with colonists and visitors alike revelling in the potential of the free and planned city.
23. As of 2023, two percent of the total 25,026 residents of the City of Adelaide identify as having Greek ancestry and Greek is the 7th most common language used at home.
24. There are a number of long-standing cultural celebrations led by the Greek community in South Australia, that over time have been embraced and celebrated by the broader community. This includes the historic Glendi Festival, the Blessing of the Waters ceremony and more recently new celebrations such as the Yiassou Adelaide Greek Festival held in the City of Adelaide in April 2025.
25. Other Greek community activities that receive Council support in the city include the Greek Independence Day commemorations as well as a Greek Orthodox Easter Procession in the West End each year.
26. The Sturt Street Community School offers Greek language as its primary language course, due to a history of post-war migrants settling in the inner-city and concentrating around the cosmopolitan areas such as the Central Market. In the 1950's, all school notices were provided to families in both Greek and English.
27. The Greek Orthodox Community Church in Franklin Street is the first built in Adelaide, in 1937, and had a vital role in preserving the cultural identity of Greek migrants.

### **Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade**

28. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) has been made aware of the CoA intentions with the proposed MOU and note the following regarding Australia's relationship with Greece:
  - 28.1. Australia and Greece have shared interests in relation to international peace and security, multilateralism, democratic values and strong people-to-people links.
  - 28.2. Australia and Greece have a close bilateral relationship based on historical ties, the rich contribution of Greek Australians to Australian society and increasing two-way investment.
  - 28.3. Australia has numerous bilateral agreements with Greece, including on social security, mutual assistance in criminal matters and cultural cooperation.
  - 28.4. Australia continues to seek opportunities to promote Australian business and raise awareness of potential benefits of increased trade between Australia and Europe, including Greece.
  - 28.5. In 2021, two-way merchandise trade between Australia and Greece was valued at \$395 million. Imports from Greece accounted for \$357 million, primarily in vegetables; medicaments (including veterinary); cheese and curd; and cereal preparations. Australia's principal exports were non-ferrous waste and scrap; starches, inulin and wheat gluten.

### **Next Steps**

29. Following Council's endorsement of the MOU, the City of Athens has advised that the document needs to be approved first by its municipal council and subsequently by the Greek Ministry of the Interior, before it can be signed. If there are any substantial changes to the MOU proposed following this process, a subsequent report with the proposed changes to the MOU will be presented to Council. Any editorial or administrative changes would be managed under CEO delegation.

30. Once the draft MOU is agreed by both parties, discussions will commence with the City of Athens for the manner and timing associated with signing the MOU.

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## DATA AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

**Link 1** - Letter from the Hon Andrea Michaels MP, Minister for Consumer and Business Affairs

**Link 2** - Letter from the Hon Frank Pangello MLC and the Hon Connie Bonaros MLC

**Link 3** - Letter from Hellenic Australia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (HACCI) SA Chapter.

**Link 4** - Athens Resilience Strategy for 2030

**Link 5** - City of Athens Climate Action Plan

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## ATTACHMENTS

**Attachment A**- Draft Memorandum of Understanding between City of Adelaide and City of Athens

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