



cittaslow

International network of cities where living is good

LET'S CONNECT

CITTASLOW Australasia

What's special about your town ...
and why should it be celebrated?

Historic paddle steamer the "Oscar W" moored at Goolwa wharf near the mouth of the Murray River. (photo: Colin Haigh)





What is Cittaslow?

The word is Italian for 'Slow Town' (pronounced as CHEETA-slow) - an international movement that celebrates the best and most distinctive places around the world. In fact, over 260 towns representing 25 million people in 30 countries have joined this positive movement of celebrating life, history, community, culture, sustainability and more. These towns and regions where local people, business and governments are proud of their place and their uniqueness, share a wish to build and celebrate a more sustainable future. Cittaslow towns seek to stand out from the ordinary and every-day, through recognition of what is locally remarkable, unique and authentic, to conserve and promote that specialness to their region and the world for both local and wider benefit. www.cittaslow.org

Why join Cittaslow?

The Australasian Cittaslow network commenced in 2007 when Goolwa (SA) became the first Australian town accredited, joined a week later by Katoomba - Blue Mountains (NSW) – a town within a region. Following the Black Saturday Victorian bushfires, Yea (Victoria) joined to bring their community together, developing a new and positive outlook for their town and place.

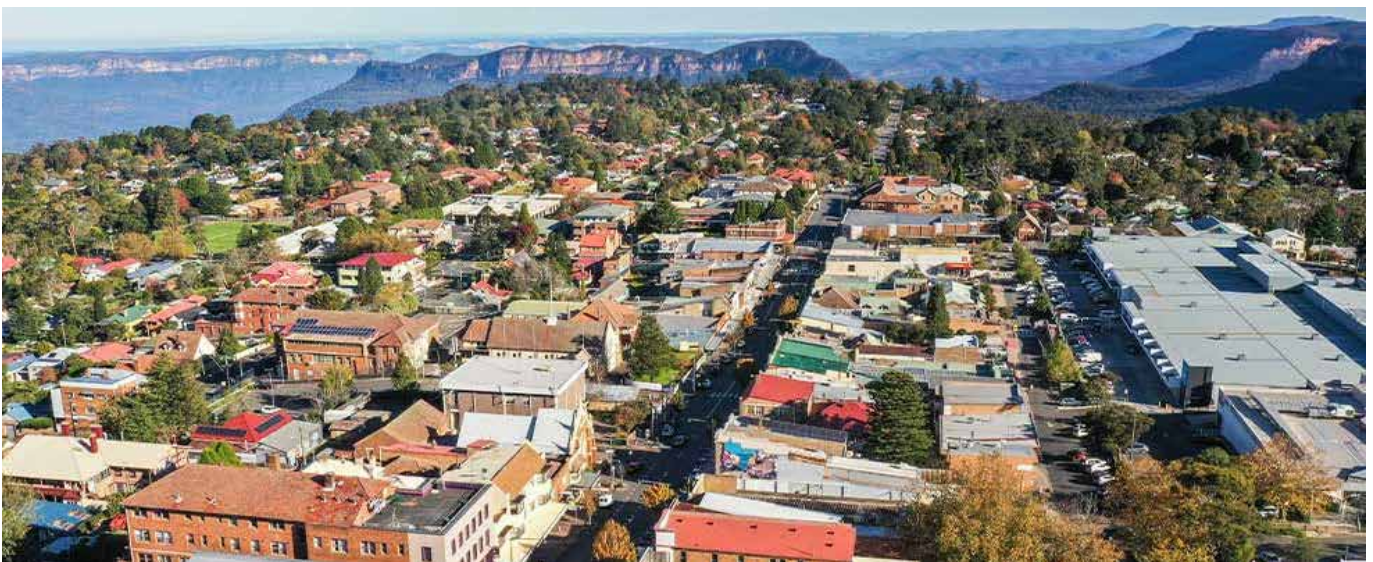
Each town uses Cittaslow membership differently, reflecting authentic local personality, issues and commitments around core values, as outlined below. It should be noted up-front that effective collaboration between community, business and government has proved vitally important in taking the idea through to accreditation and on into real community life.

Whilst Australian Cittaslows are community driven, wider support is needed to be sustainable and durable over time.

Joining Cittaslow enables and supports important unions between local government, community and local organisations in order to identify, conserve and promote the distinctive local qualities that underly a high quality of life and local heritage and distinctiveness.

With three towns accredited internationally, our Australasian Cittaslow network can encourage and accept new towns for accreditation locally - gaining full international recognition. Cittaslow Australasia has now stream-lined the process to assist other special Australian and New Zealand towns and regions to join us in the Australasian network. www.cittaslowaustralasia.com.au

Katoomba town within World Heritage nature (photo: Blue Mountains City Council)





Common Cittaslow values and benefits

- Good living by slowing down and rediscovering our identity, our territory, and our local culture ... **(an over-arching value)**
- An expression of the town's and region's deepest values, conviviality and spirit... **(slow food and slow town)**
- An investment for the future ... **(town sustainability)**
- Awareness in celebrating what is local and distinctive ... **(community lifestyle attributes)**
- Marketing the place and the lifestyle for locals and guests alike ... **(economic benefits)**
- A means of enhancing responsible tourism ... **(welcoming guests - more than tourists)**
- Enabling community, business and government to interact and collaborate positively ... **(cooperation rather than friction)**
- Local pride and community interaction around Cittaslow activities ... **(community building)**
- As a generative means for community activities and actions be it through food, recycling, energy, arts, environment ... **(social glue /cohesion)**
- Planning and economic awareness of beneficial protections be it for history, heritage, landscape ... **(avoiding 'placelessness')**
- A renewed focus on the qualities of everyday local life ... **(an over-arching value of heart, soul and being).**

Do these values resonate for your town?

Is your town interested in promoting its authenticity through joining the international Cittaslow brand and movement?

Cittaslow Yea celebrates Naidoc Week (photo: Yea Cittaslow)





How do we join ... and get accredited?

If you are interested, **contact our Cittaslow network** and have a chat about the idea and how we can support your town. Then discuss the idea with your community leaders (across all sectors) - your Council, your local politicians, business groups, community organizers - to all likely supporters about the idea and **its likely benefits for your town**.

Build an enthusiastic team that starts to build the case for your local Cittaslow qualities, using the prompts below to expand ideas, awareness and support. Try to capture the essence informally as you build the local case. This may mean encouraging key activists in each sector to develop a considered response to their key interest relevant to the Cittaslow values. But do ensure you keep **all likely supporters and activists** informed and enthusiastic as you develop an enhanced understanding of what makes your town's special qualities as you bring it all together. Enthusiasm is contagious!

When you are ready, **contact Cittaslow Australasia** and discuss your progress. A Liaison Officer will be appointed to help you apply through our **Expression of Interest (Eoi)** form online. Initially most liaison and assistance can be done by phone, email and Zoom (or equivalent) to avoid costs. Meanwhile, develop the case and evidence for your town's special qualities – and note them down under the various categories. Share the joy of discovering why your town is so livable.

When you have your 'specialness' case together in developing widespread support and commitment to the Cittaslow ideals, make your **full application to Cittaslow Australasia** (with the mentoring assistance of your Cittaslow Liaison Officer). This may be a poetic creative summary; a documented story; a video of evidence and support; a curated case-load... Whatever it is we seek something vivid and compelling that captures the essence of your place in an application that is good for you and your community - and for us to know. We're keen to read, hear, see, feel, know your application and community strength – and respond positively to such a commitment.

How long should this all take? Maybe **three to six months**. We have learnt that the longer it takes the harder it becomes to maintain focus and commitment. So that is why we have realistically streamlined the process.



The Australian contingent (all three towns) at the Cittaslow International Assembly in Orvieto Italy, June 2019.



What does it cost?

It costs you nothing to make contact, discuss the process and town opportunities, and follow through with an **EOI to Cittaslow Australasia**. www.cittaslowaustralasia.com.au

Making a **full Application** requires your time and dedication, plus local support, which doubtless means a time and cost commitment for yourselves. But there is no cost to apply to Cittaslow Australasia, as we are keen to help. Your Cittaslow Liaison Officer is there to offer guidance and support when needed.

When you are ready to make the Application, **this costs \$200**, which also becomes the first annual Australasian membership fee for your town if accepted. We anticipate in most cases we can make an assessment from the quality of your application with appropriate follow-up without needing to visit your town. However, on occasion it may be necessary to assist your application through a town visit – for which some small additional (cost-recovery) payment may be required.



(photo: Yea Cittaslow)

At present, the annual Cittaslow Australasian fee is **\$200 per annum**. Ongoing membership and Certification to the international Cittaslow network is more expensive (currently **€1500 per annum** for a town of 5000-10,000 persons). This is one of several reasons to involve local government, business and tourism operators in your Cittaslow.

'Friendship Seat' – a collaborative public art project between Cittaslow Goolwa, Alexandrina Council, local professional and community artists located in the heart of the heritage precinct.





Accreditation criteria

We seek your membership – and we are here to assist. Use the following points as a guide for your town's ambition as you are not expected to excel in everything! But hopefully, the following points may stimulate new realization and possibilities... List what you have and define areas you want to focus on, treating it as a local community census or stock-take, where perfection is not attainable!

But do tell us about your achievements ... and where you want to aim for improvement in both local policies and practices within your Cittaslow Australasia application.

Sustainability and climate change (enabling our future)

- Is there local action, advice and involvement regarding climate change?
- Has your town and/or region made energy-efficiency, climate change or carbon reduction commitments?
- How high is your ratio of renewable energy or uptake of solar rebates?
- Are Council and public buildings (and more) designed and built for sustainability – and how?
- Is your town maximizing water harvesting and minimizing water wastage?
- Is your town involved in tree-planting and/or urban heat-island activities to minimize global warming?
- If bushfire is a local issue, is there community information regarding designated escape routes or bushfire 'safer places'?
- Does your town and region actively seek to maintain biodiversity in plants and animals – how?
- Is regenerative farming, soil health and/or related activities such as bee-keeping practiced locally?
- What are your towns waste commitment to reduce, reuse or recycle?

(photo: Yea Cittaslow)





Accreditation criteria

Moving around (infrastructure for the future)

- Are you extremely car-dependent or less so - how?
- Do you have a car-sharing scheme or other means of minimizing vehicle CO² and particulate emissions?
- Is public transport available and is it fully used or maybe improved?
- And what about bike paths and footpaths, are they available and used?
- Is there signage to help locals and visitors get to their destination (including in other languages)?
- What about access and facilities for the lesser-abled - has that been provided for - how?
- Is working from home supported by local infrastructure, NBN and/or supportive services?
- Do you have co-working opportunities locally to minimize commuting and maximize interaction?

Maintaining town and landscape (typically a key local government concern)

- Do you have distinctive buildings, streetscapes, landscapes and/or views worthy of maintaining /protecting?
- Are there suitable Council development or building controls to maintain what is special or unique?
- What about tree planting, memorial drives, historical markers and the like?
- Are shopkeepers and landowners aware of what is unique and putting effort into maintaining them?
- Does local government appreciate the specialness of your town and how it can be enhanced economically by Cittaslow membership?

The annual Katoomba Winter Magic street parade snail (photo: Katoomba Cittaslow)





Accreditation criteria

Qualities of place – qualities of life (defined)

- **Town ambience** or vibe as expressed through landscape, streetscapes, shops, heritage, community and people?
- **Community ambience** and activities that are 'out of the ordinary'?
- **Slow food, craft beer, wine** that is distinctively of your place through produce, manufacture, display, consumption?
- **Shared social responsibilities** that is evident through volunteer community activities?
- **Sociability and community** being a fundamental attribute of social cohesion and sustainable progress?

Economy industry & tourism (what is your local focus?)

- **Tourism** attractions such as the old steamboat, aboriginal fish traps, outstanding views, character towns, regional food and wine?
- **Outdoor activities** that could include bushwalking, rock-climbing, skiing, fishing, mountain-bike routes, bay-watch or whale-watch, night-sky observation or more?
- **Rural pursuits** that may include specialized varieties, organics or biodynamic, quality of produce, Landcare, Bushcare, Streamcare, site restoration?
- **Local industries** that may have special and/or historical connections of note?
- **Local businesses** based on local produce and/or local skills?
- **Cooperatives** that have a history within your community in sharing sustainable products or services?

Cittaslow Corner shopfront promotes a local bush food producer. (photo: Goolwa Cittaslow)





Accreditation criteria

Culture and heritage (that is distinctive and local)

- Recognition and support of aboriginality (or ethnic groups that settled locally)?
- Language and cultural support through libraries, displays, activities?
- Traditional activities promoted (i.e. farm days, 'lost' trade skills, heritage boats, rail/ bike trails)?
- Promotion of history and heritage through open days, displays, interpretative signage, museums, development protections?
- Public arts, street arts & murals, local festivals, pub-music, community arts activities, artists in residence?
- 'Intangible heritage' such as traditional dance or music, ways of doing things (i.e. pizza-making, CWA scone-making), artisan skills that are maintained?

Community and partnerships (community activities)

Tell us about the range and strength of groups such as Landcare, Men's Shed, historical society, Scouts & Guides, artists groups, theatre activities, dance groups, sporting clubs, senior-citizens, sewing circles, tool libraries, town art, visitor facilities, community dinners, volunteers for community events, support groups of all kinds, directories of local activities ... what do you have in your town? How strong are services and volunteerism?

View this process as an opportunity to discover and share great things about your community, with mentoring from our Cittaslow network.

SO LET'S CONNECT – join our Australasian Cittaslow network.

Cittaslow Australasia at The Paragon Cafe Katoomba





Australian Cittaslow examples

With 2020 Covid restrictions further emphasizing the multiple benefits of authentic slow, local, regional and livable Cittaslows, let's provide some local examples.

Goolwa SA www.cittaslowgoolwa.com.au

The first Australian Cittaslow, the river port town of Goolwa has led the Aussie way in developing Cittaslow. With strong local government and business support, the community committee and town have wholeheartedly embraced the concept as a means of revitalization when the rivers were running dry and boats could hardly navigate Lake Alexandria (2007). The volunteers invited involvement and cooperation with such success that the Cittaslow name and snail is now seen everywhere as a unifying action plan for tourism, food and wine, environment, recycling, community garden – celebrating the farmers markets, steam train and steam paddle-steamer and much more.

Council provided a main-street heritage building ('Cittaslow Corner') as a highly visible Cittaslow community hub where volunteers now provide visitor advice, local food and artisan produce for sale, host community gatherings and more.

Bravely, the town hosted the Cittaslow International Assembly in 2017 most successfully, with the mayor then invited to join the international Board. Since then, the town has been described as a 'good morning' town, full of friendly greetings to locals and visitors alike.

Goolwa locals proudly wearing their Cittaslow T-shirts (photo: Goolwa Cittaslow)



'Cittaslow Corner' in the main street (photo: Leon Mead)





Australian Cittaslow examples

Katoomba, Blue Mountains NSW www.cittaslow.org.au

As the major Blue Mountains tourist town within a World Heritage natural region, additional tourists have not been sought. Rather, development of local pride and conviviality of place, with the opportunity for visitors to stay longer to explore more than just scenery. This approach has boosted the large creative arts industries (Mtns Made), assisted the retention of characterful towns and villages, instigated environmental initiatives of note, supported often-hidden quirky treasures no longer found in cities, and encouraged a delightful slower way of life.

For millennia the Mountains has been a meeting place for aboriginal people to gather, socialize and exchange – and this friendly ethos continues for locals and visitors today. Where the international accreditation criteria previously anticipated special local food and distinctive agriculture, Katoomba substituted 'arts and culture' to gain acceptance.



As NSW's first 'City of the Arts' and being within a World Heritage setting, environmental concerns and community involvements became key to being awarded a 2017 Jeonju (South Korea) 'World Slowness Award' as an internationally recognized 'slow town' of distinction. Being two hours outside of Sydney, our slow way of life (plus tele-commuting) has become ever more enviable for those that appreciate Cittaslow qualities.

Korean Cittaslow visit Katoomba





Australian Cittaslow examples

Yea, Victoria

www.cittaslowyea.org

Yea joined the network with a compelling video of the qualities of their rural life, agriculture, community spirit and activities. The town of 1500 people acknowledge and celebrate local indigenous history, where local food is lovingly produced, urban areas and farm life intersect, community groups are strong and friendliness is everywhere. The past is celebrated whilst the community enjoys the present and plans for the future - through events such as Farm Trails, Home Stays, 'Lost-Skills workshops', community gardens, community recycling and more. Volunteering and teamwork are encouraged. Musicians, writers, artists, artisans and creativity thrive. The historic buildings and ancient shade trees in the main street are appreciated. Yea favours handmade and local over mass produced. 'Play-Stay' visitation is encouraged.

In Yea local voices are respectfully heard and the community embraces all things green and sustainable.



Cittaslow organised star-gazing evenings are just one rural event of special note, plus events planned around local food and wine. The Rail-Trail bike path connects people, places and agriculture through the region, encouraging visitors and locals to slow down and appreciate all that makes the town and valleys Cittaslow Yea.

May your town become the next Cittaslow?



Yea: a friendly country town within a beautiful agricultural region with rail trails. (photo: Shire of Murrindindi)