

**PRESS RELEASE 25 August 2023**

**Enniscorthy signs Sister City Agreement with Blacktown City, Australia, celebrating a shared historical Vinegar Hill link.**

The Cathaoirleach of Enniscorthy Municipal District, Cllr John O’Rourke hosted a civic reception for a delegation from Blacktown City, a suburb of Sydney Australia, in Enniscorthy Castle on Friday evening, 25th August 2023. The Civic Reception included the signing of a ‘Sister City Agreement’ between Enniscorthy Municipal District and Blacktown City Council - committing each Council to officially recognising both Vinegar Hills in commemoration events as well as a commitment to fostering new connections across the areas of tourism, sport, arts and culture.

The delegation from Blacktown City Council, led by Cllr Brad Bunting (representing the Mayor Tony Beasdale OAM) and CEO Kerry Robinson, OAM, are enjoying visits to key tourism locations, including Johnstown Castle and the Irish National Heritage Park, as well as making business connections with local elected members, local schools, Wexford Campus of SETU and Co Wexford GAA.

Welcoming the group to the Civic Reception, Cllr John O’Rourke said *‘As Cathaoirleach of Enniscorthy Municipal District and on behalf of the elected members and people of Enniscorthy, a céad míle fáilte to Cllr Brad Bunting and his delegation. From little acorns, oak trees grow and we look forward to commemorating our friendship this evening and developing it over time’*. Speaking warmly of his previous visit to Ireland and Enniscorthy in 2022, Cllr Brad Bunting complimented the hospitality that the people of Enniscorthy have extended him and his delegation and highlighted the value and importance both he, and the Blacktown City Council, place in building new relationships at a community level with Sister City areas.

Tom Enright, CE of Wexford County Council said, *‘I want to highlight the good work that is happening in Enniscorthy led by the elected members and I am delighted to be here this evening signing this special agreement between the two areas.’* The CEO of Blacktown City Council, Mr. Kerry Robinson, OAM thanked both his own team and the local district and council staff for the effort put into the delegation’s itinerary.

Referencing the differences in scale between Blacktown City and Enniscorthy town, Mr. Robinson also emphasized that the importance of the Sister City relationship was about finding and building on the community, education, arts & cultural aspects that the two areas share; noting one the City Councils longest Sister City Relationships is with an area twice the size of Wexford County, but with a population a little over 7,000.

Historic Battle of Vinegar Hill Link

The first battle fought on Australian soil between government troops and rebel forces of European heritage was fought in and around Rouse Hill, located in the Blacktown City area, on 5 March 1804. As the ringleaders of the rebel forces were Irish, the battle became known as the Vinegar Hill Rebellion or the Battle of Vinegar Hill. Today, the city of Blacktown is home to over 400,000 people, with approximately 5% of those identifying as having Irish heritage. While the exact location of the battle is no longer known, in 1988 a permanent memorial was unveiled commemorating the Battle at a spot in the Castlebrook Memorial Park.

**ENDS**

**For further information:**

**District Manager**

**Enniscorthy Municipal District**