



SISTER CITIES

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NEWSLETTER

June 2019

Ashburton to host 2020 Sister Cities Conference:

‘Growing Cultural Diversity in Regions’

30 April – 2 May 2020

By Ruben Garcia, Ashburton District Council

Ashburton District Mayor Donna Favel is pleased to announce that Ashburton will host the annual Sister Cities Conference next year.

She made the announcement at this year’s conference in Palmerston North, where more than 150 delegates and dignitaries from New Zealand, United States, Japan, China and Australia gathered for the three-day event.

“Hosting the 2020 conference will be an extraordinary opportunity to showcase our district, build even stronger international relationships and further our cultural, educational, youth, sports, professional and technical projects.”

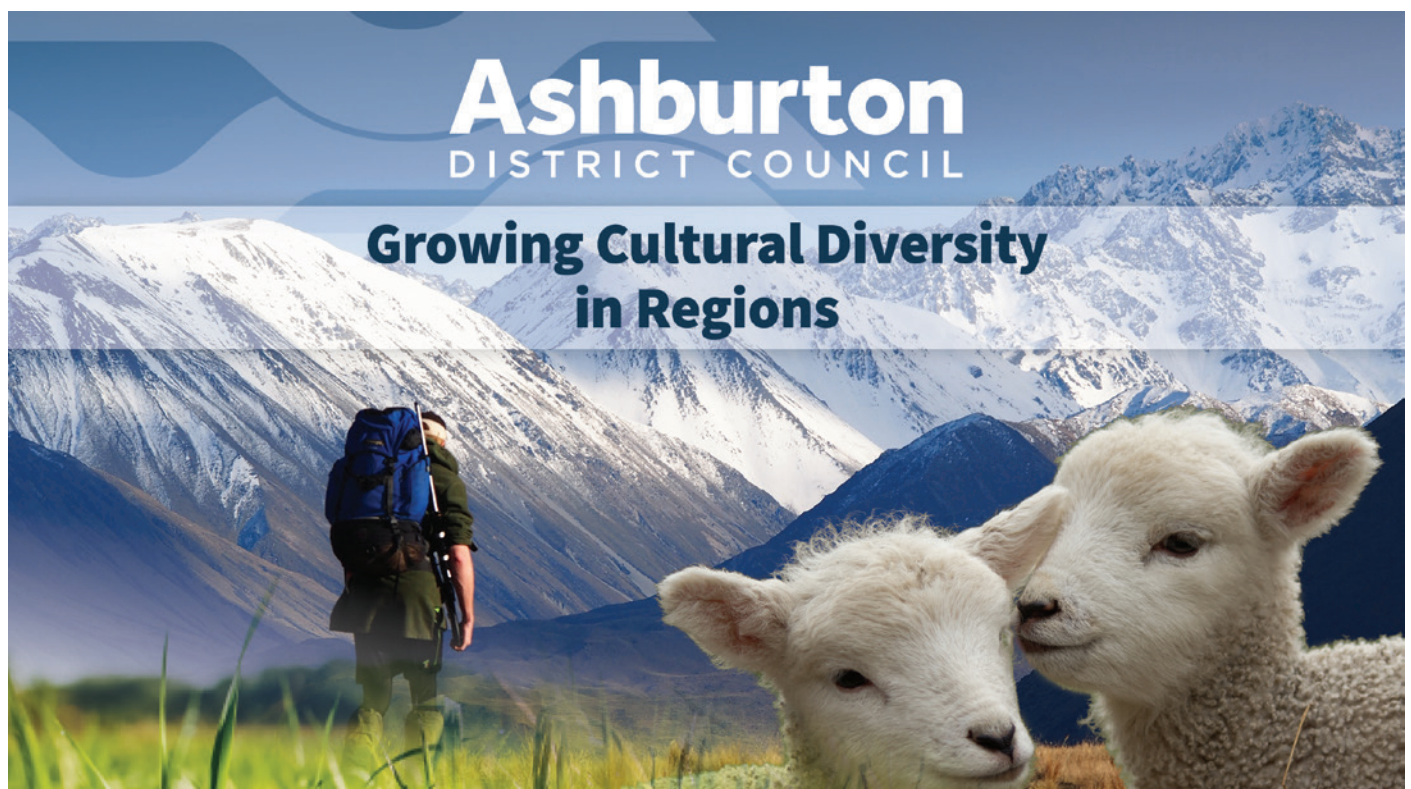
The proposed theme for the 2020 conference is, ‘Growing cultural diversity in regions’. The theme will focus on the unique opportunities that makes regions prime destinations for employment, tourism and lifestyle that will further economic growth.

“The Sister Cities Conference will be an opportunity to focus on regional capabilities, offerings and needs, while recognising our respective locations on the international stage with our partnering Sister and Friendship Cities,” Mayor Favel continued.

Ashburton has three Sister City relationships and two Friendship City relationships. These are with Minamiuonuma, Niigata, Japan; Pulaski, Virginia, United States; and Ashburton, Devon, United Kingdom; while the Friendship Cities are with Puyang, Henan, China; and Xianyang, Shaanxi, China.

There are also two expressions of interest for a Sister City relationship with Handan, China and a Friendship City with Zaohaung, China.

The 2020 Sister Cities Conference in Ashburton will run from the 30 April – 2 May 2020. Transportation will be provided to and from Christchurch Airport.



From the SCNZ board: **Kōrero – a Reflection**

By Marcus Boshier, SCNZ Board

Over the past two years SCNZ has hosted four youth panel discussions, which were aptly called Kōrero. Kōrero was made possible through the generous sponsorship from the Office of Ethnic Communities' Development Fund and the time and energy of 21 extraordinary young people. Kōrero provided an opportunity for SCNZ and its members to engage with 21 young people from diverse backgrounds and experiences on matters of importance to them as young people.

By all accounts Kōrero was a wonderful success. With the project now complete, I thought it would be good to offer some reflections on some of the key messages, themes and challenges presented by the Panels and in particular the final Kōrero Panel in Palmerston North.

Key themes

1. Enhancing Cultural understanding starts in our communities: A recurring message that we heard was the importance of events and engagement happening at a community level, through events and festivals.
2. Invest in relationships. We need to encourage conversations and allow time for relationships to strengthen. They may result in economic benefits, but there is merit in investing in relationships for the relationship's sake.
3. Young people should be provided more opportunities and encouraged to learn languages. Languages enable connection and deeper relationships. They are also a very useful asset for doing international business.
4. Diversity is invaluable and enriching to New Zealand and should be promoted

Lessons on Youth Engagement

- Don't make assumptions about young people – treat them with respect and as people whose views are valuable and valid.
- Often young people are interested, but they may not know what opportunities exist and how to get involved in them. Adults need to take initiative to engage young people.
- Engage young people through forums that young people are engaging in, for example, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube and consider the use of influencers.
- Get passionate young people involved. If young people, like adults are passionate about what they are doing, they will invest their time and energy.
- Have inclusive processes, where young people are at the table making decisions with adults rather than having adults simply making decisions for young people.
- Provide free food



Kōrero Panel at SCNZ Conference 2019

- Consider whether the young people want a formal structure or whether it may be possible to operate in an informal way – be flexible and adaptable to meet the needs of the young people.
- Consider trying to step into a young person's world and engage with them in a way that is familiar to them.

Challenges presented to SCNZ community by the Palmerston North Panel

- Have and continue to encourage better dialogue with people, and in particular those with extremist views – try to understand and empathise with people.
- Develop and promote exchanges so more people can be exposed to the warmth and beauty of other cultures.
- Talk with and be open to people around you.
- It is important for people to learn a foreign language – encourage wide breadth of languages – “if you talk to a man in the language he knows it goes to his head, if you talk to a man in his language it goes to his heart.”
- Through conferences engaging with community groups and listening to young people you can improve partnerships between cities, strengthen communities and enhance the likes of education and the economy
- People are the most important thing – invest in people and support people
- Be open and engaged and express gratitude often. Every relationship is a gift. Take opportunities to extend your relationships.

When provided the opportunity to speak, it was a privilege to hear the views of the respective panels and to gain their insights on matters of importance to them. Again, we thank the Office of Ethnic Communities for their support for enabling the discussions to happen. There are videos up on the Sister Cities YouTube Channel and also on the Sister Cities Facebook page.

If you have any questions or thoughts – perhaps you would like to run a similar panel discussion in your town – get in touch with SCNZ. We would love to hear from you.

Selwyn District Council Sister City Visit from Toraja, Indonesia

By Allison Rosanowski, Selwyn Sister City Committee

Sister City Relationships are people to people relationships developed after the Second World War to improve global understanding. One of Selwyn District Council's relationships is with Toraja, in Sulawesi Indonesia. Hugging an alpaca, visiting modern learning environment schools, seeing electricity generated from waste all added value to the relationships when Toraja Council officials visited Selwyn for the first time in May.

Toraja is a Christian community in the highlands of Sulawesi. Their primary economic activities are coffee and rice growing, plus tourism. For over fourteen years a group of Canterbury farmers, the Toraja Rural Development Charitable Trust, have been assisting coffee growers with coffee growing and the formation of cooperatives to improve marketing.

Toraja guests visited Canterbury Museum, the Christ Church Cathedral and enjoyed the opportunity to pray in the Transitional Cathedral. A Mayoral welcome gave both sides of the relationship an opportunity to talk about their districts.

The agreed programme for Toraja visitors included horticulture, waste management, education and tourism marketing.

Allen Lim, a Selwyn grower of green vegetables demonstrated the use of fertiliser and sprays and talked of how supermarkets are supplied. At Robin Oakley's Premium Fresh Vegetables the washing, grading and packaging of potatoes for supermarkets was highlighted.

Toraja is beginning to recycle plastic. The Rolleston rubbish compacting site and Kate Valley landfill showed waste management at a district wide scale. The Toraja visitors were especially impressed by the generation of electricity from the gases produced at the Kate Valley landfill. At present the two generators can supply electricity for 2000 homes. Two more generators are being built. Rolleston's sewage waste plant and its technological and scientific methods of cleaning and disposing waste were an eye opener. Ladbrooks School demonstrated their Enviroschools Programme and how students, teachers, parents and community are involved.

Toraja is working to establish educational relationships in Selwyn and especially Rolleston. Visits to Rolleston

Primary School, Clearview School and Rolleston College allowed our visitors to see engaged pupils working in bright modern learning environments, rather than the formal textbook learning in the classrooms of Toraja. Rolleston College's Kapa Haka group formally welcomed the visitors who responded with a speech and Indonesian song of their own.

At Lincoln University, the Toraja group, meet Indonesian students who are studying at Lincoln and heard of their journey to choose Lincoln and the variety of courses they are enrolled in.

A group of retired Selwyn teachers also meet the Toraja group. The plan is they will travel to Toraja later this year to work alongside English teachers in their schools. More teachers are welcome to join this group.

Tourism is an important activity in Toraja, although their remote location means that tourists need to plan to visit. Graeme Abbot, the Manager of Hanmer Springs Thermal Pools explained that they market first as part of Canterbury Tourism, then as a Hurunui destination and finally as the major attraction in Hanmer Springs. Rubicon Farm and Jet boating gave the guests a unique experience jet boating on the Waimakariri River, a farm demonstration of sheep dogs working, alpacas and a shearing demonstration. Their marketing is completely online, a big change from paper ten years ago. Chris Lowe also explained how their different activities attract different demographics- horse trekking attracts females in the 24 to 30 age bracket.

The Selwyn District Council Sister City Committee provided homestays for the Toraja visitors: a unique opportunity to experience living locally. The Canterbury Farmers' group sponsored Everyready Lolo who has worked with the farmers groups in the past and is a tourism operator in Toraja. Each day the group were accompanied by two Sister City Committee members.

A lot of voluntary time enhances the value of these visits as we learn about each other's culture and develop friendships.



Top: Toraja visitors with Indonesian students at Lincoln University. Bottom left: With alpacas. Bottom right: Meeting local Selwyn Councillor, Bob Mugford

Tree Planting at Gisborne Botanic Gardens

By Jan Calder

Members of the Botanical Gardens of Australia and New Zealand (BGANZ) met in Gisborne on the 16th and 17th May for meetings and visits to developing areas of interest to them and in preparation for their AGM Conference later in 2019.

The group was comprised of:

- Jack Hobbs (well known for many years as a television Gardening show presenter) and Bec Stanley - Auckland Botanic Gardens
- Kristian Davies - Pukekura Park
- David Sole - Wellington Botanic Gardens
- Clare Shearman - Wellington Botanic Gardens
- Bede Nottingham - Christchurch Botanic Gardens
- Alan Matchett & Dylan Norfield - Dunedin Botanic Gardens

The visiting group very generously donated a rare Wollemi Pine which had been grown on in the Christchurch Botanic Gardens. The Wollemi Pine species is established in the Blue Mountains of Australia. This tree was much appreciated as an addition to the plantings in the SC's Australia Garden collection within the Gisborne Botanic Gardens.

Gisborne Mayor Meng Foon is seen planting the tree and ably assisted by Dot McCulloch, a Committee member of Gisborne Sister Cities and a very active member of the "Friends of the Gisborne Botanic Gardens" and Gisborne District Council staff. BGANZ Committee members, GDSC members and other GDC staff watch on.

After viewing the Gisborne Botanic Gardens the visiting group continued on to visit Dame Anne Salmond's "1769 Garden".



Photo: Ann Osler

Marlborough Hosts Ningxia Visit

By Alistair Schorn, Marlborough District Council

In May, Marlborough District Council hosted a visit by a regional government delegation from Marlborough's sister region in China, the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region.

The sister region relationship is based on both regions' significant viticulture and wine industries. Since the relationship was established in 2016, a number of Marlborough winemakers have visited Ningxia to



Mayor John Leggett and Mayoress Anne Best (centre) with the Ningxia delegation members and local guests in the Barrel Room at Wither Hills Wines, Marlborough.

share knowledge and experience with their Chinese counterparts. The Blenheim campus of the Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology (NMIT) also hosts students from Ningxia, all of whom study winemaking and gain practical experience in one of Marlborough's more than 140 wineries.

The next phase of the sister region relationship will focus on winery technology. Some Marlborough-developed and manufactured technology has already been supplied to wineries in Ningxia, and the Council's Economic Development Unit is collaborating with New Zealand Trade and Enterprise to increase exports of winery technology and expertise to China and other wine markets.

The delegation comprised senior officials from the Ningxia People's Congress, as well as regional government departments. Their itinerary included a winery tour and dinner hosted by Mayor John Leggett at Wither Hills, an award-winning Marlborough winery. Guests included Marlborough district councillors, former Mayor Alistair Sowman, and Liam Sloan, Chief Executive of NMIT.

The delegation also visited Blenheim's NMIT campus and the Marlborough Research Centre, where the potential for increasing the number of students coming from Ningxia to study here was discussed.

Business, Investment and Civic Leaders Share Opportunities at Tripartite 2019

By Pamela Jamieson, Auckland Council

Auckland successfully hosted Los Angeles (LA) and Guangzhou business and civic delegations at Tripartite 2019. The event, which took place 19-21 May, is part of the five-year-old Tripartite Economic Alliance, first signed in 2014 and renewed in 2017 for a further three years. The Alliance is a world-first tri-city agreement that boosts Auckland's business and cultural connections with two of the economic powerhouses in the Asia-Pacific region.

Tripartite 2019 was timed to align with Techweek19, mirroring the agreement between the three cities to move from an annual summit for the initial three years of the alliance to aligning Tripartite activity to an existing trade and innovation event in each city. This new model was demonstrated successfully in Los Angeles in May 2018 during the 2018 Select LA Investment Summit.

Tripartite 2019, delivered by Auckland Council's International Relations unit and Auckland Tourism Events and Economic Development (ATEED), was attended by more than 100 international delegates and 260 Auckland companies, bringing business, investment and civic leaders together to exchange ideas and opportunities.

The two-day programme included a series of innovation showcases and panel discussions, networking events, site visits to local post-production companies, and an event to highlight and promote the region's Māori business capability to the international guests.

There was also a significant trilateral agreement signed between Auckland, Los Angeles and Guangzhou, on Pacific Rim emergency preparedness, that will see the three parties share best practice on how cities can cope during times of emergency and disaster recovery.

After five years of collaboration, the three cities are now whanau and have built trusted relationships which help accelerate business deals. To this end, a number of Memoranda of Understanding were signed at Tripartite 2019 between Chinese and local companies to pursue mutual opportunities.

Auckland Mayor Phil Goff said 'the Tripartite Economic Alliance is an example to the world of how cities can work together to strengthen their commercial, trade and people-to-people relationships and create enduring economic benefits that last long after the delegates have gone home.'

Los Angeles Deputy Mayor Jeff Gorell said 'there is nothing else like the Tripartite Economic Alliance in the world. The power of it is getting our business delegates to forge deals so we can create investment among our three cities, because that will improve the economy of the Pacific and when the Pacific does well, the entire world benefits.'

Mr LIU Baochun, Director General, Guangzhou Foreign Affairs Office said 'outcomes stem from the three sister

cities' unified approach. The Tripartite has been an excellent platform for facilitating connections for the private business sector in Guangzhou, and we look forward to further strengthening these connections when we host Tripartite activity in 2020,' said Mr LIU.

Los Angeles and Guangzhou are two of Auckland's oldest and most significant city partnerships. Guangzhou and Auckland celebrate the 30th anniversary of their relationship this year (which was marked during Tripartite 2019), and Los Angeles and Auckland have been partner cities for 48 years.



Top: Tripartite 2019 guests included, l-r, Christine Peterson, Director of International Trade and Investment, LA Mayor Garcetti's Office; Glen Wilcox, Deputy Chair, Independent Maori Statutory Board; ZHOU Wei, Acting Consul General of the People's Republic of China in Auckland; Jeff Gorell, LA Deputy Mayor; Phil Goff, Mayor of Auckland; ZHANG Shuofu, Guangzhou Party Secretary; Bill Cashmore, Deputy Mayor of Auckland; Rachel Maidment, NZ Consul General Guangzhou; Nick Hill, Chief Executive, ATEED; Katelyn Choe, US Consul General Auckland; LIU Baochun, Director General, Guangzhou Foreign Affairs Office and MIAO Tian, General Office, CPC Guangzhou Committee.



Right: Auckland Mayor Phil Goff addressing guests at the Tripartite 2019 Sister Cities Celebration Dinner at the Aotea Centre on 20 May 2019.

2019 Marks the 30th Anniversary of the Auckland - Guangzhou Sister City Relationship

By Pamela Jamieson, Auckland Council

On 21 May, Councillor Chris Darby welcomed over 85 guests to Pah Homestead to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the sister city relationship between Guangzhou and Auckland. It was especially relevant to have Mrs Nora YAO as Councillor Darby's interpreter as Nora interpreted for Dame Cath Tizard when the original Sister City Agreement was signed in 1989. Auckland Council was delighted that Nora was able to play the same role in the anniversary celebrations as she did 30 years ago!

The Guangzhou delegation, led by Guangzhou Party Secretary ZHANG Shuofu and accompanied by Acting Consul-General ZHOU Wei, were welcomed onto the grounds of Pah Homestead by local iwi.

To mark the 30th anniversary, Auckland Council, together with Guangzhou City, in collaboration with the TSB Wallace Arts Trust, supported the opening of a Chinese lacquer painting exhibition entitled *Dialogue of Friendship in the Language of Colours*. In 2014, Mr SU Xing, an artist based in Guangdong, visited New Zealand and became acquainted with Mr Jack Rangiwahia from the South Taranaki region, and his family. Deeply influenced and inspired by local Maori culture and hospitality, Mr

SU made a bold experiment after returning to China, applying an 8000-year-old Chinese art form of lacquer painting to a new interpretation of Maori design. This resulted in a widely acclaimed exhibition in Guangzhou in 2015 and the undertaking by Rebecca Needham, the then Consul General in Guangzhou, to have it tour New Zealand. This exhibition is a continuation of previous endeavours, and brought together fourteen lacquer painting artists - led by Mr SU - who attended the exhibition, including 4 members of Mr Jack Rangiwahia's family, reinforcing the friendship between the two countries.

The guests were entertained by the Selwyn College Jazz Band. Selwyn College also has a connection with Guangzhou as the college is twinned with the Guangdong Overseas International School.

In celebration of 30 years of collaboration between Auckland and Guangzhou, Auckland Council's International Relations team compiled a Commemorative Album entitled *Building Bridges*. It is intended as a reminder of our past cooperation, and with the sincere hope that both cities will continue to build on the already strong connections in the years ahead.



Left: 30th anniversary celebrations on the lawn at Pah Homestead. Right: L-R: Chinese lacquer painting artist Mr LI Zhihong, Councillor Chris Darby, Guangzhou Party Secretary ZHANG Shuofu, Acting Consul-General ZHOU Wei and Mr SU Xing



Left: The new mural in Palmerston North, painted by Willow Kipp. Right: Willow Kipp performs at the Festival of Cultures opening ceremony. Below right: Missoula delegation welcomed by Rangitāne iwi at Te Rangimarie Marae

Indigenous Collaboration Mural Painted During 2019 SCNZ Conference

By Toni Grace, Palmerston North City Council

Missoula and Palmerston North are both recognised nationally for their vibrant arts and creative scenes, so the recent Sister City visit provided the perfect opportunity to create a lasting public art collaboration.

In March 2019, artist Willow Kipp—a member of the Blackfeet and Shosone-Bannock Nation Tribes indigenous Montana—worked with local artists to create a street mural as an addition to Palmerston North's public art collection.

Mātauranga Māori and Toi Māori experts from Rangitāne, The Massey University School of Māori Visual Arts, Distinction Hotel Palmerston North & Nosh Restaurant, LOOP New Zealand, and established local artists Israel Tangaroa Birch and Gemma Yiannoutsos worked with Willow in creating the cultural art piece.

Willow travelled to Palmerston North as part of the 14-strong Missoula Sister City delegation, which attended the 2019 Sister Cities NZ Conference. The vibrant mural adorns the side of the Distinction Hotel, which was accommodating many of the SCNZ conference delegates

at the time.

The mural, called “Horse Coup”, tells the historic story about a group of horses which her tribe took from neighbouring tribes. While in Palmerston North, Willow and her mother Michelle also performed traditional Native American dances for the Festival of Cultures and the SCNZ Awards dinner.

The visit also furthered the connection between Massey University and the University of Montana, who are progressing talks on an MOU which could lead to student and staff mobility and a combined indigenous qualification.

The delegation, which included members of the University of Montana Native American Studies Department, were hosted by Massey University's School of Māori Knowledge (Te Pūtahi-a-Toi) for three days, as well as staying overnight at Te Rangimarie Marae in Rangiotū, hosted by Rangitāne iwi.



New International Relations Manager Appointed at Hutt City Council

By Laura Sessions, Hutt City Council

Hutt City Council is pleased to announce the appointment of Vesna West in the role of International Relations Manager.

Vesna comes to the Council from the Office of Ethnic Communities at the Department of Internal Affairs, where she worked as a Senior Diversity and Engagement Advisor. She previously worked at Hutt City Council managing settlement support programmes for migrants new to the Hutt Valley. Throughout her working life in New Zealand, she has worked in the area of migrant and refugee

resettlement, ESOL teaching, interpreting and translating, and supporting ethnic communities.

Vesna is originally from Former Yugoslavia and moved to New Zealand in 1994 with her Kiwi husband. She has two adult sons and enjoys travelling, meeting people and learning about different cultures.

Vesna says, “I’m excited about my new role and the opportunities to further develop Hutt City’s international relationships.”





Left: Palmerston North education delegation meets with the Guiyang Education Bureau. Right: Deputy Mayor Tangi Utikere and Massey University Computer Science lecturer Dr Sunil Lal interacting with exhibits at the Big Data Expo

Palmerston North Deputy Mayor Visits Sister City Guiyang

By Toni Grace, Palmerston North City Council

Palmerston North Deputy Mayor Tangi Utikere travelled to Chinese Sister City Guiyang to join an education delegation from Manawātū and to attend the 2019 China International Big Data Expo.

The delegation includes representatives from the New Zealand Consulate (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade), Central Economic Development Agency, Massey University, IPU New Zealand, St Peter's College, Awatapu College, Palmerston North Boys' High School, Palmerston North Girls' High School, and Freyberg High School.

Back in 2017 Palmerston North Mayor Grant Smith headed a city business delegation to Guiyang as part of the 25th anniversary celebrations, which included signing an international education letter of intent.

"The letter of intent has created a valuable platform for Palmerston North education providers to travel to Guiyang, meet with the Education Bureau, visit prospective partner schools, and form relationships with education recruitment agencies," says Deputy Mayor Utikere.

Guiyang is a picturesque city in Guizhou province. In recent years it's blossomed into a mecca of ingenuity, playing host to some of the world's foremost tech agencies. Think Microsoft, Apple,

and Alibaba.

Before the education delegation visit, the Deputy Mayor attended the 2019 China International Big Data Expo (26 to 29 May), along with Stephen Wong, New Zealand Consul General responsible for Southwest China (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade) and Dr Sunil Lal, a lecturer in Computer Science at Massey University's Manawātū campus.

"The China International Big Data Expo is one of the highest-profile national events held in Guiyang, a city that is fast becoming a leading hub for big data in China," says the Deputy Mayor.

During his visit, Deputy Mayor Utikere met his counterpart in Guiyang, Vice Mayor Sun Zhiming, and the Guiyang Education Bureau.

Palmerston North's international relations efforts won national recognition taking out the "best commercially focused project" at the 2018 Sister Cities New Zealand Awards. The prize included an Air New Zealand Travel voucher which enabled the Deputy Mayor's recent trip to China.

The Deputy Mayors of Palmerston North and Guiyang meet in the margins of the Big Data Expo



Palmerston North Hosts Friendship City in China- New Zealand Year of Tourism

By Toni Grace, Palmerston North City Council

Palmerston North embraced New Zealand's 'Year of Tourism' with China, hosting their friendship city of Kunshan on the 25th anniversary of the relationship.

Officials from the eastern Chinese city spent the day in Palmerston North on 30 May to discuss culture, health and tourism cooperation.

The visitors had a full itinerary, which included meetings with local health agencies, tourism operators, a visit to Massey University and Te Manawa Museum of Art, Science and History.

The day was rounded out with a celebratory dinner for the China-New Zealand Year of Tourism where both cities shared presentations and videos about their tourism offerings.

The festivities were attended by Palmerston North Mayor Grant Smith, Councillor Adrian Broad, and Linda Stewart, CEO - Central Economic Development Agency, as well as representatives from Rangitāne iwi, local tourism agencies and members of the extended Manawātū Chinese community.

While this year holds national significance, Palmerston North has been flying the flag in China for decades. The city has two longstanding Chinese relationships, Guiyang since 1992 and Kunshan since 1994.

In 2017, Mayor Smith travelled to China to reconnect with Kunshan, before an education delegation visited in 2018.

"Two decades into our relationship we're seeing

great outcomes for both cities," said Mayor Smith.

"We have many shared interests, leading to great opportunities, particularly across our education and tourism sectors."

In recognition of the friendship city relationship, students from Palmerston North were given the opportunity to apply for four-year undergraduate scholarships to attend Duke Kunshan University, worth over NZ\$300,000.

The 2018 recipient, Krista McJarow-Keller has completed her first year at the International Chinese-American University and currently represents Palmerston North as the official Youth Ambassador to Kunshan.



Members of the Kunshan delegation included the Vice Chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference of Kunshan, the Deputy Director of the Kunshan Culture, Sports, Radio, Television, and Tourism Bureau; the Deputy Director of the Kunshan Health Commission; the Deputy Director of the R&D Centre of the Kunshan Municipal People's Government; the Director of the Kunshan International Relations Centre.

Top: PNCC City Councillor Adrian Broad hosts the Kunshan delegation at Enable NZ to discuss mutual interests in community health management and support.

Bottom: The Kunshan delegation presents a scroll gift to Mayor Grant Smith at the China New Zealand Year of Tourism dinner

SCNZ Supported the NZCFS National Conference

By Kirk McDowall, New Zealand China Friendship Society

The Wellington Branch of the New Zealand China Friendship Society (NZCFS) proudly hosted the National Conference and Annual General Meeting on Friday 24 May to Sunday 26 May 2019.

The theme of the Conference was 敢问路在何方 (Gǎn wèn lù zài hé fāng): Dare to ask where to from here!

The Branch gives special thanks to the keynote speakers, Her Excellency Ms Wu Xi, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China, Mr Xie Yuan, Vice-President of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, Mr Ray Wallace, Hutt City Council Mayor, Mr Mike Tana, Porirua City Mayor and Mr Dave Bromwich, NZCFS National President. The Branch also welcomed representatives from Sister Cities NZ, the Confucius Institute of Victoria University of Wellington and the Wellington Chinese Association, along with NZCFS delegates and friends from across New Zealand.

The conference began on Friday evening with two performances from the Oriental Dance Academy, followed by speeches from Dave Bromwich and Luke Qin, Wellington Chinese Association President. Both spoke on growing and maintaining the relationship between New Zealand and China, and the important role locally based organisations have in building the people to people connections. Following the welcoming, the Branch hosted a banquet dinner at Dragons Restaurant on Tory Street.

On Saturday the Wellington Branch welcomed over 50 NZCFS delegates and guests from across the country to hear keynote speakers and presentations on the theme: Dare to ask where to from here! Guests were greeted by performances from the Oriental Cultural and Performing Arts Group to begin the conference. Her Excellency Ms Wu Xi opened the conference and spoke on the importance of the relationship between New Zealand and China, and the role of the NZCFS has in building the connection. The link to the Ambassador's speech can be found at the end of the article.

The Branch was fortunate to host a delegation from the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC) in Beijing, led by Vice-President Mr Xie Yuan, who also gave a keynote address. In addition, the Branch welcomed Mr Ray Wallace, Hutt City Council Mayor and Mr Mike Tana, Porirua City Mayor, who echoed the importance of people-to-people relations, and building awareness and understanding of China and wider diversity within our communities. Each keynote address highlighted the importance of the goals and aims of the NZCFS.

Throughout the day, the audience heard a range of speakers, including Tony Browne, Chair of VUW Confucius Institute, followed by four Mandarin Language Assistants as well as Celia Wade-Brown, Hiromi Morris, President of Sister Cities New Zealand, and a range of presentations focused on New Zealand and China. The Wellington Branch thanks all the speakers and a list of all presentations can be found below. Following the presentations, the Conference Celebration Banquet was hosted at Grand Century on Tory Street, which was attended by over 50 delegates, members and friends.

On Sunday 26 May, the Annual General Meeting of the Society was held, which included the election of the National President and National Executive Officers for 2019-2020. Reports on the activities of the Society and Branches over the past year were tabled at the meeting.

A number of attendees have expressed appreciation of the high calibre of speakers and topics for the conference, and we thank all those who could attend. The Branch especially thanks all those on the Committee and within the Wellington Branch who gave a great deal of time and effort to make this conference a success, both on the day and building up to the event.

On behalf of the Wellington Branch, thank you to those who contributed to the Conference and the attendees.



From Left: Kirk McDowall, Mike Tana, Ray Wallace, HE Ms Wu Xi, Hiromi Morris, Xie Yuan and Dave Bromwich



A performance from the Oriental Dance Academy