



SISTER CITIES

NEW ZEALAND

Connecting people globally for peace and prosperity

NEWSLETTER

December 2019

From the SCNZ board

It's been an incredibly productive year for SCNZ and we're grateful for the ongoing support of our members.

During 2019 we held one of our largest SCNZ conferences, hosted several networking events and regional forums around the country and published 6 newsletters to keep our members informed.

Through international outreach we've strengthened connections with partner organisations like Sister Cities International, CLAIR Japan, CPAFFC, and Sister Cities Australia. In March we also launched new report by the

Season's Greetings

New Zealand Institute of Economic Research (NZIER) on the economic benefits of global city partnerships, jointly funded by the SCNZ Board, MFAT and LGNZ.

We look forward to delivering continued value to our membership in the New Year and we're always keen to hear your suggestions on how we can do this even better. Global partnerships are more important than ever, and it's SCNZ's privilege to support your collective efforts. Have a great summer break and [remember to register](#) for the next SCNZ 2020 conference in Ashburton! You can also [view the draft programme here](#).

Mayor's Message - Sister Cities Conference 2020

By Ashburton District Mayor Neil Brown

Fostering meaningful relationships and sharing our successes are some of the building blocks of the human experience, and Sister Cities are a shining example of these virtues in action on a global scale.

I am delighted that Ashburton will have the privilege of welcoming our friends and delegates from across the nation and the world to our stunning district at the 2020 Sister Cities New Zealand Conference in April. Located in the rural heart of Canterbury, an hour south of Christchurch, Ashburton thrives on its primary producing roots, and its innovation in agriculture and irrigation expertise. We also take great pride in being a culturally diverse region that supports diversity and wellbeing. Many cities and regions across the country are increasingly committed to enabling their communities to flourish in a



global marketplace, and this is certainly the case for Ashburton. It is through this lens that we will be presenting the 2020 Sister Cities Conference theme, 'Growing Cultural Diversity in the Regions'. It will explore the ways in which cities, towns and regional centres can play their part in supporting international connectivity, trade business and innovation.

We are very excited to have the opportunity to welcome you to our district, share the expertise of national and international speakers, and to work together to unlock valuable international partnerships. I look forward to seeing you in the Ashburton District in April for what is sure to be a rewarding and impactful Sister Cities Conference.



SISTER CITIES CONFERENCE

Growing Cultural Diversity in Regions

Ashburton, 30 April – 2 May 2020

[View the draft programme](#)

[Register now](#)

There's this place...

By Toni Grace, International Relations Manager, Palmerston North City Council

Name a University city with rural surroundings, a city population under 100,000, a strong research and bio-science sector, and a river running through the middle... Your first guess might have been Palmerston North, but I'm actually talking about its Sister City of Missoula, Montana!

Missoula and Palmy have been sister cities since 1982, starting with a partnership between the University of Montana (UM) and Massey University.

This year I was invited by Missoula and UM to take part in an 8-week exchange programme to learn more about the city and advance some new areas of cooperation.

The extended visit allowed me to get to know our Sister City a lot better, create strong networks across government, education & community groups in the city, and to identify areas where it makes sense for Palmerston North and Missoula to work together.

City management:

Missoula and Palmerston North have similar typographies, population sizes and pressures, meaning the cities can easily learn from comparing policies and initiatives. The distance is advantageous, as often one city has developed a completely original solution to an issue that the other has never considered, so both cities are doing things that the other can really learn from. For example, Palmerston North can learn a lot from Missoula's well-developed Downtown Partnership, while Missoula is really interested in Palmerston North's new approach to strategy, planning and organisational transformation. Throughout my time in Missoula, I was able to connect city council teams across both cities on issues like affordable housing, transport, downtown development, urban design, sustainable infrastructure and practices, and liveable communities – all of which are high on the agenda for both cities and have massive potential for best-practice exchange.

Education:

The relationship between Missoula and Palmerston North started with links between Massey University and the University of Montana (UM). The UM Global Engagement Office was involved in the hosting of my visit, as they were keen to explore Sister City opportunities for departments, staff and students. As well as the recent renewal of the student exchange agreement, both universities are also

making new connections between the Massey School of Māori Knowledge (Te Pūtahi-a-Toi) and the UM Native American Studies Department, as well as the Student Enterprise and Innovation hubs of both campuses. On the vocational training front, Missoula College and UCOL are

also in discussions about joined up study and exchange opportunities as a result of the visit.

Sustainability:

During my visit I also met with the Missoula City Climate Change Officer and was invited to give a presentation to Climate Smart Missoula. I was struck by how much the community was taking inspiration from New Zealand in their city and community efforts. There was a lot of interest in working together under the Sister City framework on common issues such as waste reduction, river restoration and reducing carbon emissions. For many, it seemed like a really feasible and practical way to connect globally on these issues.

Economic development:

Our cities are also facing a lot of the same opportunities and challenges around sustainable and equitable economic development. I attended the Innovate Montana Conference and also spent time with the Missoula Economic Development

Agency, Montana High Tech Business Alliance and Montana World Trade Centre. As part of this, I had the pleasure of helping to welcome a visit from Wellington-based company Peoply – which was interested in opening an office in Missoula as a US market pilot city. This is a great example of how our city-to-city connections and outreach can not only help facilitate business and export opportunities between sister cities, but to other parts of Aotearoa.

The sights, sounds & culture!

And best of all, my family and I had the opportunity to really immerse ourselves in the community of Missoula, Montana. It is a beautiful place with a generous community spirit. We may have endured a few snowfalls along the way (which the kids loved), but we also had the opportunity to visit Yellowstone National Park, Glacier National Park, carve pumpkins, take part in an American Halloween, and see a Griz Football Game. We made many friends and lost count of the number of people who invited us around for a meal. Most sister city visits in this job are usually short and fleeting, but I'd really recommend that people consider



Top: Glacier Park Visit, Bottom: Griz Football Game

taking a longer exchange-type visit like I did, in order to really get to know the communities we have long-standing relationships with.

In summary, my 8 weeks in Missoula gave me a much stronger understanding of what our Sister Cities have in common, what makes each unique and what the most promising areas of collaboration could be. All of this will help inform the development of a cooperation roadmap for our sister city relationship, that sets out a clearer set of goals, ambitions and steps for making our relationship more intentional and beneficial to both communities.



Selwyn Volunteers visit Indonesian Sister City

By Allison Rosanowski, Selwyn Sister City Committee Chair

Three Selwyn residents recently went on a volunteer trip to our sister city in North Toraja, Indonesia. Nick Konijn, Joan Gomez-Douglass and Pam Reveley, all retired teachers, were able to respond to a request from North Toraja for help in strengthening their English teaching programme. Preparation for the trip was overseen by the Selwyn Sister Cities Committee, in liaison with officials in Toraja.

The relationship between the two cities began when some Selwyn farmers became involved in a coffee project in North Toraja. With this support and local input, a co-operative was formed where the growers truly benefit from the coffee sales, without middlemen or multinational companies taking a cut. In later years, a European NGO has also helped with the project and the relationship with Selwyn has diversified into wider spheres. Some Toraja officials visited Selwyn in May 2019 and the proposed English exchange took shape.

After weeks of preparation, the volunteers set off on September 4th, travelling via Singapore, Makassar and Palopo, before reaching Rantepao, the main centre of North Toraja. They were warmly welcomed with an introductory dinner by the Bupati (Mayor), support personnel and the staff at their picturesque hotel accommodation. Another wonderful welcome followed when they started their workshops at a local boarding school, which hosted them for the first week.

The volunteers were, by this time, keen to start and began

their six days of intensive workshops with 30 enthusiastic, pre-selected Junior Secondary School English teachers. Some topics had been pre-arranged, but fine-tuning occurred as the needs and wants of the teachers were better understood. More communicative and interactive teaching techniques were the main emphasis and as these were modelled, rather than just explained, the workshops became rather rowdy at times but definitely engaging. Local facebook gossip meant some unannounced extras arrived to look in the door – something the volunteers found unnerving! It was wonderful to see teachers re-enthused about their subject, as students there find spoken English very difficult and this affects enjoyment and proficiency.

In the second and third weeks, the participant teachers were observed and supported as they incorporated new practice into their teaching. Feedback at the closing ceremony was extremely positive from all involved, with requests that teachers of other subjects got similar support. The English teachers were keen to share their experiences with other colleagues at local professional development days which means the programme will have a much wider impact.

The volunteers did a little sightseeing as well, made all the more enjoyable by superb weather.

North Toraja hopes to continue this relationship with more exchanges, including sending four English teachers to Selwyn in 2020.



Fostering stronger international links for Auckland startups at Myojo Waraku Summit in Fukuoka

Fiona Haiko, Auckland Tourism, Events and Economic Development (ATEED)

In recent years, Auckland has embarked on a proactive programme to nurture stronger economic development outcomes with its key sister cities.

The trilateral 'Tripartite' agreement, signed in 2014 by the sister cities of Los Angeles, Guangzhou and Auckland has enabled annual meetings of businesses, stakeholders and city leaders from all three cities over the past five years. Several companies from Auckland have reported successful entry into and/or investment from those markets, as well as collaboration on projects.

Collaboration with Brisbane has been strong with business visits and there is continued strong collaboration in the screen sector in Busan, South Korea.

While most of these initiatives have involved established businesses and investors, more recently Auckland has assisted its start-up community to establish new international connections.

Auckland's latest initiative is with Fukuoka, Japan's seventh largest city. The 33-year long relationship has mainly involved occasional bilateral visits related to education, culture and tourism. Fukuoka's recent positioning as Japan's startup hub and aspiration to be the 'Silicon Valley of Japan' has turned Auckland's attention towards its startup community. In 2017, both cities signed a memorandum of understanding focussed on startup collaboration. The agreement was renewed in 2019.

Each year, Fukuoka city invites startup companies from its sister cities together with a city representative to attend the Myojo Waraku Summit. The summit fosters collaboration, learning and growth and supports startups

to make key connections - enabling founders and their companies to reach the next level.

In October, Fiona Haiko, International Specialist, ATEED, accompanied Melanie Langlotz from GeoAR Games to Fukuoka for the 2019 summit. Melanie pitched GeoAR Games' Emergency Management Education app to an international audience from ten cities. The app uses augmented reality to teach children how to be prepared and stay safe in a disaster.

ATEED also showcased Auckland's startup ecosystem, including the GridAKL innovation campus, and was part of the judging panel for the Japanese startup pitch competition. Auckland awarded the winner of the competition, Doreiming, a residency at GridAKL.

Fukuoka's strong international network and the summit itself provided a platform to develop new relationships and explore avenues for collaboration between GeoAR Games and the international partners attending.

This year, 26 startups from Fukuoka and around the world, and 12 support organisations, such as ATEED, attended the summit, which featured panel discussions, pitch competitions, and booth exhibitions to encourage exchange among the participants. The summit was also attended by VCs, investors and other start-up supporters.

Attending the summit has opened opportunities in Fukuoka for GeoAR Games and has expanded the breadth of opportunity for collaboration between Auckland and Fukuoka. ATEED values these invitations as it also enables time for strengthening ties with city officials and for discussions around upcoming opportunities.



Te Ha 1769 Sestercentennial / Tuia 250 Encounters

By Jan Calder, Secretary Gisborne District Sister Cities

Turanga Gisborne and Uawa Tolaga Bay: 5th - 9th October 2019.

Mayor Rehette Stoltz and Gisborne District Council; Chair, Jim Osler and Gisborne District Sister Cities Committee and various groups from Uawa Tolaga Bay were privileged to host SCNZ President Hiromi Morris, a delegation from Sister Cities of Nonoichi Japan and Mahina Tahiti along with French Polynesian President Edouard Fritch and his delegation.

Many events and experiences of both a personal and international flavour were experienced over a very short period of time by those attending or through the media. It is thought provoking to now reflect on the events of Tuia 250 through the media and memories as the flotilla sails to various points of interest around coastal New Zealand.

As in all events time is at a premium and this was the case for our guests as they had to attend many functions between Tairāwhiti Gisborne and Uawa Tolaga Bay over a few days. It was inevitable that some very interesting options would be missed but these can be followed up during future visits.

A huge thank you must be extended to all residents (and visitors) of this region as all in some small or large way played a part in producing an event full of enlightenment emotion, memories and exposure that was shared internationally. This was achieved through events, stories and personal engagement developed by a combination of the Iwi, Te Ha Trust, Tuia Encounters 250, the Ministry of Culture and Heritage and entities that come under these headings.

Right: Lytton High School Powhiri for Nonoichi Delegation Akane Yoneyama, Mayoress & Mayor Awa, Werimu Elliot, Yoshihiko Nakamura, Ed Millner, Tyachi Kato

Bottom left: Ryan Beattie, Export Exec Leaderbrand Produce Ltd hosts and presents to Nonoichi Delegation

Bottom middle: Tavana Damas Teuire addresses guests at the Civic Dinner on behalf of the Mahina Tahiti Delegation

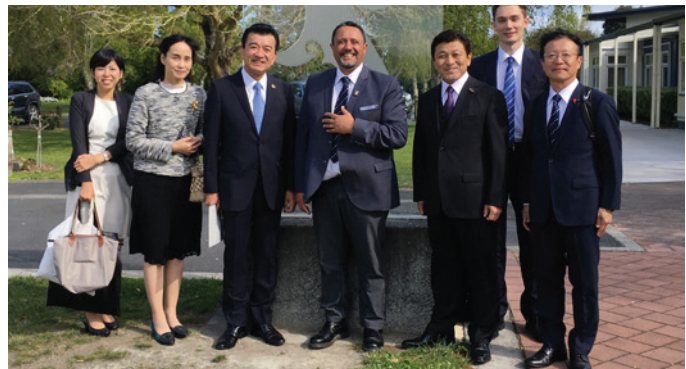
Bottom right: Deputy Mayor Josh Wharehinga, SCNZ President Hiromi Morris, GDSC Chair Jim Osler and Committee members welcome Mayor & Mayoress Awa and delegation at Gisborne Airport



Nonoichi Delegation and SCNZ President Hiromi Morris welcomed onboard Tairāwhiti Waka Hourua by Te Aturangi Nepia-Clamp Tairāwhiti Voyaging Trust CE and TeHa Trust member



French Polynesian President Edouard Fritch and wife socialise and enjoy songs with large student group from Mahina



Adelaide Garden artwork 'Kaurna Wailyu' unveiled at Halswell Quarry Park

By Peter Cottrell, Christchurch Adelaide Sister Cities Committee Chair

The unveiling ceremony for 'Kaurna Wailyu' was held on the afternoon of Thursday 21st November 2019 at the site of the artwork, which is at the entrance to the Adelaide Garden at Halswell Quarry Park in Christchurch. A mihi whakatau and blessing were given by Ngāi Tahu representative Aroha Rereti-Crofts.

The Lord Mayor of Adelaide, The Right Honourable Sandy Verschoor, was present to represent Adelaide, as were the artist, the very talented Karen Genoff, and aboriginal Kaurna Elder, Uncle Lewis O'Brien, both from Adelaide.

There was great representation from Christchurch City Council with Mayor Lianne Dalziel, Deputy Mayor Andrew Turner and Councillors Pauline Cotter, Jimmy Chen and Anne Galloway, as well as the team from Civic and International Relations. And current, past and future Christchurch Adelaide Sister City Committee members were also present along with representatives of other Christchurch Sister City Committees.

Short speeches were given by Mayor Dalziel and Lord Mayor Verschoor, with a longer speech by Karen Genoff describing the process from the previous (stolen)



artwork, 'Spheres', to the elements in the new artwork and the Kaurna words on the grit etched granite. Uncle Lewis then used a eucalypt leaf from the surrounding trees to explain some of the traditional uses of these leaves in Kaurna healing and burial ceremonies.

The Halswell School kapa haka group gave fantastic performances at the unveiling, supported by their kapa haka tutor, teachers, and Principal.

[Click to read the Christchurch City Council press release.](#)



Left: The Halswell School kapa haka group. Right: Committee Chair Peter Cottrell, artist Karen Genoff, Mayor Lianne Dalziel, Lord Mayor of Adelaide Sandy Verschoor, Kaurna Elder Uncle Lewis O'Brien. Photos: Kirk Hargreaves.

Nelson NZCFS facilitates student visit in 2020

By Barbara Markland, Nelson NZCFS President

Nelson Branch NZ China Friendship Society is again facilitating a student visit to the People's Republic of China.

Ten Year 12 and 13 students, from the five Nelson colleges, will be travelling to Nelson's sister-city Yangjiang, in Guangdong province in April 2020 as an on-going Arts and Cultural Youth Exchange programme. The programme was initiated in 2018 to show the value of sharing arts and culture across language, stories, school life, art, drama, film and musical performances.

The students will be guests of Guangdong Liangyang Senior High School, a boarding school of 3600 students. They will be billeted in the school dormitories during the week and spend the weekend in a hotel to enable sight-seeing. While at the school it is expected the students will attend classes and cultural clubs, participating in the life of the school. They will contribute to a theatre performance with musical items including waiata, drama, and dance. Each college will contribute an art work to be presented to Liangyang Senior High School and receive an art work in return.

2019 Gansu International Fellowship Programme

By Robert Love, Strategy & Policy Planner, Selwyn District Council

During September I was given the honour of representing the Selwyn District at the 2019 Gansu International Fellowship Programme, an experience that will stay with me due to the experiences and people I have met.

The Selwyn District shares a special relationship with Gansu through the work of Rewi Alley, which was formally recognised in a sister city partnership in 2009. This partnership has extended to an annual invitation to a candidate from Selwyn to attend a fellowship based in Lanzhou.

This relationship between Rewi and China was a driving factor behind New Zealand becoming the first country in the world to sign a free trade agreement with China, which has now resulted in China becoming our largest trading part worth over \$28 billion annually.

Over 30 days the Fellowship covered lectures in language, history and culture, accompanied by many visits within the Lanzhou area and surrounds, including an excursion to one of my highlights the Tibetan Plateau.

The city of Lanzhou and the Gansu province is located

in North West China, and historically was the entry point into China along the Silk Road. In modern times, the belt and road initiative has identified the same route the Silk Road followed as a vital transport corridor to Western and Central Asia, and onto Europe, and is now subject to massive investment.

The histories of our two countries are quite contrasting, China with over 5,000 years of civilisation and many more of human habitation. Whereas, New Zealand only had the first peoples arriving 700 years ago during the time of the Ming dynasty. The sheer length and richness of Chinese history is incredibly humbling, such as the majestic Mogao Grottoes with some dating back more than 1,500 years.

The trip provided me with a fantastic opportunity to experience this unique part of China, and develop my understanding of its society and learn that while we can have minor cultural differences, the most important things to us are the same, such as the place water has in our society. If you have the opportunity to attend this Fellowship I would urge you to apply.

Clockwise from top left: Jiayuguan Fortress - Great Wall of China; Fellowship Closing Ceremony; Crescent Lake, Dunhuang; Zhagana.





Clockwise from top left: Chair HMHFT Ray Wallace and Event Manager Linda Goss-Wallace with two Kimono models, Recruiting for new member of the Kendo Club, Ambassador Kobayashi at the Hutt Minoh Display with Daisuke Hayashi, Taiko Drumming in Dowse Square, Touring artist from Japanese at special preview hosted by his excellency Ambassador Kobayashi.

Vibrant Hutt Story – Hutt Japan Day 2019

By Linda Goss-Wallace, Event Manager, Hutt Japan Day

Lower Hutt City and Minoh City are in the 25th year of their Sister City relationship. It's been a very strong relationship and particularly so over the past 8 years.

The relationship was founded to foster global understanding, promote the language and cultures between the two cities, build friendships and celebrate the similarities and differences between the people, lifestyles and culture.

Since 1995 there have been a number of mayoral delegations and in the last eight years there have been various exchanges between Minoh and Lower Hutt by way of Art, Students, Teachers, along with School to School and Citizen Skype discussions, biennial Educational visits, and Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme delegates plus many other invitations to join festivities in Minoh via Skype. All of these activities have strengthened the Sister City relationship and formed many personal friendships between citizens.

Hutt Japan Day, hosted by the Hutt Minoh House Friendship Trust has been another way of showcasing the Japanese Culture to local residents and visitors. This was the second Hutt Japan Day that has taken place in the Civic Precinct of Lower Hutt and it was a great success with approximately 5000 people attending throughout the day.

Trust Chairman Ray Wallace said “Hutt Japan Day supports and strengthens the wonderful Sister City relationship we have with Minoh City, which will celebrate the 25th Anniversary in July 2020. Hutt Japan Day will take place

every two years in Lower Hutt to alternate with the Wellington Japan Festival every other year.”

Event Manager Linda Goss-Wallace reflected on the day saying “Hutt Japan Day was a celebration of the Japanese culture for our locals to experience the arts, dance, sports, language, food, fashion and much more. We were delighted to welcome a group of performers direct from Japan who were hosted by Ambassador Kobayashi from the Embassy of Japan in Wellington. The group performed demonstrations of calligraphy, tea ceremony, music and dance.

Many other local groups demonstrated a variety of martial arts, taiko drumming, tea ceremony, dance, music, fashion and culture. There were food trucks, a photo booth and market stalls to add more dimension to the festivities.

We also connected to our friends in Minoh for a short time during the event so that they felt they were part of the celebration through the virtual link via Skype.

We were honored to showcase the interest and passion many locals have for the Japanese Culture.”

Hutt Japan Day 2019 was a huge success and the organisers are proud of the turnout of people on the day.

The Hutt Minoh House Friendship Trust is establishing a Citizens Association to get involved in local events, exhibitions and activities to continue to strengthen and enhance the relationship with Minoh City. If you are interested please email: secretary@huttminoh.org.nz

US - NZ Breweries make a 'Sister City IPA'

By Jules Grace, Co-owner Brew Union Brewery, Palmerston North

In October this year the first US-NZ Sister City beer was brewed in a collaboration between Draught Works Brewery in Missoula, and Palmerston North-based Brew Union Brewing Company.

The aptly named 'Sister City IPA' was brewed onsite at Draught Works combining ingredients from both countries. This is the second Sister City beer for New Zealand, the first having been made between BentSpoke in Canberra and Fork Brewcorp in Wellington.

What was unique about this brew was really drilling down into local ingredients. Malt for the beer was sourced entirely from one farm 3 hours drive southeast of Missoula in Bozeman - Gallatin Valley Malt Co. - who have recently constructed their own malting facilities and all the Hops for the beer were sourced via NZ Hops which grows in the Nelson region.

The recipe was developed over a couple of weeks with head brewer Kyle after much emailing back and forward between the both of us and the beer was brewed in October with myself on site assisting (or getting in the way, depending on who you talked to). It was a great opportunity to talk about different ways that not only our two breweries tackle the task of brewing beer, but what industry norms are in different environments - the NZ and USA brewing scene are both very different but very similar.

The new Sister City IPA was unveiled with a launch party at Draught Works in November, bringing together many

people in the community with links to New Zealand and Palmerston North. We also had the pleasure of hosting Montana Lt Governor Mike Cooney just before the party started giving him a taste of the beer, as well as an introduction into what the sister city partnership meant to the people attending, including the owner/operator of Gallatin Valley farmer who grew all the malt.

While flying over to Missoula, Montana, to make a batch of beer is not economically viable for us, I enjoyed being introduced to a range of different individuals and business, both New Zealanders working in Montana, or Americans who had lived and worked in Palmerston North. It's always thrilling to be tapped on your shoulder in a busy bar by an American in a Manawatu Turbos Jersey and told of the good times that he had in Palmerston North working at the hospital, or university lecturers at the University of Montana who are well connected with research that is happening at Massey University in their areas of expertise.

Making a beer and releasing it to the local community were a small part of the trip through Montana for me and my family, but it was one of the most memorable events for us of our time over there. It reinforced what sister city relationships are all about, and we have made lifelong connections with a number of people, many of those met brewing, or planning the beer, or at the release party. Our family looks forward to hopefully hosting some of those people that we met in Montana back here in New Zealand.



Left: Mike Cooney, Lieutenant Governor of Montana (centre), joins the brewers and malt company owner for a taste of the Sister City IPA. Right: The Sister City IPA Tap Badge

Long white cloud to the rising sun: two worlds never apart

By Luke Qin, SCNZ Board

Having spent my formative years watching Dragon Ball, Yu Yu Hakusho, Saint Seiya and Slam Dunk, and owning Japanese electronics like most boys from middle class families in China, while being exposed to perhaps more than my fair share of various history books and war movies, I always knew one day I would visit Japan to see it with my own eyes, and experience the culture deemed so close to my own, yet so far apart. As we say in Chinese, seeing once is better than hearing a hundred times.

That interest grew stronger after my arrival in New Zealand as a teenager, having first studied with a couple of Japanese

international students, and then worked with some Japanese subsidiaries in my day job and many NZ-based Japan experts and expats through my various commitments. I have a friend who is of Japanese heritage and currently heads up SCNZ. Even people who know her may not know she adopted two orphans from China (a boy and a girl who are now university students) and is actively encouraging them to learn Chinese. Shortly after I tried to talk her into leading a delegation to Japan, I found out the Asia New Zealand Foundation was offering its Leadership Network members the opportunity to participate in a Japan Leadership Hui.

At the very beginning of the trip, I found myself surrounded at the back of the plane by a large group of Japanese high school students on their way back to Tokyo, having studied in Auckland for 3 months. As I looked “the same”, the Japanese kids sitting next to me greeted me in Japanese. Soon enough we were communicating comfortably via broken English/Japanese, writing Hanzi/Kanji characters and hand gestures... It was a no-brainer to decline the offer for an upgrade of my seat out of that area.

Having landed in Japan for the first time, it did not initially feel like a foreign country to me as the vibe and cultural symbols are all too familiar. However, it was a surreal feeling on the bustling streets of Shinjuku because I could pretty much understand all the signs, as I can read and write Chinese, but I felt a bit “crippled” as I couldn’t speak much. There were also tourist-friendly signs and translations in English, Korean, as well as Chinese for trains, restaurants, shopping centres and major attractions which perhaps explains why Japan is always a popular travel destination with returning tourists.

I had heard of Peace Boat before our visit to their headquarters in Shinjuku for they are a global NGO established for the purpose of raising awareness and building connections internationally among groups that work for peace, human rights, environmental protection and sustainable development. To my surprise, it was far from a grandeur building with glittering chandeliers just because they run cruise ships. In fact, it relied on a team of volunteers to put together trips and projects in the once war-torn places in Asia. We had lively discussions about the various projects Peace Boat ran and was shown a photo of a futuristic-looking Ecoship which was being built to become the planet’s most environmentally sustainable cruise ship. There was also a striking photo on the wall depicting the aftermath of the nuclear bomb in Hiroshima... Being a history buff, I am well aware of what happened during the Great Wars. We should never forget the tragedies against humanity and the sufferings inflicted upon the common people, but we should also never be slaves of the past. The best tribute to the forebears who lived, fought and died during the wars of the past, is to move forward together to ensure they never happen again.

At the Kodokan, the birthplace of Judo, I saw a photo of the “Father of Modern China” Dr Sun Yat-sen, and the enrolment form to join a Judo class of one of China’s most celebrated fiction authors Zhou Shuren (better known by his pen name Lu Xun), as both spent time in Japan before continuing on to follow the calling of their lives that reshaped contemporary China. I never thought in my wildest dreams that I’d have a pretty physical Judo session with the “mother” of the Asia New Zealand Foundation Leadership Network, a Berlin based expert in Japanese politics, a Hokkaido based academic/adventurer, the now deputy mayor of Gisborne, and an affable Japanese gentleman who turned out to be one of the most senior police officers in Japan that nobody should pick to spar with... Of course, someone told me that only after our sparring session. In hindsight, I perhaps should not have picked him, as the three “red and white belts”, including him, were throwing the young “black belt” like a rag doll when doing the demonstration earlier. I did my best to subdue him once but I knew he just let me win, and we were not of the same weight class.

After the energy-sapping but exhilarating Judo class, the obvious thing to do was to try some Sumo food to beef up.

Sichuan hotpot will always be the best for me but the Sumo hotpot “Chankonabe” is a close second. It’s considered a reasonably healthy dish in its own right, yet so rich in protein one can appreciate why it’s consumed in vast quantity by sumo wrestlers as part of a weight-gain diet in order to perform at their peak. It was fantastic to meet the Japan based Leadership Network members (over Sumo food) to hear their stories living in Japan, and their participation in the enrichment of the New Zealand Japan relationship.

On Mount Takao, I stood long before a torii (shrine gateway) with the couplets “共同祈願國土安穩，祈願被災地復興”， meaning “Together praying for the stability of the land and country, and the revival from disasters”. Having lived in my native Sichuan, Christchurch and Wellington where natural disasters struck, I can really relate to the prayers of the Japanese people as they recover from various natural disasters, including the latest setback caused by Typhoon Hagibis.

There were too many indelible moments in an action-packed six days: getting up at 4am to go to the fish market and watching buyers bid on Tuna, some from as far as New Zealand; staying at a traditional Japanese barn house in Uenohara and queuing up to have photos taken on the tatami; sharing a Kaiseki style meal while learning the table etiquettes and the meaning of Omotenashi (the spirit of Japanese hospitality) with local chef Ozawa-san and New Zealand based master chef Nomura-san; meeting a special team of New Zealand representatives at the New Zealand Embassy in Tokyo and discussing the challenges and achievements of the Japanese society, and the many planned opportunities to market New Zealand during the Rugby World Cup and Tokyo Olympics, and the various joint projects between New Zealand and Japan; trying some delicious cookies at the popular retail shop of flagship New Zealand brand Cookie Time which is only a stone’s throw away from Meiji Shrine; encountering leeches for the first time in our lives wading through undergrowth on our way to an organic farm to learn about Japanese farming and agriculture policies; talking politics and cracking jokes with a bunch of naked men while sitting in an onsen/hot spring spa; spending all my Japanese Yen at the airport on those cute confectionaries...

It was a great privilege to attend the Leadership Network Japan Hui with a bunch of interesting and committed delegates. Although we were only together for a relatively short period of time, I really appreciated the opportunity to get to know and learn from my fellow delegates, and feel that we will be staying in touch forever. I am grateful to the Asia New Zealand Foundation for continuing to challenge my assumptions, expanding my horizon and helping prepare me for the future chapters of my leadership journey. This experience has also further strengthened my resolve to contribute my two cents to help advance the mutual understanding, friendship and goodwill between the New Zealand and Japanese peoples, and between our multicultural communities in a vibrant and inclusive Aotearoa.

At our last team session in Japan before we continued on our separate journeys, we were asked to come up with a haiku that epitomises our time in Japan. I struggled a bit as there were so many memories, and perhaps didn’t quite get the syllables right:

*Two worlds never apart;
From the long white cloud to the rising sun;
We’re here to learn and love...*

Wainuiomata High School Rugby Club visits Hachinohe, Japan

By Daiji Kataoka, Wainuiomata High School

We had a fantastic trip - a trip of a lifetime.

The cultural exchanges were everything we could have hoped for and more. Our first destination in Hachinohe we were welcomed on the footsteps of the school by the entire school and responded with our school's haka. This was overwhelming as we did not expect such a magnificent reception. The school treated us with awesome hospitality and to spend time with some families in the north of Japan was a privilege and exciting for all our touring group.

The game we played there was on a field of top quality and the supporters were fantastic to play in front of. But due to the fantastic hospitality the rugby match became much more of a background component as the locals treated us so very well, something which we would find would continue throughout the rest of the journey.



Children's University Canterbury Partnership Update

By Peter Cottrell, Christchurch Adelaide Sister Cities Committee Chair

This project was first profiled in this Newsletter in the April edition. Here's an update:

The first graduation ceremony for the Children's University Canterbury Partnership (CUCP) was held on the evening of Wednesday 20th November in the James Hay Auditorium at the Christchurch Town Hall. Of the 192 students who started the programme in Term 2 of 2019, 155 were eligible to graduate at this ceremony and almost 150 did so, watched by proud family and whānau.

The Sister City link is with one of Christchurch's Sister Cities, Adelaide in South Australia, with the Australasian hub of the Children's University based at the University of Adelaide. Adelaide is Christchurch's oldest Sister City, having been established in 1972, so the 50th anniversary is not far away.

It was a fun evening which the students seemed to enjoy. There was a balance between speeches (both University of Canterbury [UC] and Lincoln University [LU] Vice-Chancellors spoke, as did the Children's University Australasia Chancellor, Professor James McWha) and

the presenting of certificates, with the names read by a representative from the respective schools. There were a couple of hakas, one from some of the graduating students in the audience, and another one by Te Pā o Rākaihautū students from the stage. The CUCP Programme Manager, Amy Underdown, is to be congratulated on an amazing event and the culmination of all the hard work that she and Jack Swannell (who is based at LU) have done, supported by the schools, the families of the children, the learning destinations, including many Christchurch City Council facilities.

And here are two links about the event. I'm sure this will generate much more attention over the coming year(s): [TVNZ](#) | [Canterbury University](#).

And if you don't have the April Newsletter at your fingertips, [here's the link to the Children's University Australasia website for more information](#). And although this one is based in the Canterbury region, there are plans for North Island and other regional Children's Universities in New Zealand.