



SISTER CITIES

NEW ZEALAND

Connecting people globally for peace and prosperity

NEWSLETTER

December 2020



Season's Greetings / Ngā mihi o te wā

The Board of Sister Cities New Zealand wish you and your family a very Merry Christmas, and a happy and healthy New Year.

We are grateful for your support throughout the year.

SAVE THE DATE: Sister Cities New Zealand 2021 40th Anniversary Annual Conference

LOCATION: Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington

DATE: 15th-16th April

THEME: Celebrating 40 years of Global Connection and Diversity

Introducing New Board Members and Advisor

SCNZ Board is pleased to introduce new Board Members. Jan Fitz-Gerald was elected at AGM in August, and Mayor Grant Smith and John Christie were co-opted at the Board meeting in November, and Elisha Hsiao was appointed as Youth Advisor.

Director: Mayor Grant Smith (Palmerston North)

Grant Smith is the 29th Mayor of Palmerston North City and is proactive in supporting Sister Cities and global relationships. Palmerston North has Sister City relationships with Guiyang and Kunshan in China, Mihara in Japan, and Missoula in the USA. Grant has had an extensive business background in advertising and marketing, as well as managing multiple international sporting and cultural events, before becoming Mayor. He has also served on the boards of Te Manawa Museum Trust, The Manawatu Rugby Union, The New Zealand Rugby Museum, Central Squash Association, and New Zealand Squash. He has championed the international programme Palmerston North city runs, which supports key city sectors of Food Research, International Education, Defence, and Trade.



Director: John Christie (Dunedin)

John is a senior management executive with previous director, CEO, and project manager experience at several high-profile New Zealand organisations. In his role as Director of Enterprise Dunedin, he is also a member of Dunedin City Council's executive leadership team. His governance experience includes roles with Otago Polytechnic, Knox and Salmond Colleges, Warbirds Over Wanaka, Diversity Works NZ, and New Zealand Chambers of Commerce. John is the former Chief Executive of the Otago Chamber of Commerce, a role that he held for 20 years. He has been instrumental in the development of Dunedin's relationship internationally including its sister cities of Shanghai, Otaru, and Edinburgh.



Director: Jan Fitz-Gerald (Christchurch)

Jan has an extensive background in the education industry and particularly within international relations and commercialising education opportunities. She is currently Founder and CEO of the Institute of Global Engagement New Zealand, a short-term international education provider for study groups and youth leadership programs. Jan is also founder and past CEO of Queenstown Resort College after many years at AUT University and on secondment to the Ministry of Education. Jan and her team alongside the Qingdao Education Bureau in PR China were recipients of the SCNZ Best Youth Project Award in 2018 for the China New Zealand Youth Leadership Summit. She is passionate about the work of SCNZ and is delighted to be given the opportunity to support its growth and development during the board appointment. Jan has a strong community spirit having been a member of Rotary for 15 years and serving on community boards and school trusts.



Youth Advisor: Elisha Hsiao (Porirua)

Elisha is a Product Manager at Volpara Health during the day, innovating software to assist with early cancer detection. She is also a member of the Asia NZ Foundation's Leadership Network. Originally from Taiwan, Elisha is a firm believer that fostering friendships around the world from a grassroots level is a great way to learn about other cultures. Sister Cities relationships are a way to achieve this. Elisha organised and led the SCNZ's inaugural Youth Tour to 5 cities in China in 2018.



SCNZ November Strategic Forum

By Toni Grace, SCNZ Board Director

Major global changes and the upcoming 40th anniversary of SCNZ provided a timely opportunity for members to come together for a forum to discuss a new strategic direction for the organisation.

More than 50 participants joined the Strategic Forum, held at the Wellington City Council (WCC) on 16 November, including 15 online participants throughout the day. Representatives from supporting organisations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade (MFAT) and Office of Ethnic Communities (OEC) also attended, together with recently arrived Japanese Embassy Representatives Mr Tatsushi Nishioka, Deputy Head of Mission and Mr Tomotaka Ishizu, Director of Japan Information & Cultural Centre.

The purpose of the forum was to take stock of Covid-19 impacts on local-global relations (including sister city cooperation) and workshop an updated future vision and objectives ahead of the 40th anniversary conference in 2021.

The session began with welcome remarks from His Worship Andy Foster, Mayor of Wellington, and Ms Susan Freeman-Greene, the new CEO of LGNZ. Philip Shackleton (LGNZ) then set the scene on the impact of Covid-19 on local government international relations, while Simon Draper, Executive Director of the Asia NZ Foundation, outlined



Mayor Andy Foster, Philip Shackleton & Simon Draper



Strategic Forum participants

how the Foundation worked to identify its unique value proposition and one-page strategy.

In small group discussions, participants were able to provide input on a revised SCNZ strategy – including vision, mission, value proposition, key objectives, indicators, capabilities and stakeholders. Each group summarised their contribution, which was collated and condensed into a first draft summary. The document will now be revised by the SCNZ board before going out to wider membership in early 2021 for further feedback.

The Forum was made free to members due to the free venue provided by WCC and catering generously sponsored by the Embassy of Japan. The event was also an opportunity to farewell outgoing Japanese Ambassador, His Excellency Mr Hiroyasu Kobayashi, on his final day of diplomatic service before retirement. The Ambassador noted that it was fitting for the SCNZ Forum to be one of his final diplomatic engagements, given that New Zealand's 44 city-to-city relationships with Japan provide immense value and community connection within the bilateral relationship.

Hutt Minoh House Friendship Trust Farewells Japanese Ambassador

By Ray Wallace, Trust Chair

The Hutt Minoh House Friendship Trust recently hosted a farewell reception for outgoing Japanese Ambassador Kobayashi and Madam Kobayashi.

The Ambassador has been in his New Zealand post for two plus years and in that time was very active in promoting good relationships between our two countries. He has been a great supporter of Sister Cities New Zealand.

Minoh City, in the Osaka region of Japan has been Lower Hutt's Sister City for 25 years and Ambassador Kobayashi has been a strong supporter

of the relationship and of Minoh House. He has attended many events here over his term of office, so this was a small way of saying thank you for his support and commitment, said Minoh Trust Chair Ray Wallace.



Members of the Hutt Minoh Friendship House Trust and Hutt Sister Cities farewell the Ambassador at Minoh House

"Both Hiroyasu and Atsuko are lovely people and will be missed. We will look forward to seeing them back in New Zealand again in the future when they return as friends and tourists. The Ambassador's daughter now lives and works in New Zealand as a result of his term as Japanese Ambassador to New Zealand."



Yubetsu and Selwyn Mark 20 Year Anniversary

By Nicole Bourke, former Darfield High School Student and Yubetsu Exchange Student

Last month through Zoom the town of Yubetsu, Japan and Selwyn District came together to mark the 20-year anniversary of their sister city relationship.

Over the years the relationship between these two rural communities has offered great insight into a different culture, place and way of life along with the forming of many special friendships and unforgettable memories for all people involved.

For me and my family the connection to Yubetsu started with my older sister Anna being the first recipient of a scholarship to travel to Yubetsu on student exchange, with her encouragement I too applied for the scholarship two years later when I was in Year 10 at Darfield High School. This opportunity allowed me to fully immerse myself into school and home life in Japan for 3 months. I attended Koryo Junior High School, a school known for all students learning the taiko drums, this became one of the many new experiences I had the opportunity to try during the exchange. It was great putting my Japanese studies into practice as a student and I was blown away by the generosity of the people. At home I quickly discovered that if I expressed that a food was *oishii* (delicious) my incredible host family would stock up the cupboards and always have more on hand.

Years later this scholarship opened up the doors for me to work in Yubetsu as an Assistant Language Teacher. This job involved working across four schools, including Koryo Junior High School (I should have kept up my drum practice!). It was a rewarding job which enabled me to foster the learning of English and act as a cultural ambassador in the wider community which was a real privilege. The best aspect of this job was it allowed me to inspire and encourage young people to take up exchange opportunities just like I did. For me living in a new place and experiencing a new culture and language was a truly wonderful and eye-opening experience which had a great impact on me.



Above: Singing a waiata. Top left: Cutting the anniversary cake from left: Selwyn Mayor Sam Broughton, Malvern Community Board member Judith Pascoe and Malvern Community Board Chairperson John Morton. Top right: Zoom call from left: Sumi Hayakawa-Buist (liaison and interpreter), Karen Mear (Malvern Community Board), Allison Rosanowski (Selwyn Sister City Chairperson), Mayor Sam Broughton, Chairperson Morton and former Selwyn Mayor Kelvin Coe.

Thank you very much for all people who have contributed Yubetsu relationship for years from Selwyn district and understanding of the importance of our friendly relationship. Mayor Sam Broughton, Mr John Morton, (Malvern Community board chairperson), Mrs Allison Rosanowski, Sister City committee chairperson and Avis and Doug Hewson who hosted guests from Yubetsu for 20 years Consular office of Japan in Christchurch Consul Mr David Tsunakake and Consul of Japan from Christchurch and all other people who have joined the celebration for this occasion, Mr Morris to support for this relationship. thank you very much for joining us.

Mrs S Hayakawa-Buist

Eight Weeks in the Life of Gisborne District Sister Cities

By Jan Calder, Secretary GDSC

19th October – regular 6 weekly GDSC committee meeting

27th October – worldwide videos of GFA 2019 – Gisborne interviews recorded within Botanical Gardens (below).



31st October – Mayor Rehette Stoltz and Chair Jim Osler presented prizes to the Gisborne winners of the annual Gisborne Gamagori Photo Competition. The Theme for 2020 was 'Simply Green' and 47 Gisborne entries were received in the 20th year of the competition. Even with the handicap of COVID-19, Gamagori managed to judge the Gisborne entries and Gisborne voted on the Gamagori entries which were received and displayed at the HB Williams Memorial Library. Interestingly, the photos took no more than 10 days to travel by sea.

1st November – GDSC committee gathered to farewell three long serving members of the Committee. Chair Jim Osler presented Hazel and Peter Wooding and Ray Gowland with a gift and time was spent reminiscing. All three had visited one or more of the Sister Cities of Palm Desert, Nonoichi and Friendly City of Whitby during their time on the committee and had been involved in hosting delegations to Gisborne.

November – during 1st week – a Hui was held for the Manuel Jose whanau where James Barnes (management committee) was appointed to the position of Chairman – this position had been held by the late 'Big John' Manuel. The Manuel Jose whanau, Gisborne District Council (GDSC) and Valverde del Marjano Spain are part of a joint Friendly City agreement signed in Gisborne in 2010.

9th November – Palm Desert Sister City Foundation – Mark Talboys (PD Programme Co-ordinator) requested an update of Gisborne photos for the PD web site. After some background work, Adam Hughes, Manager Tourism Tairāwhiti Trust was approached and Adam released to Mark with permission to reproduce a package of Tairāwhiti Gisborne photos.

20th November – 2021 Gisborne/Gamagori photo competition – theme 'My favourite photo of Tairāwhiti Gisborne' – posters and entry forms distributed.

20th November – Mayor Rehette Stoltz, Chair Jim Osler and some members of the GDSC Committee took

part in a Zoom meeting with Mayor Takaaki Awa and representatives of Nonoichi City Japan. When Mayor Awa and his delegation visited Tairāwhiti Gisborne for the Tuia 250 commemorations it had been arranged that Mayor Awa and delegation would visit Gisborne in August 2020 and Mayor Stoltz and delegation would visit Nonoichi in October to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the relationship signed in 1990. While COVID-19 dealt to these plans, Ed Milner (Nonoichi International Relations) and Donna Shaw (personal assistant to GDC Mayor Stoltz) set up a Zoom meeting so both Mayors, staff and SC committees could recognise the 30 years and discuss ways to continue the relationship within these difficult conditions. The Zoom was very informal as all participants except one had visited either Gisborne or Nonoichi and met each other. Simon Cave (GDSC committee) and wife Caroline had been present at the original signing both in Gisborne and Nonoichi. The Zoom concluded with Mayor Awa inviting Mayor Stoltz and delegation to Nonoichi in November 2021 to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Nonoichi becoming a City. The next Zoom meeting is booked for late February 2021 where ideas for continuing the relationship within these current conditions will be discussed.



Left: Interpreter Shingo Suematsu and Gisborne Mayor Rehette Stoltz.
Right: Interpreter Ed Milner and Nonoichi Mayor Takaaki Awa

30th November – the regular 6 weekly GDSC committee meeting held.

November/December 2020 – SC Rizhau China – after having no communication with Rizhau since January 2020, emails and greetings have been received and sent between Mayor Stoltz and Mayor Li Zaewu – a request for a Zoom is now being slotted into Feb/March 2021 and a format for the Zoom has been received from Rizhau. During August 2021 the 30th anniversary of the SC signing between Rizhau and Gisborne (signed in 1996) will be celebrated.

21st December – a morning tea will be held at the Botanical Gardens to celebrate and acknowledge the work of GDC staff and the 'Green Flag Award' for 2019 and 2020. Within the Botanical Gardens are 3 Sister Cities' gardens – Japan (Nonoichi), Australia (Gisborne) and USA (Palm Desert).

21st December – meeting at GDC to discuss plans and ideas for Parks Week 2021 (6th – 14th March 2021).

Best wishes to all for the festive season and the year of 2021.