



SISTER CITIES

NEW ZEALAND

Connecting people globally for peace and prosperity

NEWSLETTER

Special Edition - May 2021



SISTER CITIES CONFERENCE 2021

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS

of Global Connections and Diversity

TE PAPA TONGAREWA, WELLINGTON

15 & 16 APRIL 2021

From the SCNZ Board

Sincere appreciation by Hiromi Morris, SCNZ President & Conference Coordinator

On behalf of the Board of Sister Cities New Zealand, I would like to thank you, all the participants for attending the special 40th Anniversary Annual Conference.

We trust it was a success with over 100 people attending, with a high standard of programme and distinguished speakers to reflect the theme "Celebrating 40 years of Global Connections and Diversity". This year's Conference was special, not only celebrating the 40th anniversary, but also meeting with participants in person after the 2020 Conference was cancelled due to the Covid Pandemic. Technology has allowed us to connect with overseas participants as well through Zoom while the borders are closed.

Special appreciation to our patron The Rt Hon Dame Patsy Reddy for hosting the Welcome Reception at the Government House and to Hon Priyanka Radhakrishnan, Minister for Diversity, Inclusion and Ethnic Communities for inspirational and encouraging speech at the Reception.

We would like to acknowledge the following organisations for their generous sponsorships:

- Office of Ethnic Communities
- Local Government New Zealand
- Asia New Zealand Foundation
- Wellington City Council
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade
- Embassy of Japan
- CLAIR Japan Local Government Centre
- Nautilus Estate
- Moore Wilson

I also would like to acknowledge a retired board member, Bernard Duncan, after six years' contribution to SCNZ, particularly for researching and compiling an excellent summary of 40 year history of SCNZ for this special Conference. The conference booklet and the 40 year history summary is available to read - [please click link here](#).

For your information, the structure of the Board is as follows for 2021/2022 year:

President: Hiromi Morris (Wellington)

Vice President: Ray Wallace (Lower Hutt)

Directors: Grant Smith (Palmerston North), Jan Fitzgerald (Christchurch), John Christie (Dunedin), Toni Grace (Palmerston North) and newly elected Taylor Marston* (Auckland). *Please see profile below.

The 2022 year is a significant year for New Zealand's diplomatic relationships with USA (80 years), Japan (70 years), South Korea

(60 years) and China (50 years) and the SCNZ Conference will be held in Blenheim 6-7 April in partnership with Marlborough District Council. We all look forward to seeing you there.

Introducing new board member



Taylor Marston

Taylor has an academic background in sister cities having completed his master's thesis on sister city relationships shared between Japan and Aotearoa New Zealand. Taylor lived in Kobe, Japan for three years while completing his master's

degree but currently resides in Tāmaki Makaurau and is pursuing a PhD in the field of community development, looking at the role of community in sister city relationships.

Taylor has a strong passion for the "think global, act local" doctrine and is eager to promote the actions of sister cities and their importance in contemporary society, especially to today's youth. Being a 'youth' himself, Taylor hopes to use this opportunity as a director of the board to help promote youth involvement in sister cities and to bring youth into the discussion table. Taylor is also an assistant lecturer at AUT teaching both Japanese and social sciences.

Introducing new SCNZ member

Ōpōtiki District Council by Mayor Lyn Riestrer



In July 2019 the three Eastern Bay Mayors (Kawerau, Whakatāne and Ōpōtiki) travelled to Nanchang, Jiangxi Province of China, to formalise a Sister Province relationship as well as three sister city relationships within the Jiangxi Province. Ōpōtiki District has begun our sister city relationship with

Xin Yu. Unfortunately through 2020 and Covid issues we have not been able to reciprocate our sister city colleagues coming to visit us but we are hoping to get to this in the future. We are keen to pursue educational, cultural and economic opportunities between Xin Yu and Ōpōtiki District.

As Mayor, I wanted to join Sister Cities New Zealand to learn how best to grow inter-city relationships as well as extend cultural understanding by being involved in the organisation. With a volunteer background in intercultural student programmes (AFS NZ) I think this is a logical step to make from a local government perspective. I look forward to learning more.



Reflections on SCNZ Conference

By Jan Fitz-Gerald, SCNZ Director

We were immersed into the wonderful cultures that reflect the nature and purpose of Sister Cities.

Beginning with a beautiful mihi by Te Papa staff and powerful opening remarks by local iwi Kaumatua Kura Moeahu this served as an excellent introduction to the theme of Day One.

The theme of 'globally-engaged communities' was introduced by Anusha Guler from the Office of Ethnic Affairs and followed by recorded messages of greetings by NZ Ambassadors to China and Japan, and special friends from Sister Cities International (USA), CLAIR (Japan) and CPAFFC (China).

The afternoon's theme changed to one of celebration where a number of 40 and 45 year anniversaries were acknowledged. These were for the cities of Dunedin, Napier, Nelson, Gisborne and Lower Hutt and their respective sister cities.

The highlight of the day most certainly was the welcome reception at Government House hosted by Her Excellency The Right Honourable Dame Patsy Reddy Governor General of New Zealand. This was a truly memorable occasion with many delegates delighted to experience visiting such a special and important location and home.

The day concluded after the reception but this certainly set the scene for the next day's work.



By John Christie, SCNZ Director

During the recent Sister Cities 2021 Conference, I was privileged to chair the session on investing in relationships and economic development.

The focus of this session was looking at how established sister city relationships can be used as a platform for economic development and the opportunities that enhance this through regional and national collaboration.

This is a topic close to my heart, after being involved with Dunedin's sister city programme for more than 25 years. Progressing these relationships from a purely civic and cultural approach to include economic and social outcomes takes foresight, planning and commitment.

There were three projects that stood out to me as best practice examples of this at the Conference, including:

- Marlborough's support of the Ningxia wine industry which has yielded a 30:1 return on investment through wine technology export and expertise, marketing and education;
- The Auckland, Guangzhou and Los Angeles tripartite alliance promoting trade, investment and people-to-people connections;
- The Selwyn District sister city project with Toraja, Indonesia, assisting coffee farmers.

For me these are very tangible examples of the close link between community development and economic development.

I think Wikipedia's definition captures it best when it states, 'economic and social development is the process by which the economic well-being and quality of life of a nation, region, local community or an individual are improved according to targeted goals and objectives.'

These projects all demonstrated great examples of the value sister cities have in improving economic and social outcomes for our mutual communities.

If you want to check out the presentations further [follow this link](#).





2021 Sister Cities Awards

By Ray Wallace, SCNZ Vice-President

Congratulations to all the nominees who entered in the 2021 Awards. We had a range of members' groups who did great things in strengthening their sister city relationships.

The awards evening was a splendid affair held at the Te Papa Marae. The evening included speakers Bernard Duncan, SCNZ Director and John Strevens, former SCNZ President, giving some of the 40 year history of Sister Cities New Zealand. There was also great entertainment from the Conference's MC.

The many volunteers who contributed to the great success of sister city relationships were also acknowledged at the awards evening.



Award Category Winners

Best Local Government Award

WINNER: Selwyn District Council: Toraja Relationship

RUNNER-UP: Whanganui District Council: Covid-eoing with NagaiZoomi Project

Best Project (Corporate or Commercial Focused)

WINNER: Christchurch Songpa-gu Sister City Committee: Songpa-gu Korean Garden Project

RUNNER-UP: Enterprise Dunedin: City Council Project China

Best Project (Community and School)

WINNER: Marlborough District Council: Ninqxia Sister Region Wine Technology Project

RUNNER-UP: Taylor Marston

Supreme Award

WINNER

Selwyn Sister Cities Committee: Toraja Relationship



SIGNIFICANT ANNIVERSARIES

2020

Napier - Tomakomai, Japan (40 years)

Dunedin - Otaru, Japan (40 years)

2021

Nelson - Miyazu, Japan (45 years)

Gisborne - Palm Desert, USA (40 years)

Lower Hutt - Tempe, USA (40 years)



Feedback from Conference Participants

Neil Henry, Economic Development Manager at Marlborough District Council

SCNZ 2021 at Te Papa was my first Sister Cities conference. In my role as Economic Development Manager at Marlborough District Council I have been fortunate enough to be closely involved with Marlborough's sister region relationship with Ningxia, China which has connected me to SCNZ and its work. Marlborough was well represented at SCNZ 2021 as our Mayor and members of our Sister City sub-committee attended to promote Marlborough as the host of SCNZ 2022, and I presented on our Ningxia relationship. I was very impressed with the conference as it was very well organised, the venue and catering were outstanding and most importantly the content was relevant and useful, and I made many new contacts. I particularly liked the sessions on the Friday which talked about the strategic approach, economic development and youth engagement, and I'm sure everyone enjoyed the visit to Government House, the Gala Dinner, and the skills of the MC Chris Gallavin. The Marlborough group were very proud to win the award for best corporate or commercial project on Friday evening, which finished off a very good couple of days at SCNZ. We look forward to seeing you all in Marlborough in 2022.



Adam Curtin, Chair & Simon Oe, Deputy Chair, Christchurch Songpa-gu Sister City Committee

The Sister Cities Conference 2021 was a very memorable experience for us as first time attendees. We enjoyed listening to the range of speakers who shared their valuable insights and experiences, the catering was outstanding and there was a great balance of topics to foster some meaningful discussion between those in attendance. The conference was also an invaluable opportunity for us to network and immerse ourselves amongst those who have been involved with Sister Cities for many years.

Everyone at the conference was very welcoming and it was fascinating to hear everyone's different stories as to how and why they became involved with Sister Cities. We felt there was a great sense of passion and community amongst those in attendance, and hearing everyone's different experiences with Sister Cities has motivated us to look further into how we can contribute to the growth of Sister Cities New Zealand. At the end of the two days we were lucky enough to take home an award, which is a fantastic acknowledgement for all the hard work our committee members have put in. We look forward to being involved in future events and will do our very best to make a valuable contribution to Sister Cities' growth and success in the future.

Teresa Chan, Chair, Dunedin Shanghai Association

From Sister Cities to Global Cities- 2021 Conference. If the Conference was to provide us with food for thought, we were treated to a colourful feast.

Sister Cities NZ celebrated its 40th anniversary by illustrating the diverse approach which cities and regions can take to their sister cities' relationships. From Marlborough's relationship with Ningxia which provided a 30-fold with economic benefits to their investment, to the Selwyn District's relationship with Toraja in Indonesia where the motivation was the warm friendship between two farming regions, there was plenty to inspire.

I was especially pleased to see the focus on youth engagement and the invitation for young people to tell us what they are looking for.

I welcome the rebranding from Sister Cities NZ to Global Cities NZ. The new branding is more inclusive, and allows opportunities for cities and regions to work together, in NZ and internationally. It will also be more appealing to our youth.

I congratulate the Board and especially Hiromi in organising such a delightful conference. We look forward to implementation of the strategic plan adopted at the AGM.

Paul Duffin, Chair, Hutt Sister City Foundation (HSCF)

The 2021 Conference and 40th Anniversary celebration of SCNZ was special to HSCF as it highlighted that the Sister City movement is still alive and well - despite the issues we are all facing in regard to funding and connecting with our SC people around the world. A special highlight for me was the enthusiasm shown by Taylor Marston - who knew you could get a Masters in Sister City Relationships, culminating in Taylor being elected on to the SCNZ Board? Congratulations Taylor! Another highlight was the young councillors who attended the conference and provided their views on what SC relationships can do in their areas.

It was a wonderful coup to have Marie-Louise Blockley and her husband Peter attend part of the Conference. It was great to catch up with them. Marie-Louise Blockley was instrumental in setting up the Sister City programme in New Zealand 40 years ago when she was sent overseas to the Sister Cities conference in the US. A special thank you to Dame Patsy Reddy for hosting the function at Government House at the end of day one of the conference.

Te Papa as a function venue for the conference dinner was second to none - especially having the awards on the Marae. Thanks go out Hiromi Morris who put together the programme and function on the last night.



Amy Trigg, Senior Policy Analyst, Hamilton City Council

As a first time attendee, the conference provided a great setting to be able to test ideas, make connections, listen and learn from the successes of other Councils and community organisations in building and expanding their international relations and sister city relationships, many of which had been through a similar journey to our own.

Hamilton City Council is working to revitalise our Sister City relationships and re-examine their strategic opportunities following several years of lower activity. Our team is small, with just two staff members working part-time on international relations and sister cities.

One of my key takeaways for Hamilton is that it was evident that Councils who have a good understanding of their value proposition are in a strong position to establish meaningful connections with cities that provide strategic opportunities, and that these relationships had a higher chance of being successful and providing tangible benefits.

On a personal note, the passion from those who have developed deep and enduring personal relationships through Sister City bonds resonated with me. I spent a year abroad in high school and still have a strong connection to Sweden and to my host family.

Hiromi, the Sister Cities New Zealand board and staff ran a wonderful event, and I am looking forward to attending in 2022 in Marlborough.



Robson Liang, Director, International Education Fund Ltd.

Please accept my sincere congratulations on such a successful event. The SCNZ 2021 conference was, without exaggeration, a long-awaited event for many.

As a corporate member and a long-time supporter of SCNZ, we have engaged in the promotion of International Education, and sister schools facilitation programs between NZ and China for over 20 years. I greatly appreciate the Organisation's endless effort to put together such a successful event and proving us participants with a wonderful opportunity to get together and share past experience and future opportunities. It was very well organized, both logistically and in terms of its contents (reports, panels, etc). Over the years, IEF too has been focusing on nurturing the future Citizen of New Zealand. Like SCNZ, we too care about the social value of new migrants and want to help them create a positive wave in society. Based on the in-depth relationship developed with our clients and their family, we have attracted not only human capital but also substantial investment to NZ and contribute to both economic and social benefits for New Zealand. It was my great pleasure to be able to participate and reconnect with the association members, it was even more exciting to see so many bright-eyed and fresh-faced young members on board.

I really do think that SCNZ has the ability to become a great platform for various international cities to get together and share existing resources, to promote mutual economic growth and strengthening relationships. This is especially vital during this COVID-19 pandemic, where the globalization process is slowly coming to a halt and somehow global fragmentation has become the norm. We have many different ethnic communities here in NZ, and SCNZ could definitely assist with engaging these communities together so that we can work out any potential conflicts to create a unified society so that we have a stronger power to lobby the ideas that we want to achieve.

I look forward to seeing how SCNZ will lead us members to become the best and leading advocacy platform for international relationship policy; as well as becoming a powerful brain for our central government. I also cannot wait for our younger members to proactively engage and find innovative ways reunite the World again post-pandemic.

Once again thank you for all you did to make participation in this Conference so easy, pleasurable and rewarding! I look forward to exploring further avenues of collaboration and engagement with SCNZ.



Feedback from Zoom Overseas Participants

Tim Quigley, Chair Emeritus and Kevin O'Donnell, Young Professional Representative, Board of Directors. SCI

Through the wonders of technology, some of us from Sister Cities International were still able to join in Sister Cities New Zealand's 40th Annual Conference. We felt privileged to be asked to deliver video messages during the International Segment, and were delighted to participate by Zoom on the actual conference days! We commend you all for putting on a high-quality, in-person/virtual hybrid conference despite this being a new endeavor and in the middle of a pandemic, to boot.



Our compliments also on the high caliber of your plenary dignitary speakers and for the thoroughly knowledgeable panel presenters. We thought the subject sessions were on point; two in particular warrant further comment. As Sister City linkages can source and stimulate economic development, the comparative discussion between representatives from Auckland (large city) and Selwyn (rural community) was very informative. The Youth Engagement Session was definitely our favorite. We intend to follow up with Taylor Marston on his Japan study results.

We cannot wait to join you in-person for next year's conference and invite you to join our 2021 virtual SCI Annual Conference on July 15th and 16th.

And, as soon as we can travel again, look forward to welcoming you to your U.S. sister cities soon!



Paul Cranch, Lead-Trade and Investment, Local Government Association of Queensland

I found the event very entertaining and welcoming. The relaxed atmosphere allowed opportunities for participants to share their challenges and opportunities which in turn made the event engaging and interesting. The key take away that I had from this event was the importance of involving youth to shape and drive the international programs for exchange.

AKAIWA Hiroto, Executive Director, CLAIR Japan Local Government Centre Sydney

On behalf of all the staff at CLAIR Sydney, I would like to express our warmest congratulations on the 40th anniversary of Sister Cities New Zealand. SCNZ and CLAIR have a remarkable collaborative partnership in supporting the sister cities between New Zealand and Japan. We look forward to seeing the people of New Zealand and Japan continue to learn from one another through the sister city activities supported by SCNZ and CLAIR for many more decades to come.



At the recent 40th Anniversary SCNZ 2021 Annual Conference, eight members of CLAIR attended virtually, including an executive member from our Tokyo Headquarters. It was a great opportunity for us to hear about the knowledge and experiences of the presenters and panellists for the future development of our relationships with SCNZ and local governments in New Zealand. We deeply appreciate the efforts of SCNZ and those involved in the organisation of the conference for extending the conference engagement to those abroad.

The trans-Tasman travel bubble has begun between Australia and New Zealand. We sincerely hope that the staff of CLAIR Sydney can meet with the exceptional team at SCNZ and representatives from local governments in New Zealand at upcoming events and meetings soon.

David Liu, CPAFFC (Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries)

Warm congratulations and big applause on the 40th anniversary of Sister City New Zealand and the conference as well! With immense participation from New Zealand and abroad, the conference discussed issues of our common concern and demonstrated the eagerness and passion at the sub-national level to sustain international engagements and recover their economies in the face of COVID-19.

I was fortunate to be a witness of the growth of China-New Zealand people-to-people ties over the past few years. I miss the old days when joining your annual conferences, visiting beautiful cities, meeting friends face-to-face, enjoying Maori and New Zealand cultures and sharing experiences on our sub-national exchanges. The happy moments spent with SCNZ friends on the China International Cities Forums are also in my mind.

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the solid friendship between our two organizations, with heart-warming sympathy letters and PPEs to each other. Only by solidarity and mutual assistance can we ride over the difficult times, especially for sub-nationals and locals.

Looking forward to meeting SCNZ and other New Zealand friends in China when the COVID-19 situation eases!



Save the Date



SISTER CITIES
CONFERENCE
2022

BLENHEIM • 7 & 8 APRIL

