

From the Board

Message from President Mayor Grant Smith

Kia ora,

As 2023 draws to a close, we are looking forward to seeing you all again at our GCNZ national conference in Blenheim, Marlborough, Thursday 14th and Friday 15th March next year. Please register now for the two days of conference which finishes with our Annual Awards dinner on the Friday evening.

In this newsletter we feature Sister Cities connections for Cambridge and Le Quesnoy, France as well as Bihoro, Japan. While metros Wellington City visits Asia, signing up formally with Seoul in South Korea, and Dunedin reconnects with long-time partner Shanghai in China. We hear about the Korea-NZ Smart Cooperation Forum and our very own GCNZ Youth Forum, while GCNZ Board member Taylor Marston gives us a rundown on the recent Australian Sister Cities Conference.

Please don't forget to enter your city's, town's, organisation's or school's international project into our Awards. Please see the link later in the newsletter for

entries, which close 1st February 2024.

We still really value receiving your articles and snippets from your own international programmes for this newsletter and our online and social networks, no matter how small or large they are. So please do send material into Caroline, our editor for future editions and distribution.

Finally, with a new Government here in New Zealand and the world order being challenged in several spots around the globe, our Global Cities movement and the understanding that comes with 'internationalism' has never been more important. Thank you all for your support, in what has been a challenging year. I wish you a wonderful Christmas and exciting New Year.

Ngā mihi nui,
Mayor Grant Smith, JP, GCNZ President



Marlborough taking names for GCNZ conference

Registrations are open for the Global Cities New Zealand 2024 conference in Marlborough in March, and organisers are looking forward to a rush of members registering!

Marlborough sister city committee chairman, Councillor Jonathan Rosene, says he is looking forward to welcoming delegates to this year's GCNZ conference, but they should book soon.

"Marlborough in March is brilliant. The weather is fantastic, and there are lots of things to see and do. The vineyard harvest is underway, and there are lots of great events."

The conference has been timed to show off Marlborough – the Havelock Mussel Festival is the day after the conference, and Councillor Rosene encourages delegates to stay on in the district to enjoy what is one of Marlborough's premium events.

"However, it does mean there will be a lot of other people looking to enjoy Marlborough, so GCNZ delegates should register for the conference and make their travel arrangements as soon as possible."

Councillor Rosene says the Marlborough conference

has a good programme, based around the theme of "Reconnecting to the World". Delegates will be able to share their experiences of reconnecting with sister city partners after the global COVID pandemic, and for Marlborough, this will have a focus on youth activities and economic development.

Another key aspect of the conference is two presentations on the new Liberation Museum at Le Quesnoy, France – Le Quesnoy is the sister city of Cambridge in the Waikato. This amazing project exemplifies what links can be built between communities and countries through a good sister city relationship.

If anyone has not received conference information or registration forms, or has any queries about the conference or Marlborough, please contact organiser Cathie Bell at cabell@korimako.nz and Cathie will send you what you need.

Councillor Rosene says the benefits of being able to get together in-person and share experiences makes conferences really valuable.

"I am looking forward to seeing GCNZ delegates in Blenheim in November."

[> Click here for Conference Registration Form and further information](#)

Youth Subcommittee community forum

By Taylor Marston, GCNZ Director

On Saturday 18th November, the GCNZ Youth Subcommittee held a community forum on global partnerships. The forum, held in Wellington, brought together representatives from the Wellington City Council, the Japanese embassy, CLAIR Sydney, and sister city associations in the region, alongside Youth Subcommittee members.

The forum centred around future-proofing global partnerships and the growing need for increased communication and collaboration between sister city practitioners, especially for those at a community level. The forum also represented the youth subcommittees' first attempt at organising an event.

We began with a Youth Subcommittee presentation introducing the Future-proofing series and the development of GCNZ's new website. As the name suggests, the Future-proofing series will be a collection of forums across the country, organised by the Youth Subcommittee, on future-proofing global partnerships covering topics such as resilience and innovation. For the new website, we introduced the interactive search tool being developed that will enable users to find any global partnership in Aotearoa New Zealand with a few clicks. The search tool will lead to individual partnership pages, providing in-depth information on each relationship, including past and upcoming events and exchanges, contact information, how to get involved, plus aims and goals.

The presentations were followed by group discussions on four topics: (1) communication and collaboration, (2) exchanges, events, and projects, (3) innovation, and



Attendees at the community forum hosted by GCNZ.

(4) resilience. While many points were raised, the group feedback session highlighted a shared sentiment that **global partnerships need to engage and involve educational institutions more, be adaptable and open-minded, engage in new and innovative ways of communicating and collaborating both domestically and globally, be intentional, and perhaps most importantly, be fun.**

Guests were also asked to rate the importance of different issues/topics in global partnerships. **Communication and collaboration**, and **community engagement** were tied for first, followed by **being relevant** and **youth engagement**.

The youth subcommittee would like to thank all those who attended. We will be looking to apply for funding to run three more forums next year in different areas around the country.

2024 GCNZ Awards nominations open

By Ray Wallace ONZM, Awards Co-ordinator



I am delighted to announce that the highly anticipated 2024 Global Cities New Zealand Awards nominations are now open. These awards celebrate the significance of people-to-people relationships in shaping our global community.

Participating in the Global Cities New Zealand Awards is an exceptional opportunity for cities and towns to showcase their dedication to fostering strong and inclusive communities. It provides a platform to recognize the initiatives that have strengthened Sister City Relationships through social cohesion, encouraged cultural exchange, and promoted diversity and inclusion.

These awards celebrate the cities and towns that have successfully bridged divides, promote understanding and cultivate a sense of belonging.

Moreover, the Global Cities New Zealand Awards promotes the exchange of ideas and experiences, enabling cities and towns to learn from one another's successes and challenges. By participating, cities and towns can forge partnerships and build networks that

enhance collaboration on a global scale, fostering mutual understanding and cooperation among diverse communities.

Ultimately, the 2024 Global Cities New Zealand Awards emphasise that cities and towns are more than just buildings and infrastructure – they are living entities built on the foundations of human connections. By placing people-to-people relationships at the forefront, we recognise the pivotal role individuals play in shaping the future of their cities and towns and collectively building a more inclusive, empathetic, and prosperous world.

Join us in celebrating the outstanding achievements of people-to-people relationships.

Talk to your group and look at what great projects or milestones you have achieved in 2022 and 2023, and put in a nomination for the GCNZ Awards – you could be our 2024 winner.

> [Click here for the awards information sheet and entry form.](#)

2023 Korean-New Zealand Smart Cooperation Forum

By Michael Healy



Hello, my name is Michael Healy and I am the Manager of the Christchurch City Council's Smart Christchurch Unit. I was originally born in Ireland but moved to Christchurch in 1988 and while I have been fortunate to travel to many parts of the world, it has been my home city for most of the years since.

The Smart Christchurch Unit was founded in 2016 and effectively acts like the city's Research & Development function, trialling technologies and approaches that enhance and stimulate innovation for improved community outcomes. I joined Smart Christchurch four and a half years ago and find the smart cities space an exciting and dynamic one to work in.

In October this year, I was honoured to be invited, by an introduction from Global Cities New Zealand, to partake in the 2023 Korean-New Zealand Smart Cooperation Forum hosted in Wellington. The forum was designed to bring a range of innovators from New Zealand and Korea with a diverse range of government, business, and academic expertise. I learnt about Korea's plan to transform their economy into one powered by green energy, collaboration and innovation. I also learned about the ways that New Zealand and Korea could co-operate on a wide range of

transformative and world leading technologies.

Later in the day, I was part of a panel that included smart cities experts from Busan, Seoul and Wellington talking about key initiatives from our respective regions. As well as being able to share some of the exciting projects we are working on in Christchurch with an influential and diverse international audience, I found it fascinating to hear what was happening in the three other cities on the panel, especially the world first floating city that is being established off the coast of Busan.

I came away from the Korean-New Zealand Smart Cooperation Forum inspired by my experience, and excited about how New Zealand and Korea will work together in the years to come.



Sports the focus for Zhejiang delegation visit

By Melanie Crawford, Senior International Relations Advisor, Wellington City Council

Five Wellington regional cities hosted a business roundtable event in collaboration with the Zhejiang Government and Global Cities New Zealand.

In November, Executive Vice Governor of Zhejiang Province, Mr Xu Wenguang led a 19-member delegation to Wellington. The delegation was made up of representatives from tourism and travel, investment and trade, education and tech.

During the roundtable, participants learned more about the opportunities for collaboration between the two regions, including a presentation by David Dome, Wellington Phoenix General Manager who highlighted the club's new football academy and the opportunities for international collaboration.

In 2012, Wellington along with Porirua, Lower Hutt, Upper Hutt and Kāpiti established a strategic economic partnership with Zhejiang Province. The partnership focuses on increasing opportunities for trade, tourism and education, and cooperation on a number of initiatives has included business forums, gaming and animation opportunities, delivery of tertiary courses, and sports and education exchanges.

While in Wellington, Mr Xu also met with Wellington Mayor Tory Whanau where they discussed opportunities for cooperation in the arts/museum space, as well as education exchanges with Te Herenga Waka-Victoria University of Wellington and Toi Whakaari-New Zealand Drama School.

Zhejiang has been described as the 'back bone of China' as it is seen as a major driving force in the Chinese economy. It is home to some of the largest e-commerce and gaming companies in China. Direct flights between Zhejiang and New Zealand commenced in November 2023.



David Dome (GM, Wellington Phoenix), Ambassador Wang Xiaolong, Mayor Grant Smith, Zhejiang Executive Vice Governor Xu Wenguang, Mayor Wayne Guppy, Mayor Campbell Barry and Avan Lee (CEO, Hurricanes) at Wellington Zhejiang Business Roundtable at the New Zealand Campus of Innovation and Sport



Zhejiang Executive Vice Governor Xu Wenguang meets Mayor Tory Whanau

Photo: Tom Yuan, WCC

Sister Cities reunited

By Alana MacKay, Cambridge Community Board

A delegation from Cambridge's Japanese Sister City, Bihoro, enjoyed an action-packed visit to the Waikato town at the end of November, the first time since 2017 the two have connected in person.

The group of eight, including the Mayor of Bihoro, Koji Hirano and Chairman of the Bihoro Town Council, Yoshinori Tozawa, were all home hosted by Councillors and members of the Bihoro Sister City Committee. The visit was coordinated by the Cambridge Community Board, who have the responsibility of managing our two sister city relationships (the other being Le Quesnoy, France).

Arriving on Tuesday, the delegates were welcomed at Cambridge's Japanese Garden with a performance by the Cambridge Primary School kapa haka group, before a walking tour of the town taking in the historical sites and admiring the entries in the Welcome Sister Cities Shop Window Display Competition. The guests were impressed with the effort and creativity that went into the displays, Mayor Hirano commented that "you make us feel very special and happy". The Green Geranium and Victoria Station were announced as joint winners. The Green Geranium's display had a strong Japanese focus, while Victoria Station paid tribute to both Sister Cities and had handmade replicas of the Japanese Garden, Le Quesnoy sculpture, Cambridge Town Hall and Cenotaph.

Involving the greater community was very important to the Cambridge Community Board, "I aimed to get our people educated about our Sister Cities, excited about the upcoming visits, and involved in the associated activities" says Alana MacKay, Chair of both of Cambridge's Sister City Committees. The shop window display was one

aspect of this, as were a Sister City themed colouring competition, local school involvement, and events open to the public.

The whirlwind tour saw the delegation take in a tour of Councillor Mike Montgomerie's dairy farm, ecological island Sanctuary Mountain Maungatautari, an Alpaca Experience, the Perry Aquatic Centre Puna Kaukauo Te Oko Horoi, Cambridge High School, the Fonterra Hautapu Dairy Factory, Cambridge Stud and Heritage Centre, Camjet, dinner with Waipa District Mayor Susan O'Regan and invited guests, a tour of the Council Chambers, and Monavale Organic Blueberry Farm.

Mayor Susan O'Regan said in her address to guests at the dinner that "Sister city relationships can be complex. They're a bit like a marriage in that they require ongoing nurturing and constant attention... The relationship between Cambridge and Bihoro is a good example of what a sister city relationship should be. Our relationship is not about plaques on the wall, or occasional official visits, where the Mayoral chains are dusted off and gifts exchanged. Our relationship is about people, and it will always be about people. Our strong links are something we have actively cared about for more than a quarter of a century, with no sign of enthusiasm waning."

Hiromi Morris, Emeritus President of Global Cities New Zealand, joined the delegation for the dinner and their last few activities in Cambridge. She commented that she was greatly heartened by the "kiwi hospitality shown to the guests and the personal relationships that were being created and nurtured".

Mayor Koji Hirano has extended an invitation for a group from Cambridge to visit Bihoro next year.



Waipa Mayor receives a gift from Bihoro, left to right: Koji Hirano (Mayor of Bihoro), Susan O'Regan (Mayor of Waipa), Yoshinori Tozawa (Chairman of Bihoro Town Council).



Yoshinori Tozawa, Hiroki Sakuma, Koji Hirano, and Philip Coles enjoy a spin and ecological tour of the Waikato river. Photo: Philip Coles.



Farewell breakfast at Café Irresistible, Monavale Blueberry Farm. Photo: Philip Coles.



Sanctuary Mountain Maungatautari group photo. Photo: Alana MacKay.

Cambridge delegation visits Le Quesnoy

By Jo Davies-Colley, Chairperson, Cambridge Community Board

Cambridge, in the Waipa District, is fortunate to have two sister cities, both with strong connections to our town. Le Quesnoy, France, and Bihoro, Japan, have been our sister cities since 2000 and 1997 respectively.

Le Quesnoy and New Zealand have a strong military connection that dates back to World War 1. The walled town was occupied by the German army and under their control. Several battalions of the 3rd New Zealand Rifle Brigade were given the task of liberating the town and freeing the local inhabitants.

While the walls could have been easily felled by heavy artillery, the New Zealand soldiers decided instead to scale the steep ramparts to avoid injury to the townsfolk. With a bit of kiwi ingenuity, and an impressive measure of stealth, a ladder placed on a small ledge high above a sluice gate provided an entry point and one-by-one the soldiers snuck into the town. After a short battle, the New Zealanders advanced as the Germans surrendered. Not one local civilian life was lost, although sadly, 140 of our soldiers died saving the town.

To this day, the sacrifice and bravery of the New Zealand soldiers has not been forgotten in Le Quesnoy.

In October of this year, I was fortunate to attend the opening of the New Zealand Liberation Museum - Te Arawhata (meaning "the ladder") in Le Quesnoy as part of a mayoral delegation. The museum is a small yet poignant memorial to the battle for Le Quesnoy and a tribute to the bravery and skill of the New Zealand soldiers who liberated it. It is an immersive, storytelling experience that encompasses both cinematic and sensory elements. A large perspex ladder climbs its way through the three different floors of the museum, countless photographs and personal accounts are found throughout, and, possibly the most emotive, a larger-than-life hyper realistic soldier greets the visitor from the outset.



The opening program also included a battlefield tour which was an eye-opening experience for all those in the group. As we looked over the vast flatness of the land, the full extent of what combat would have been like, all those years ago, became apparent.

While the museum opening itself was the most wonderful experience and I learnt a lot about the liberation of Le Quesnoy, the other special part of the trip was the sister city connection.

Just as Cambridge acknowledges our French city sister throughout our town, the small village of Le Quesnoy recognises New Zealand in a number of street names and special touches. Monuments to fallen kiwi soldiers, plaques and memorial gardens greeted us and it truly felt like a home away from home. The townsfolk were incredibly welcoming and hospitable, everyone from shop keepers, to the local police and council officials. The whole trip made me appreciate the close connection that our two towns share and deepened my understanding of the importance of sister cities as a whole. The experience taught me that sister cities are a valuable part of our town's identity, and that these relationships need to be nurtured and prioritised into the future.



Jo Davies-Colley with New Zealand gifts to the town of Le Quesnoy.



Weta Workshop creation of a New Zealand soldier post liberation of the town of Le Quesnoy.



New Zealand Liberation Museum - Te Arawhata

Wellington Mayoral visit to Asia opens doors of opportunity.

By Melanie Crawford, Senior International Relations Advisor, Wellington City Council

A key function for a Mayor of a major city is to promote the city overseas as a great place for people to live, study, visit and do business.

Wellington Mayor Tory Whanau did just that when leading a 26-member delegation to Xiamen, Tianjin, Beijing (China), Sakai (Japan) and Seoul (South Korea) in September 2023.

It was the first official visit by Wellington City Council since borders re-opened after the pandemic. It highlighted how important *kanohi ki te kanohi* (face to face) meetings are in maintaining and deepening Sister City relationships.

Mayor Whanau said the purpose of the visit was to sign a sister city agreement with Seoul and support Wellington business and education sectors with opportunities in Asia.

“It provided an amazing opportunity to promote Wellington’s thriving arts and cultural scene, pristine landscapes and wildlife, and our international reputation as a film, screen and creative hotspot of excellence.

Joining Mayor Whanau were representatives from Massey University, Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington, Samuel Marsden Collegiate, Wellington Phoenix Football Club, Screen Wellington, Floating Rock Studio, film producers, E2E (Education to Employment) Centre, and Te Āti Awa.

Education played a major role in the trip, with visits to schools and universities, and a pitch session to JLL, the leading education agent in China, which was live-streamed to hundreds of agents around the country.

Massey University signed a new letter of intent with Xiamen University, which will make it easier for Chinese film students to complete their studies in Wellington at Massey’s new National Academy of Screen Arts.

Mayor Whanau completed her trip to Asia with the signing of a new Sister City agreement with Seoul – one of Asia’s fastest growing and most innovative cities.

This agreement formally outlines cooperation between the two cities with a focus on areas such as international education, trade, and sharing knowledge on building smart

cities and environmental sustainability.

“Signing the sister cities agreement was a highlight of my 10 days in Asia. Seoul is a bustling city of 10 million people and presents an amazing opportunity for Wellington businesses and people.

“Wellington is doing a lot of good work to ensure we are a sustainable city that is resilient to natural disasters and climate change, and the agreement with Seoul gives us the chance to work together on our shared interests of urban development, resilience, and sustainability.

I expect the Sister City agreement will open doors and boost our economic partnerships and cultural exchanges with Seoul.”



Mayor Whanau and delegates on Wellington Road in Xiamen, China



Associate Professor Oli Wilson from Massey University in Xiamen, China



New sister city! Mayor of Wellington Tory Whanau and Mayor of Seoul Oh Se-hoon signing the new sister city agreement between the two cities



Mayor Whanau and delegates with students from Daisen Elementary School in Sakai, Japan



Gisborne student recognised for environmental action

By Jan Calder, Gisborne District Sister Cities committee

Mayor Rehette Stoltz and the Gisborne District Sister Cities committee (GDSC) are proud to introduce 10-year-old student Harry Newman from Motu School.

Where is Motu? Turn off SH2 at Matawai for the historic Motu Village and Motu School (est. 1896) with students from Years 1 - 8, situated within the Raukūmara Conservation Park.

The village is the gateway to some very well utilised outdoor adventures, and has rural and progressive back-country agriculture.

Harry, his family and school friends can boast of having many options and experiences on their doorstep, including the Motu Old Coach Road to Opotiki, the Motu Cycle Trail, the Whinray Scenic Reserve's (never milled) native bush walk and Motu Falls. The Motu river is home to the famous strain of wild brown trout, the eel of which Motu school do a yearly study and count, the area home of the Hochstetter frog, the Weka, and the Whinray Ecological (Kiwi) Reserve.

An enterprising youth of many talents and with an abundance of enthusiasm for life, Harry has this November been made a Junior Ambassador in the annual Fred Hollows NZ Humanity Award. Harry has been recognised for his passion and environmental action in restoring a bush reserve near his school.

His challenge and achievement, the 'Motu Scenic Reserve' is a 20 hectare kahikatea wetland forest situated near the school – it is unique as it contains an oxbow wetland and an

original kahikatea swamp forest, one of only 2% left in NZ.

Harry rallied the troops, canvassed retail outlets, utilised tools and equipment from nearby farmers, and within the capabilities of a mature 10-year-old country lad set about clearing the overgrowth to bring back and make new pathways, all the while backing himself with a plan to nurture the preservation of the reserve.

All Harry's endeavors, inspired by Conservation Week, did not go unnoticed and Motu school principal Hannah Moorhouse nominated Harry for the Fred Hollows Humanity Awards. The award recognises 'young New Zealanders who strive to make the world around them better for others and embody the values of compassion, integrity, and kindness.' Harry has, through the Charity partner Specsavers, donated his \$5,000 prize to a Pacific program run by the Foundation – the foundation Mobile Eye Clinic.

Gisborne District Sister Cities, in partnership with their Sister City, Gamagori (Japan) has for 20 odd years run a yearly photographic competition – Harry along with his family and Motu School, are staunch supporters of this competition and in 2019 Harry placed Highly Commended and in 2021 won First Place. Over the years, he and families connected with the Motu school, have submitted some great photos depicting country life.

We are immensely proud to acknowledge Harry and wish him the very best and much success in all his future endeavors.

Gisborne District Sister Cities update



Valverde del Majano Mayor & D. Mayor receive Taiaha gift from James Barnes on behalf of Australiasan Jose Manuel Familia Hikoi - August 2023



GDSC Committee: Jan, Raewynne, Ann, Chairperson Jim, V.P Judy



Futures Discussion meeting at GDC Chambers - Mark, Chair Jim, Secretary Jan, Committee Member Ann, V.P Judy, Deputy Mayor Josh Wharehinga

Dunedin signs agreements with Shanghai

By James Hall, Enterprise Dunedin

Mayor of Dunedin Jules Radich has welcomed the signing of several agreements between Dunedin and Shanghai institutions during a civic delegation to the Chinese sister city.

In November Mr Radich led the delegation with representatives from The University of Otago, Te Pūkenga, Business South and two Council staff members.

Mr Radich attended the Shanghai International Friendship Cities Cooperation Forum where he made a formal presentation on Smart Cities to a prestigious audience of leaders from Shanghai's other global sister cities.

Part of the visit to Shanghai comprised the signing of agreements between Dunedin and Shanghai institutions in the areas of film, research, and business.

Mr Radich witnessed the signing of a new agreement between Enterprise Dunedin and the Shanghai Art Film Federation (SAFF) which was expected to further boost burgeoning film links between the two cities.

“Our creative sector is a key part of our city, and this new agreement will boost international exchanges and film screenings, and hopefully lead to more co-productions involving both cities. It’s a great outcome,” he said.

Business South Chief Executive Mike Collins also signed an MoU with the Shanghai Council for the Promotion of International Trade.

We are building a strong partnership with a significant international market and business community in Shanghai, Mr Collins said.

“This partnership is about shared growth, innovation, and a future where our businesses thrive together, by expanding markets, sharing expertise and working on collaborative ventures.”

Research was also a significant part of this visit to China, shown by the support and attendance of representatives from the University of Otago. An MoU was signed between the University of Otago School of Dentistry and Jiaotong

University Dental School. As a part of the Shanghai Dunedin science and technology agreement the cities’ institutions will be collaborating on several major pieces of research including on Alzheimer’s Disease, Parkinson’s Disease, brain research and kidney research.

The civic delegation also visited the offices of local high-value knowledge-based export companies, including ADInstruments and Silver Fern Farms.

During the visit the leaders of both cities discussed preparations to celebrate the upcoming 30th anniversary of the Dunedin-Shanghai Sister City relationship next year.



Dunedin Mayor Jules Radich and Mr Jin Hui, Director General of Shanghai Art Film Federation.



Sister Cities Australia Annual Conference 2023

By Taylor Marston, GCNZ Director

On 12th October, I had the pleasure of attending Sister Cities Australia's 2023 Conference hosted by Wyndham City to speak on youth engagement in sister city relationships.

The conference was attended by various community members, council representatives, delegates, academics, and politicians, past and present. While being the first conference held by Sister Cities Australia since COVID-19, the passion and commitment around the room was nonetheless tenacious. It was clear the difficulties of COVID-19 has only stood to galvanise the efforts of our close neighbours across the ditch. This was also very much reflected in the conference theme, 'Linking the World Together', the significance of which reverberates here in Aotearoa New Zealand.

In a timely speech, the Hon. John Brumby AO, Chancellor of La Trobe University and Former Premier of Victoria, addressed the growing talk of "deglobalisation", "onshoring", and "de-coupling" around the world and echoed the International Monetary Fund's concern that "after several decades of increasing global economic integration, the world is facing the risk of policy-driven geo-economic fragmentation". While global conflict may not be as severe as it was during the introduction of the sister cities movement in the 1950s, several speakers shared the sentiment that risks to global peace, including climate change and resource scarcity, are ever present. Upon this discouraging backdrop, another speaker, Hannaa Pappalardo, Consul General of Italy, spoke to the importance of cities in international relations:

Cities have evolved into fully fledged actors of international relations. Cities are the level of governance closest to the people. They play a crucial role in shaping national agendas and in addressing global challenges. They engage and represent their interests on the international stage. At times where a different action is required to address the many challenges posed by the new multipolar 'world disorder', Cities are indispensable platforms for leadership development, beneficial to the whole world.

Australian cities, and arguably also towns and districts, appear to share the same predicaments faced here in



Taylor Marston speaks at the 2023 SCA Conference.

Aotearoa New Zealand - how do we leave our mark on global affairs while nestled in the corner of the world, and what should this mark be? One thing, however, remains certain, as the Hon. John Brumby AO expressed, "This is a very positive phenomenon in a world in which people still need to 'learn a little bit more of each other'". I hope that Australian and New Zealand cities, towns, and districts can continue to work together, perhaps more than they currently do, to tackle these questions.

I want to thank Sister Cities Australia for inviting me to what was a fantastic conference and for their hospitality during my stay. We look forward to welcoming them to our conference next year in Marlborough.

2023 – 2024 GCNZ Board and Advisors

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