

From the Board

Message from President Mayor Grant Smith

Kia ora and welcome.

It feels like the sector is finally coming back and great to see international activity happening at all levels. Around the country we are welcoming and farewelling school students and trips, international students to tertiary institutions, researchers and academics back into universities and CRI's, as well as a notable increase in business delegations and activity.

In this newsletter, there's a range of interesting stories and reports from around the country, including updates from; Nelson, Whanganui, Hutt City, Palmerston North and Cambridge. We learn the history of the Cretans Association of NZ, Gisborne thank New Zealand and their Sister Cities partners in time of need, and we acknowledge Emeritus President Hiromi Morris and her citation from the Japanese Foreign Ministry.

Planning is underway from the GCNZ Board to organise and host three regional one-day Forums, one in the South Island, another in Wellington and another in northern New Zealand. These, along with the national Conference and Awards Dinner, being hosted by Marlborough District Council on November 7th & 8th, will make for a busy calendar.

Finally, we look forward to seeing as many members, Councils or organisations present at our AGM on Tuesday 2nd May at 12.30pm at Wellington City Council, either in person or online. The meeting papers and agenda will be sent to all in the near future.

Ngā mihi nui,

Mayor Grant Smith, JP, GCNZ President



Appreciation to CLAIR, Council of Local Authorities for International Relations, Japan Local Government Centre

by Hiromi Morris, GCNZ Emeritus President

I recently returned to Japan for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic closed the borders for the last three years.

In taking this opportunity I made a courtesy call to Mr Tamotsu Okamoto, Executive Director of CLAIR Headquarters, and Mr Katsunori Kamibo and Mr Hiromoto Akaiwa, former Executive Directors of CLAIR Syeney, in Tokyo.

I expressed our sincere appreciation for our long established relationship and asked for their continued support to our new President Grant Smith and GCNZ. To at last meet them in person was beneficial.

I also passed Grant's letter to Mr Okamoto.



Back: Mr Akaiwa, Mr Kamibo. Front: Hiromi, Mr Okamoto

Save the Date
AGM 2023



12.30 - 1.30pm, Tuesday 2 May
Wellington City Council
The Terrace 16.02, Matairangi Room
Lunch provided



New Zealand, Australian and British dignitaries along with members of the Greek and Cretan communities of New Zealand at the Greek-New Zealand Memorial in Wellington in 2022 to commemorate the Battle of Crete.

A brief history of the Cretans Association of NZ

By Vasilis (Bill) Giannakakis, President, Cretans Association of New Zealand Incorporated

The Cretans Association of New Zealand was formed to support the cultural and social needs of migrants from the Greek Island of Crete to New Zealand.

These migrants had an active social life aimed at maintaining and strengthening their ties with their motherland. The Association was formalised in 1960. Prior to this there was several other Greek Associations that the immigrants of Crete were members of. The earliest being the Pan-Hellenic Association of New Zealand that was formed in 1929 by the earliest Greek residents of Wellington, New Zealand.

A large influx of Cretans to New Zealand took place in the fifteen-year period of 1955-1970 so that by the late 1970's more than a thousand Cretans were living in New Zealand. More than three quarters of them moved to Wellington where many Greeks had settled. There are now well over 10,000 people of Greek descent in New Zealand. The Association focuses on maintaining the Spiritual and Cultural Links of the Cretans who had migrated here acting as an incubator of Cretan Music, Dance, Language, Food and Faith.

In 1984 a formal Sister City relationship was established between Hania in Crete and Wellington. This was to celebrate the contribution of the Greek and Cretan communities in Wellington as well as honour the enormous personal sacrifices that the Cretan Civilian population made during WWII in supporting New Zealand Defence Force personnel. During the period of the Battle of Crete and the ensuing occupation the Cretan Civilians, at great personal risk, fed, housed, clothed and sheltered NZDF including many members of the famed 28th Maori Battalion who were evading the Nazi Forces on the island for over three years.

In 1994 the Cretans Association of New Zealand came under the auspices of the Cretan Federation of Australia and New Zealand along with all the Cretan Associations of Australia.

Every January the Cretan Federation runs a three-day national conference with participation of members of the Cretan Associations from throughout Australia and New Zealand that focuses on promoting the very unique Cretan Culture through music, dance, sports and other social events and ensuring that the community's ties with Greece, New Zealand, Australia and Crete are maintained.

In May there is also the Annual commemoration of the Battle of Crete with representation from New Zealand,

Australian and British Government officials as well as NZDF Personnel.

In 2022 at the Battle of Crete commemorations in Wellington then Mayor of Wellington, Andy Foster signed an agreement confirming the Mayor of Wellington as a perpetual Patron of the Cretans Association of New Zealand in honour of the sacrifices that Cretan civilians made during WWII.

The Cretans Association of New Zealand continues to grow with the Association now being led by the children and grandchildren of those who had migrated to New Zealand after WWII, maintaining the Cretan traditions here in New Zealand and adding to the inclusive and rich diverse cultural identity of Wellington.

In September 2023 a delegation of approximately 35 Cretan & Greek New Zealand Youth are travelling to Hania to honour the Sister City relationship and to ensure that the relationship forged through the mutual sacrifices between the two cities remains strong well into the future.

In January 2024 the Cretan Federation of Australia and New Zealand's annual conference is scheduled to be held in Wellington with hundreds of delegates from all over Australia and New Zealand expected to descend upon Wellington and showcase Cretan Culture.



[Former] Mayor of Wellington His Worship Andy Foster, Archdiocesan Vicar, Greek Orthodox Church of New Zealand, Reverend Father George Kanellis and President of the Cretans Association of New Zealand, Vasilis (Bill) Giannakakis along with members of the Greek Orthodox Youth during the signing of the Patronage agreement in 2022.

Nelson Branch of NZ China Friendship Society Reaches Out

By Barbara Markland and Ian Lister, Nelson Branch NZ China Friendship Society

With the interruptions to travel caused by COVID making travel to China virtually impossible, the Nelson Branch of the NZ China Friendship Society has been reaching out more to the local Chinese community. This has been welcomed by everyone involved, created new friendships and deeper relationships within our region and will be an ongoing part of our contribution to “welcoming communities”.

The first Santa Parade in Nelson for two years was a multi-cultural event with several local cultural groups participating along with other more traditional Christmas floats. The parade was held on Sunday 4 December. Some members of the Nelson Branch of CFS joined the float organised by the Nelson



Branch of the Chinese Association. The float was a colourful affair comprised of a team of dragon dancers followed by women, men and children dressed in traditional costumes. The dragon was a hit with the large crowd lining Trafalgar Street, especially when they stopped and performed their energetic dance routine.

It was a great way for Nelson CFS to continue reaching out, supporting and developing closer relationships with the local Chinese community. Our CFS people who participated, enjoyed a riverside picnic with the team of local Chinese at the conclusion of the parade.



Palmerston North's Festival of Cultures

By Gabrielle Loga, International Relations Manager, Palmerston North City Council

Palmerston North's award-winning and iconic event, the Festival of Cultures, returned to Te Marae o Hine on 24 - 25 February with a Lantern Parade on Friday, followed by a World Food, Craft and Music Fair on Saturday.

Part of Saturday's event saw the Manawatū Multicultural Council celebrate their 30 years in supporting and connecting our diverse communities in the region.

The two-day festival attracted 22 diplomats from 11 embassies and high commissions in addition to more than 10,000 people to Te Marae o Hine, visiting 42 stalls of crafts or exquisite cuisines from different cultures. The attendees also got to enjoy live music and performances including:

- Hot Potato Band (Australia)
- Kaleidoscope (Palmerston North)
- Aziza Belly Dancers
- Wellington Chinese Sports and Cultural Centre Dragon Troupe
- IPU Kodama Drum Team (Palmerston North)
- DJ Ryan Walsh (Palmerston North)

Head of Events, Luke McIndoe, says “Palmerston North is home to more than 150 ethnic groups and about 130 languages are spoken here, so it's great to be able to show off our diverse cultural identity and have some fun.”

Minoh Hutt Friendship Club in Osaka, Japan translates history of Lower Hutt

By Miyoko Rokkaku, Vice President Minoh Hutt Friendship Club



The Minoh Hutt Friendship Club in Osaka, Japan has translated *Lower Hutt: The First Garden City*, written by David McGill into Japanese and published the Japanese version in 2020. The book is the official history of Lower Hutt. It covers from early 1800s to around 1990.

After active exchanges between Lower Hutt and Minoh over many years, we were convinced that in order to communicate deeply with people of different culture, we should know the history of their city and country.

It took three and half years for the volunteers to complete its translation, since wide local knowledge of places and names was required on top of Māori words. Its publication was made possible mostly by donations from club members.

Recently the project was awarded a Mayoral Prize for achievement in Minoh City.

Please enjoy our member's interpretation of the book.

A reader's impression by Takasuke Matsuo, a member of the Minoh Hutt Club, Osaka, Japan.

We see in the world history that, since the time of Christopher Columbus, European people began to arrive in North and South America, Asia and Africa, and conquered the existing civilizations. Indigenous people suffered from the overwhelming cultural power of Europeans.

Since that time, social disparities characterize the countries in these parts of the world. By cultural power, I mean the entirety of human activities: language, law, art, science, philosophy, education, technology, medicine, industry, agriculture, socioeconomic systems, political institutions, military systems, world views, views on the history and so on. These characterize a society for a certain period of time. When two societies meet, the difference in their cultural power determines the future course of the society.

Lower Hutt tells that the first encounter between Maori people and Europeans (mostly British) occurred in the early 1800's. By that time, musket guns had been sold to Maori people. As a result of this fighting between various Maori groups frequented. Also conflicts between Maori and British peoples were unavoidable. However, the British saw the land from a different point of view than Maori people. They thought that, given the expanse of land and the climate, they would be able to produce many tons of wheat each year and raise many hundreds of cows and sheep, enabling many families to live from these resources and making the land worth of many pounds of money. The cultural power is an essential factor that makes these calculations materialize. Disputes and conflicts over possession of the land occurred between Maori and British peoples, and among the British. A society that keeps its unity in the presence

of disagreements is a culturally powerful society.

In Europe the principle of universal human rights had been generally accepted as a result of the French Revolution and other modern ways of thinking. It appears that ways to establish countries legally with an immigrating population were searched for.

New Zealand has been established as a modern country formed by the cultural power of the United Kingdom. Disparities arising from the two cultural powers are obvious, the history of British and Maori relations in New Zealand is much less violent than in other countries.

I have read the book to the end, reflecting in a general way on interactions between different societies. Near the end, I found a picture of our Emperor's father Akihito from his visit to New Zealand as a Prince. It was taken at a DSIR institute in the city. Another picture shows a Van de Graaf accelerator being set up in the institute, representing the part of New Zealand culture familiar to me (a physical chemist).

The book contains many more interesting aspects of New Zealand and Lower Hutt: exotic plants, history of Maori culture, beautiful gardens of the cities, frequent flooding of the Hutt River, strong earthquakes.

I recommend it to you.



Takasuke Matsuo

Toowoomba mayor Paul Antonio visits sister city of Whanganui

By Mike Tweed, NZME (originally published in the NZ Herald, 4/3/23)

Long-serving Toowoomba mayor Paul Antonio is visiting Whanganui with a message for its councillors - fight for what's best for the people.

The two provincial centres have been sister cities since 1983. Amalgamation and centralisation of local government entities had been issues discussed with Whanganui mayor Andrew Tripe, and councils needed to be wary of them, Antonio said.

“Fight like Kilkenny cats and make sure you get what you want to get. If you have a big organisation you begin to centralise for efficiency. My hometown (council) used to have four graders, a heap of trucks and employed 70 people.

“Now, some people travel out from Toowoomba to work. That's not what local government should give to a community.”

Previously, Antonio was the mayor of his hometown of Millmerran, one of eight shires that joined together to form the Toowoomba Regional Council in 2008 after a Local Government Reform Commission report and recommendation. He was deputy mayor when it was formed and won the top job in 2012.

A major issue currently facing local councils in New Zealand is the government's 3 Waters reform, which aims to amalgamate the water services of 67 councils into four regional water entities. He did not agree with centralised schemes.

“My advice is to resist it. Work with a group of councils that have a common interest. Local government is about making sure it gets the best for its people, and essentially it (centralisation) is about a lack of respect.”

Antonio said the relationship between Toowoomba and Whanganui had been “excellent” over the past 40 years.



Mayor Paul Antonio.
Photo: Bevan Conley
(courtesy NZ Herald)

“We've always received a very special welcome here in Whanganui, whether it's with a council delegation or privately,” he said. “There is an all-level partnership between Australia and New Zealand. We might argue about rugby and cricket but there is a strong cultural bond between us.

“I'm here to make absolutely sure that we can identify spaces to work together in. We have some pretty exciting things happening, especially with the likes of the Olympic Games (Brisbane 2032), and I think there is potential for some of the teams who are coming for that to have a bit of a look at our sister city as well.”

Toowoomba was hit by severe flooding in January 2011 and then- Whanganui District Councillor, the late Ray Stevens, lead a fundraising campaign to help the stricken city.

“What we (Toowoomba) have done is build detention basins, which hold the water up and discharge it at a rate that will just fill the creek. We won a number of state and national awards as a result of the effort we put in and the study that we did.”

Antonio said there had been talks about Toowoomba donating to the Whanganui Mayoral Relief Fund for those affected by Cyclone Gabrielle. He will not be seeking re-election next time around as his “state of maturity” had caught up with him. His family has a long-running farming operation in the region.

“My son has offered me a job as a first-year jackaroo with no recognition of prior learning. That's down the bottom of the ladder in farming,” Antonio said. “I just advised him to have look at the share(holder) register, it might help him a bit when making those kinds of decisions.”

Whanganui's other sister cities are Nagaizumi-cho in Japan and Lijiang in China.

Thank you - on behalf of Gisborne District Sister City Committee

By Jan Calder, Gisborne District Sister City Committee

On behalf of the Gisborne District Sister City Committee and every citizen in the region of Tairāwhiti Gisborne - “A big heartfelt thank you for all your generosity and emotional support.”

Our Mayor and GDSC committee have had emails of concern from our Sister City relationships internationally in which they have expressed their sincere concern for us and in fact all folk in New Zealand.

Also, we express our appreciation to Local Government New Zealand who last week launched the campaign

“Adopt-a-Community”.

Mayor Rehette Stoltz informed us that we are matched with Mayor Jules Radich - Dunedin City Council, Mayor Nobby Clark - Invercargill City Council, Mayor Nadine Taylor - Marlborough District Council and Mayor Sam Broughton - Selwyn District Council.

Mayor Rehette Stoltz and GDSC Chair Jim Osler, and committee members look forward to expressing our thanks to you all at the 2023 GCNZ conference in Blenheim this November.

Cambridge Sister City Updates

By Alana MacKay, Cambridge Community Board

In October Cambridge marked the 25th Anniversary of our Sister City Relationship with Bihoro, Japan.

The relationship was initiated by Professor Masaharu Yamaki, who first addressed the Cambridge Community Board with his idea in 1993. Discussions continued for several years, with Yamaki making a very generous donation of \$1million Japanese yen (NZ\$13,500) to help develop and foster the relationship, and in 1997 a Sister Cities agreement was signed to formalise the connection.

Although our Japanese friends were unable to join us,

two events were held in Cambridge to celebrate the anniversary, a reunion dinner on 12th October for those who have been involved in exchanges, hosting, and the development of the Bihoro relationship over the years, and a public “Japanese Day” in the Japanese garden next to the Cambridge Library on 15th October with a performance by the Wai Taiko Drummers, Japanese themed crafts, and karate demonstrations.

Plans are currently under way for a delegation from Bihoro to visit Cambridge in November.



The Cambridge Le Quesnoy Friendship Association had a busy month in November. The Sister City relationship with the French town has its roots in the liberation of Le Quesnoy by New Zealand troops during WW1.

On 4th November every year Cambridge celebrates Liberation Day to remember Le Quesnoy’s dramatic liberation by the New Zealand Division, the last major action by New Zealanders in the Great War. The day’s action cost the lives of about 140 New Zealand soldiers, about 80 were men of the 3rd New Zealand (Rifle) Brigade who led the assault on Le Quesnoy.

Le Quesnoy was an old fortress town occupying a strategic position in north-eastern France. It had been in German hands since 1914, and there were several thousand German troops still in the town when it was captured by the New Zealanders. The walls of Le Quesnoy could have been quickly reduced by heavy artillery, but there was no plan to mount such an assault on the town. Instead, several battalions of the 3rd New Zealand (Rifle) Brigade were given the task of masking the enemy forces present.

When a section of the 4th Battalion reached the inner walls about midday on 4 November 1918, they had already scaled the complex network of outer ramparts with ladders, supplied by the sappers (engineers). But due to the height of the inner wall, the riflemen could only position a ladder on a narrow ledge atop a sluice gate. Led by Lieutenant Leslie Averill, the battalion’s intelligence officer, a small group of men quickly climbed up the wall.

After exchanging shots with fleeing Germans, the New Zealanders entered the town. The garrison quickly surrendered.

The delight of the people of Le Quesnoy on being free again

knew no bounds. That their liberators had come from the other side of the world to help them in their hour of need impressed them very greatly, this battle and their sacrifice will never be forgotten.

The sculpture pictured tells the story of the liberation and connection. The brick work that edges the concrete is in the shape of the fortifications at Le Quesnoy, the shape of the sculpture is a compass needle pointing to France, and the fern represents both NZ and the ladder that was used to climb the wall.

Remembrance Sunday – 13th November

Cambridge also commemorates Armistice Day (which came shortly after the liberation) on 11th November, celebrating the end of the war, as well as Remembrance Sunday on 13th November, to commemorate the contribution of our forces in the two World Wars and later conflicts.

The Cambridge Le Quesnoy Friendship Association is excited that the NZ War Memorial Museum Le Quesnoy is due to open in October this year, and many members are hoping to attend. We are also awaiting further details of a Le Quesnoy delegation to visit Cambridge in November.





Hiromi Morris receives commendation from Japanese Foreign Minister

By Elisha Hsiao, Youth Advisor, GCNZ

On 16 February 2023, I had the privilege of attending a special moment in sister cities' history where Hiromi Morris, Emeritus President of Global Cities New Zealand received an award at the Japanese Foreign Minister's Commendation Ceremony.

Hiromi is a great example of a citizen diplomat who has spent decades building people to people relationships from the grass root. She has spent many years mentoring and establishing the Youth Subcommittee of Global Cities New Zealand. I attended the ceremony alongside my Youth Subcommittee peers, Sarah Ma, Subby Singh, Miko Morris (Hiromi's daughter), Jun Yang, Aaron Liew, Marcus Boshier, and Karyn Lo. We have all benefited from Hiromi's mentorship.

The ceremony was held at the Japanese Ambassador's residence. As I entered the residence, the Japanese style decor reminded me of my previous trips to Japan. The evening was unique because Hiromi had invited all her friends who had played a part in her sister cities journey from all walks of life and in all age groups. It was the night where we celebrated Hiromi's success together.

Hiromi is one of the most genuine people I've ever met. In her acceptance speech, she complimented each and every one of the guests by sharing a piece of memory of how we contributed to her success. In exchange, the guests took the opportunity during dinner time to share the difference that Hiromi had made in our lives.

The award that Hiromi received is one of the most significant recognitions from the Japanese Foreign Minister.

Congratulations, Hiromi! I'm so proud of your success to date. I can't wait to see and be part of all the other great things you'll do over the next few decades.



Left to right: Jun Yang, Ambassador Ito, Elisha Hsiao, Hiromi, Miko Morris, Sarah Ma, Subby Singh, Karyn Lo, Mrs Ito.