



Prosperity through Partnership: 2019 SCNZ conference

By Toni Grace, Palmerston North City Council

SCNZ Conference 2019 was a roaring success, with over 150 participants, top-notch presenters, the launch of a new report, and a host of new sponsors delivering the event.

SCNZ 2019 was proudly supported by main conference partner, Toyota New Zealand, as well as supporting sponsors Air New Zealand, MFAT, LGNZ, Orbit World Travel, CLAIR, the Japanese Embassy, the 2019 China NZ Year of Tourism, Palmerston North City Council (PNCC), Central Economic Development Agency (CEDA) and the Universal College of Learning (UCOL).

The theme for the 2019 conference was “Prosperity through Partnership”, exploring the many ways that cities and regional centres have a role in supporting international connectivity, innovation and sustainable business. A new report by the NZ Institute for Economic Research (NZIER) helped to frame the conversation, exploring the economic role of Sister Cities and some best practice guidelines for both Councils, community groups and business.

The conference also explored themed panel sessions, including how Maori and Indigenous exchange and environmental cooperation can be incorporated into city-to-city partnerships. Special presentation topics also highlighted the opportunity to leverage major events and initiatives, such as the 2019 China NZ Year of Tourism and 2019 Rugby World Cup in Japan, as well as upcoming events such as the 2020 NZ China Mayoral Forum and 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

The conference provided several break-out workshop sessions allowing delegates to deep-dive into issues such

as regional cooperation, trade and business, international education, emergency management and youth development.

The conference opened with a sombre tone following the recent Christchurch terror attacks. Though the ultimate message was one of hope for greater intercultural connection, and a strengthened sense of purpose and resolve for the New Zealand Sister City mission.

In his opening speech, Palmerston North Mayor Grant Smith quoted President Dwight D Eisenhower, who started the international Sister City movement in 1956:

“I have long believed, as have many before me, that peaceful relations between nations requires understanding and mutual respect between individuals. If only people will get together, then so eventually will nations.”

Mayor Smith continued, noting the applicability to modern day Sister City efforts, “I believe President Eisenhower’s call for citizen diplomacy is just as applicable today in a world deeply divided on many global issues. Local government and community groups can support this by being globally-oriented and welcoming communities.”

The 2019 SCNZ conference fittingly concluded with the Palmerston North Festival of Cultures in the city square – a major annual event which celebrates the cultural diversity of Palmerston North and New Zealand. This year’s opening ceremony included performances from both of Palmerston North’s visiting Sister Cities, Missoula (USA) and Mihara (Japan).

> Conference materials are available now from the SCNZ website at www.scnz.org.nz



Conference attendees at the 2019 SCNZ welcome reception, NZ Rugby Museum



NZIER CEO Laurence Kubiak presents the economic benefit report to delegates



Native American dance at the Festival of Cultures, performed by the Missoula delegation members

From the SCNZ board:

Save the date:

Annual Conference in Ashburton 30 April - 2 May 2020

Theme: Growing Cultural Diversity in a Primary Producing Region

Commendation by Ambassador Kobayashi



Hiromi received Certificate of Commendation from Japanese Ambassador Hiroyasu Kobayashi in March for her significant contribution to deepening of mutual understanding and friendship between Japan and New Zealand.

Social Media

By Raewyn MacGregor, Youth Subcommittee

Social media is one way for us to communicate more widely beyond our members and to hopefully reach a wide audience including the youth demographic who are not necessarily still on Facebook but more likely to be found on Instagram.

At Sister Cities NZ Conference in Palmerston North this year the youth sub-committee decided to do some social media direct from the event. During the event you may have noticed Raewyn MacGregor (especially during the dinner) running around taking photos and posting straight to Instagram (@sistercitiesnz) and also Sister Cities New Zealand on Facebook.

Since the event our followership on Instagram has more than quadrupled. Don't get too excited that's from six to 31 as of April 4.

We're hoping that our members and associated groups will follow us and email us photographic content (with permission to be used) for us to post to our Instagram. Of course we will photo credit.

Please send Instagram and Facebook content with descriptions and photo credit information to Jean (admin@sistercities.org.nz) and she will forward to



Raewyn for posting. Alternatively, you could send links for sharing through FB to us by messaging the Facebook page.

We're also following a number of our member organisations but not all so send us a message if you'd like us to follow you. That way if we see things we can ask you if it's okay to repost if it's on Instagram, or just straight up share the content if it's on Facebook.

NZIER report launch – From Sister to Global Cities: The Economics of New Zealand’s Sister Cities

By Toni Grace, SCNZ Director



The 2019 SCNZ conference discussion was framed by the launch of a revised report in to the economics of New Zealand’s Sister Cities, presented by the Chief Executive of the New Zealand Institute of Economic Research (NZIER).

NZIER is a specialist consulting firm that uses applied economic research and analysis to provide a wide range of strategic advice to clients in the public and private sectors throughout New Zealand and Australia and further afield.

The report “From Sister to Global Cities: The economics of New Zealand Sister Cities” built on an earlier 2003 analysis produced by NZIER on the economic benefits of Sister Cities. Sixteen years on, the revised report was recommissioned to follow-up on how things have changed, and explore what have been the learnings from successful attempts by some Sister Cities to commercialise their relationships.

The new NZIER report also wrapped an economic framework around Sister City relationships, explaining their function and drivers of success. It also explored what areas or bottlenecks need to be addressed for Sister City relationships to become platforms for economic growth.

The revised report found that Sister City relationships

produce two types of trust-generating economic outputs:

- Bilateral cultural-enhancing activity between city communities that creates and enhances community trust.
- Trust and assurance between cities that reduce transaction cost at the international level.

Sister Cities create a high-trust environment between local governments across border that can open economic opportunities for business and lowers risk, cost and uncertainty for business seeking to engage in bilateral trade.

Report author, James Hogan, was very happy with how the report turned out. “I’m hoping now that there’s an economic theory behind how Sister Cities grow, it can shape their strategic evolution.”

The revised report was made possible by the generous support of Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) in conjunction with the SCNZ Board. Thanks to all those involved in the report funding, research and production.

The full NZIER report and executive summary can be found on the SCNZ & NZIER websites.



Palmerston North formalises City Partnership with Mihara, Japan

By Toni Grace, Palmerston North City Council

A special moment at the 2019 SCNZ conference saw the formalisation of the city partnership between Palmerston North and Mihara City, located Hiroshima Prefecture, Japan.

The relationship between Palmerston North and Mihara has a grassroots origin, and has included community triathlon participation, cultural exchange and school visits over many years.

Since 2014, SCNZ has been a facilitator to assist in formalising this new relationship.

The first official Mayoral visit from Mihara to Palmerston North took place in 2016, and since then the two cities have worked together formally to establish practical cooperation with community benefits. This has included the exchange of emergency management experts between the cities, and the establishment of education partnerships with Palmerston North’s IPU campus.

To mark the occasion, the Mihara delegation gifted Palmerston North’s Te Manawa Museum with a framed landscape drawing and a replica Samurai armour to be on permanent loan to the museum.

The Mihara delegation spent a week in Palmerston

North including attendance at the SCNZ conference, as well as civil defence meetings, tertiary education visits and a Skype between a Palmerston North Intermediate School and Sagiura Elementary School in Mihara.

A delegation from Palmerston North’s American Sister City, Missoula, Montana, was also in Palmerston North for the week. Both delegations were welcomed onto Te Rangimarie Marae by Rangitāne Iwi, including a hangi meal, cultural performances and an overnight stay.



Left: Palmerston North Mayor Grant Smith and Mihara Mayor Yoshinori Tenma hold up the signed agreement

Right: Japanese Ambassador H.E. Hiroyasu Kobayashi stands with the Mayors beside the replica Samurai armour, which is now on permanent loan to Te Manawa Museum

2019 Sister Cities New Zealand Awards

Sponsored by Air New Zealand

Best Project (Youth or School)

Winner: Institute of Global Engagement
New Zealand

Name of Project: 2018 China New Zealand
Youth Leadership Summit

The key objectives of the summit are to prepare the next generation of leaders from China and New Zealand to work together within a cross-cultural environment and provide opportunities for delegates to learn about each other's differences and similarities and customs and culture while experiencing living and learning in their respective countries. The future relationship of China and New Zealand will be determined by these young future leaders.



Runner Up: Wainuiomata High School

Name of Project: Te Tira Whakaau Kapa Haka
Tour Japan

Te Tira Whakaau Kapa Haka group traveled to Japan September to October 2018, for 14 days. While in Japan the group traveled from Tokyo to Osaka and lastly to Fukuoka. This trip strengthened our international relationships with our sister city and sister schools. It also increased the global awareness of Maori Performing Arts (Te Reo Maori and culture) and offer an opportunity for students from a low decile school the experience of other cultures and travelling abroad. The highlight of the trip was the performance at Maple Hall to dignitaries, to celebrate and acknowledge the poutokomanawa that was gifted many years ago when the relationship was still in its infancy. The opportunity to also facilitate and participate in the New Zealand Fair was also a significant event where we were able to connect with the community, young and old.



Best Project (Local Government Members)

Winner: Whanganui District Council

Name of Project: Nagaizumi-Cho and
Whanganui: Celebrating 30 years of Friendship

Whanganui District Council was formally recognised for its 30-year anniversary celebrations with Japanese sister city Nagaizumi-cho. The Council took home the Best Local Government Project award at the Sister Cities New Zealand annual conference.

Mayor Hamish McDouall said it was an appropriate way to honour the bond between the two cities.

The Mayors of Whanganui and



Nagaizumi signed a sister cities agreement in 1988. In August 2018 a group of 18 travelled to Nagaizumi to attend the official celebrations of the 30 year anniversary of the Sister City relationship.

In January 2019 there was a reciprocal visit with an official mayoral delegation from Nagaizumi travelling to Whanganui.

During these visits friendships were strengthened and new opportunities for social, cultural and educational links between the two cities were discussed. Later this year students from Whanganui will travel to Nagaizumi, and students from Nagaizumi will be hosted amongst schools and families in Whanganui.

Best Project (Local Government Members)

Runner Up: Taupō District Council

Name of Project: 10th Anniversary Celebrations, Suzhou & Taupō: A Celebration of our Sister City Relationship

Taupō District Council has been nationally recognised for its efforts during a project around the 10th Anniversary Celebrations for the Suzhou and Taupō Sister City relationship.

The project won runner-up in the Best Local Government Project for its museum exhibition and schools programme that celebrated 10 years of the Sister City friendship.

Council representatives were presented with the award at New Zealand's annual Sister Cities conference in Palmerston North on March 22. The museum exhibition, Suzhou – Faith and Life 618AD-1279AD, ran from September to November and over 5000 people visited and a schools programme ran alongside it.

Head of economic development and business transformation John Ridd said it was fantastic for the council to be recognised for a project of this scale that had far reaching benefits.

“We saw this as a great opportunity to share knowledge and education, while promoting cultural awareness and strengthening our relationship with our Sister City, Suzhou,” he said. “Sister Cities are an important part of any regional growth plan, not only for economic outcomes, but in our evolving society, strengthening ties and learning to promote a truly global culture of inclusion.”

He said time spent building trust and building personal relationships with our Sister City was vital to maximising the economic long-term benefits of the relationship. An archway gifted to Taupō from Suzhou was also erected during the celebrations, and stands at the southern entrance to Tongariro Domain.



Best Project (Community Organisations)

Winner: Cambridge Community Board

Name of Project: Armistice in Cambridge, remembering our Sister City Le Quesnoy, France 2018

As Le Quesnoy in France commemorated 100 years since their liberation by NZ Troops at the end of the Great War, so too did Cambridge. We centred the celebrations in Cambridge around our Town Hall, a Light and Sound Show each evening, billboards on the Town Hall Plaza telling the NZ/Le Quesnoy Story, an art exhibition in the Hall and a wonderful Armistice service. At the same time, a Cambridge delegation including our brass band was in Le Quesnoy taking part in their commemorations. Many of the band members were school students and they have formed their own continuing link with the young people of Le Quesnoy.

Viva Le Quesnoy, Viva Cambridge!

Runner Up: Gisborne District Sister Cities

Name of Project: Siting SC relationship & Commemorating Ta Ha sestercentennial and Polynesian Migration to Aotearoa Mahina Tahiti & Tairawhiti - Gisborne, NZ

Evolving from an historic background of unique significance. Lieutenant James Cook (Capt.) requested to observe Transit of Venus in 1769 then sail Endeavour south to explore resulting in discovering NZ. Historic first landing at mouth Turanganui River. Joining Cook's Endeavour historic voyage an important Tahitian interpreter, high priest and artist “Tupaia” from Mahina Tahiti. Four students Tolaga Bay School (winners Royal Societies England/NZ Competition) and Mayor Meng Foon hosted by Whitby observed Transit of Venus June 2004 (1st) 2010 “Tairawhiti Navigations Project” 2010 signed, increased bond. Transit of Venus June 2012 (2nd) observed at Tolaga Bay, created worldwide attention. What followed was a developing relationship of two Cities who during October 2019 will with others worldwide commemorate “Te Ha 1769-2019 Sestercentennial/Tuia 250”.



Best Commercially-Focused Project

Winner: Wellington City Council

Name of Project: Taipei - A Wellington Inc. Approach

Wellington City Council won the Commercially Focused award at this year's SCNZ Awards at the annual Conference. The project focused on creating strategic partnerships across the region to give breadth to Wellington's sister city relationships and to stimulate a cohesive, targeted approach to the city's international engagement. The application covered a case study in which Wellington City Council and the Wellington Chamber of Commerce formalised a partnership agreement, with the intention of bringing the local business community into the fold of the city's international relations programme and developing a more internationally capable industry.



Auckland and Busan refresh collaboration potential

By Tao Chen, Auckland Council

In late March, Auckland Council welcomed the visit by the Assistant Mayor of Busan Metropolitan City, Mr. Kim Yun-il and his delegation.

The Busan guests came to attend the 2019 Korean Day Festival, Auckland's biggest annual Korean cultural event organized by the Korean Society of Auckland. The annual official visit to Auckland on this occasion by Busan Metropolitan City highlights the two cities' long-term and active relationship.

2019 marks the 23rd year of Auckland-Busan partner city relationship.

On 29th March, Councillor Penny Hulse, Councillor Paul Young met with Assistant Mayor Kim and discussed topics and opportunities of mutual interests focusing on

ports, innovation, film industry, renewable energy, and tourism promotion. Busan is the 2018-2019 President City of Tourism Promotion Organization (TPO) for Asia Pacific Cities. Assistant Mayor Kim invited Auckland to attend the 9th TPO General Assembly in Busan this September.

Sister Cities New Zealand President Hiromi Morris, Screen Auckland Manager Michael Brooks, Marguerite Delbet, General Manager of Auckland Council's Democracy Services and Kimberley Wu, International Relations Manager joined the meeting with the Busan delegation. Sister Cities New Zealand and Screen Auckland both welcomed more frequent, wider and deeper interactions between Busan and New Zealand cities.

The delegation also visited Auckland's start-up GridAKL, and were excited to find quite a few similarities between Auckland and Busan's startup scenes. An Auckland Council funded initiative, GridAKL is Auckland's prominent startup precinct, whilst Busan is South Korea's first startup cradle of 100 years and a pilot city for national smart city project. There is promising potential for both cities to cultivate opportunities of co-platform collaboration.

Tourism Promotion Organization for Asia Pacific Cities:
www.aptpo.org



Auckland Council welcomed Busan Metropolitan City delegation (Photo: Tao Chen)

Whanganui's new sister city – Lijiang, China

By Marianne Cavanagh, Whanganui District Council

Whanganui has signed a new sister city relationship with Lijiang, China in the NZ-China Year of Tourism

Mayor Hamish McDouall travelled to Lijiang, Yunnan Province, China, on 23 February 2019 to formally sign an agreement for a sister city relationship between Lijiang and Whanganui.

In 2014, Whanganui District Council established a relationship with Lijiang and in September 2015 a Memorandum of Friendly Co-Operation was signed by both mayors.

Mayor McDouall says formalising the relationship is the first step in a commitment to identify and develop mutually beneficial economic, cultural and social outcomes with Lijiang.

“It became evident to me at the Mayoral Forum that there are massive economic opportunities for New Zealand cities which result from relationship with Chinese municipalities. This year is the China- NZ Year of Tourism and this has prompted the timing of the visit. We have a great opportunity to showcase Whanganui as a tourist destination to many millions



of people,” says Mayor McDouall.

Lijiang is an economic and cultural hub located in the northwest of the Yunnan province in China. It has a population of 1,244,769 and is home to the Naxi people, one of the 56 ethnic groups of China.

Lijiang is one of the most popular tourist destinations in China, with more than 40 million tourist visits per year.

The Old Town of Lijiang is a UNESCO World Heritage Site dating back to 1,000 years and famous for its old waterways and bridges and timber and mud-brick houses.

There is also a university for tourism with 18,000 students, a massive trading hub and access to the Mekong and Yangtze Rivers.

The visit focussed on increasing tourism between both cities and the potential for educational exchanges. Whanganui visitor guides and business packs were translated for the visit.

Mayor Hamish was joined by the Council's Principal Advisor Marianne Cavanagh, Cr Hadleigh Reid and two local business people with ventures in China.

Wellington Sakai Sister City relationship flowers with Japanese water pipe project

By Amanda Cundy, Wellington City Council

On 10th April, Wellington kicked off a year of activity celebrating 25 years of sister city relations with Sakai with the launch of a pilot water pipe project.

Kurimoto Ltd., a Sakai based manufacturer of resilient water pipe infrastructure, chose the Wellington region as the location of their first international venture, with Hynds Pipe Systems Ltd. approving Kurimoto's pipes for importing and beginning preparations for a pilot project in partnership with Wellington Water in Porirua this year. During the launch, Mayor Justin Lester accepted a generous donation of cherry blossom trees from the President of Kurimoto Ltd. which WCC intends to use to extend the existing Sakai Cherry Garden in Katherine Mansfield Memorial Park.



Mayor Lester accepts donation of cherry trees from Kurimoto's President Moriyoishi Kushida

Connecting Cities Through Song - Kyoto Festival Choir in Nelson

By Lyndal McMeeking, Nelson-Miyazu Sister City Association

A 39-strong party came to Nelson from Kyoto to perform a one-only New Zealand concert, jointly with the Nelson Festival Choir, on Friday, 22 February.

Although staying only 3 nights, the Kyoto Festival Choir enjoyed the best of Nelson including a visit to Abel Tasman, an afternoon personally hosted in small groups by members & supporters of the Nelson Miyazu Sister City Association and a wonderful Sayonara Party at Trafalgar Pavilion. A visit to Nelson's Miyazu Japanese Gardens was also a feature of their short visit.

The joint concert at Nelson's Centre of Musical Arts was excellent, despite a smaller than expected audience. A highlight of the evening was the post-concert get-together where both choirs & audience mixed to chat & share a Japanese supper together. This camaraderie was also a special feature of the Nelson Festival Choir concert tour of Japan in 2016. This tour, celebrating the 40-



Photo: Akiko Crowther

year anniversary of the Nelson-Miyazu sister city relationship, prompted the desire for this 2019 visit.

In addition to celebrating the friendship between our two countries and cultures, this 3-day stay contributed in excess of \$23,000 to Nelson's local economy (the group also stopped in Wellington & Auckland) and raised funds for the victims of the recent Tasman Fires. SCNZ President Hiromi Morris also made a personal contribution to this fund-raising effort.

This trip was born from the enduring relationship between Nelson & Miyazu - Miyazu is part of the Kyoto prefecture. It was an example of the outcomes (cultural, arts, inter-personal & financial) that are possible from a strong, enduring sister city connection. We're grateful to be able to realise these special opportunities. A trip to New Zealand was a dream for many of our Kyoto guests, we hope someday they will return.

Visit to Minamiuonuma-shi: Ashburton's sister city in Japan

By Cr Liz McMillan, Ashburton District Council

On a recent trip to Japan, I was staying with a friend who lived around an hour from Minamiuonuma, Ashburton's sister city and I decided we were too close not to visit.

After a few phone calls to arrange a time, the Mayor (who had meetings scheduled for most of the day) agreed to meet us between 1pm and 1:30pm on Friday 11 January.

My friend Michiko, my children Floyd and Estella and I caught the bullet train to Echigo and then the local train to Muikamachi, where the Minamiuonuma city civic building is based.

It was snowing lightly when we arrived in Muikamachi with a good 50cm of snow on the ground.

We had a quick look through the library, which was right beside the train station. We found out later it had been built 5 years ago. I liked the use of the wood in the library and the "kotatsu" in the children's area. Kotatsu are small tables with a blanket that have heaters under them. Great for cold days!

We then went to meet Mayor Hayashi and Katagiri-san Manager of Planning and Policy. We received a warm welcome from them and were shown photos of the visit from Ashburton residents several years ago.

We were presented a booklet on Minamiuonuma-shi

which now includes Shiozawa, Muikamachi and Yamato as one city. The area is similar to the Ashburton district, with many mountains, ski fields, and crop farms. They are famous for their rice production and sake. I was presented 2 bottles of sake to bring home to our Mayor and Council.



Cr McMillan with Mayor Hayashi in front of a painting by local artist Karen Smith that the Ashburton District Council gifted to its sister city for their 30th anniversary.

Mayor Hayashi spoke how he was a keen skier, growing up on a ski field and skiing to school each morning, taking the lift home after school. He said he had visited Mt Hutt many years ago and is interested in a relationship with Mt Hutt. The ski field he is associated with Ishiuchi Maruyama. They have recently installed the newest gondola in Japan and have a half pipe, which they are hoping to attract athletes who will be training for the Winter Olympics in Beijing, China in 2022.

We finished the visit with some photos in front of the wonderful Karen Smith painting that Ashburton District Council had sent to commemorate the 30th anniversary of our sister city relationship.

Mayor Hayashi hopes to visit the Ashburton district one day. He was interested in learning about Methven and Ashburton. He didn't speak much English, so was pleased that I could speak Japanese. He was very welcoming and is keen to continue the sister city relationship.

Children's University Canterbury Partnership

By Peter Cottrell, Christchurch Adelaide Sister City Committee

An exciting, aspirational project with a Sister City link is now in New Zealand.

[Children's University](#) provides opportunities for children aged from 7 to 18 years to engage in exciting and innovative learning activities and experiences outside of the classroom.

The aim of the programme is to raise young people's aspirations for higher education and encouraging life long learning. Children between the ages of 7-14 attain this through Passport to Learning initiatives and for 15-18 year olds, through the Passport to Volunteering. The programme leverages learning destinations as a way for providing a broad range of learning experiences and environments in which children and their families can engage with their local and wider communities.

There has been some New Zealand media around the setting up of this project in the Canterbury region - [click here to learn more](#).

But there is a substantive Sister City link, and many years of lobbying. Children's University Australasia is based at the University of Adelaide in South Australia. And Adelaide is one of Christchurch's Sister Cities. Members of the Christchurch Adelaide Sister City Committee have been advocating for this initiative since 2013, but the time was not quite right at that time with the universities in the region being quite rightly focussed on issues post-earthquake and this project was not at the forefront of their thinking at that stage.

Momentum was gained when Christchurch Mayor Lianne Dalziel visited Adelaide in September 2017 as part of the 45th anniversary of the Christchurch Adelaide Sister City relationship. Mayor Dalziel met with Children's University Australasia's Managing Director and was (almost) instantly excited to see this in Christchurch, the Canterbury region and ultimately throughout New



Caption: Christchurch City Councillor Anne Galloway (centre), Gabrielle Huria (right, Ngāi Tahu advisor at Christchurch City Council) and Emeritus Professor Peter Cottrell (Chair, Christchurch Adelaide Sister City Committee), with the Children's University Passport to Learning and Passport to Volunteering.

Zealand. On her return to Christchurch she encouraged Councillor Anne Galloway and the Council's Ngāi Tahu representative Gabrielle Huria to take a lead from the Council's perspective. In September 2018, an agreement was signed between Children's University Australasia, the University of Canterbury and Lincoln University, to bring Children's University to the South Island. The programme will be piloted in Canterbury in 2019. The City Council will be a strong leader in providing learning destinations for the programme through its rich network of City Libraries, the Canterbury Museum and Botanic Gardens to name but a few.

This will be a significant new initiative for not only the Canterbury region but New Zealand as well. We're excited to have been a small part of its incubation.

For additional information on the origins of the Children's University [click here](#).



Whakatāne Reverberates with Taiko

By Janie Storey, Whakatāne District Council

Taiko has come to our community once again!

For the past three years, Kenji Furutate from Tokyo Japan has been coming here to share the power of Taiko through school mini concerts, workshops and community concerts.

This year Kenji, a world class Taiko professional went to six schools around the Whakatane district with the local Taiko group in Edgecumbe called Kagutai. Together they also performed at the Edgecumbe Cosmopolitan Club, and in Whakatane with the Hamilton Taiko group called Wai Taiko.

One of Kagutai's members can play the Tabla (a traditional Indian instrument). A piece of music was composed and performed at the concerts which combined the Tabla and Taiko instruments together. It was a rare opportunity to see this.

Overall, it was a huge success once again. Throughout the week, Kagutai with Kenji performed to over 1,500 people. Members of the community that came to the concerts said that the performances were of world class.

Every time Kenji comes to Whakatane we try to give our community a unique musical experience, showcasing the art form of Taiko. We are really lucky to have Kenji come to our small community year after year.

This cannot be done without dedicated Taiko members, the support from Edgecumbe College, Arts Whakatane, Wai Taiko (the Hamilton Taiko group) and Creative Community New Zealand's support.

Kenji's two month trip around New Zealand includes going to Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin.



Taiko Drumming Groups Wai Taiko (top) and Kagutai (middle) and Taiko Master Drummer Kenji Furutate (bottom)

Seoul landmarks light up for Christchurch

By Amanda Cundy, Wellington City Council



On 29th March, Wellington's friendly city, Seoul illuminated both their City Hall and the Namsan Tower in white to show solidarity and support for New Zealand while the country mourned the loss of 50 lives in the Christchurch mosque attacks at the National Remembrance Service.

The lighting of Namsan Tower was covered extensively across the social media accounts of Mayor Park Won-soon and the New Zealand Embassy in Seoul.