

## FROM THE BOARD



### 2015 CONFERENCE

The Board wish to advise that the 2015 Sister Cities New Zealand Conference will be held at the James Cook Hotel in Wellington on 10/11 April, 2015. Please put these dates into your diary.

#### SCNZ INTERN – LEYLA CHERIF



My name is Leyla Cherif and I have recently been accepted as a Sister Cities NZ Intern. Born and raised in Tunisia by my Tunisian father and Greek mother in a French speaking environment, I guess international relations were a reasonable choice to reconcile these differences. After high school I left my native country to study communications in the south of France and carried on to complete a MA in French and European Politics Communication in Paris and have gained some valuable experience along the way.

As far as I can remember, I have always dreamed of discovering New Zealand as I was really amazed by the recent history of this country and its 'virginal' ground. I finally took the decision to come and, when I discovered Sister Cities New Zealand, I saw it as a great opportunity to broaden my experiences. I really am glad I applied as I am now in charge of organising the SCNZ Auckland Youth Workshop under the supervision of Stephen Duxfield. I am very thrilled to be part of this challenging adventure. I hope to learn a lot about New Zealand's position in global cooperation and maybe be an inspiration for the development of projects with Africa. Hoping to meet many of you during my time here !

#### NEW PLYMOUTH OFF TO CHINESE SISTER CITY

The Mayor of New Plymouth District Council, Andrew Judd, will lead a small delegation to New Plymouth's Chinese sister city of Kunming in August.

The short visit follows a formal invitation from the Mayor of Kunming and fulfils a long-standing obligation to officially open the New Zealand Garden in the south-western city.

The New Zealand Garden complements the Kunming Garden in New Plymouth's Pukekura Park, a gift from the city of Kunming. We believe it may be the first formal New Zealand garden in Kunming.

#### ASIA NEW ZEALAND FOUNDATION "SPEAKERS BUREAU"

The Asia New Zealand Foundation has launched a new initiative designed to inspire people to increase their knowledge of Asia. The Speakers Bureau is designed to reach audiences across New Zealand in a wide range of organisations. Get in touch if you are looking for a speaker- the Foundation can get them to your city or town.

Click [HERE](#) for more information

## HEFEI VISIT BY SC DIRECTOR – SEEKING A NZ RELATIONSHIP

Jordan Lee, Director at Sister Cities New Zealand, recently visited Hefei and met with the Deputy Director of the Hefei Foreign Affairs & Overseas Chinese Affairs Office and the Chief of the Division for Sister Cities. Jordan told us:

Hefei is a city on the rise and it is looking to New Zealand for the appropriate partnerships to help it on that journey. This is an opportunity for a city in New Zealand to forge a close relationship with the fastest growing metropolitan economy in the world (Economist, 2012).

There is plenty of potential for collaboration and Hefei has already indicated an interest in fields as diverse as education, research and development, and sustainability - as well as, of course, trade and investment and business in general.

On a personal level, my hosts were very hospitable, and demonstrated a passion for New Zealand and a deep desire to learn more about our country. It was an extremely exciting conversation that took place and I encourage our members to get in touch with me if you are interested in exploring a partnership with Hefei.



*Hefei City Moat*

For more information please contact: [jordanl@sistercities.org.nz](mailto:jordanl@sistercities.org.nz)

## FOXTON PRIMARY SCHOOL WELCOMES SISTER CITY CHILDREN'S ARTWORK

Foxton Primary School has taken up the opportunity to display artwork by children from Foxton's sister city in Japan.

All 10 artworks are by children who live in Narita, located 50 kilometres east of Tokyo.

As part of the sister cities arrangement, the artworks have been gifted to the Horowhenua District by Narita City's Mayor Kazunari Koizumi, who is also Chairperson of the Executive Committee for the International Exchange Exhibition of Children's Art.

For the past two months the artworks have been on display publicly, first at Foxton Library and then in Youth Space at Te Takere.

Horowhenua District Council offered schools the chance to display the artworks and Foxton Primary was the first to take up the offer.

Pupils and staff held a powhiri on Wednesday afternoon to welcome the artworks, which were presented by Horowhenua District Kere Kere Ward Councillor Ross Brannigan.

Pupil Hirini Ryland, 11, says he did not even know Foxton had a sister city.

"It's cool that some of their children's art has come to our school and it will look wonderful up on the walls."

Councillor Brannigan says the Narita children's art provides Horowhenua's younger people with a special insight into a unique culture.

"It's amazing how quickly any language barrier can be overcome with the arts," he said.

"Also, it's wonderful to see that no matter where in the world children may be, the way they express themselves through art is surprisingly similar."

Students from Foxton Primary School have now been invited to send back artwork of their own for Narita's next international exchange gallery in October.



*Checking out the Narita children's artworks are Horowhenua District Kere Kere Ward Councillor Ross Brannigan with Foxton Primary School pupils, from left, Sapphire Thompson, 11, Adam May, 12, Skylah Taffs, 11, and Hirini Ryland, 11.*



## JAPANESE CITIES AREN'T 'SISTERING' UP LIKE THEY USED TO

Tight budgets and, in some cases, chilly diplomatic relations are making it tougher for Japanese municipalities to establish bonds with foreign cities.

The Tokyo-based Council of Local Authorities for International Relations tracks these so-called sister city relationships, which are intended to foster trade ties and cultural exchanges. The council counts agreements that meet a few criteria:

- There is an official pact signed by the heads of both local governments;
- Exchanges are not limited to one specific field; and
- The local assemblies give their consent.

According to the council, there were 13 sister city deals signed by Japanese and overseas municipalities in fiscal 2013, which ended in March. That is half as many as a year earlier and 70% off the recent peak of 42, reached in fiscal 2002. The record since fiscal 1955, when data became available, is 73 -- set in fiscal 1994.

The fiscal 2013 agreements included five with South Korean cities, two with Italian cities, two with French ones, and single pacts with cities in the U.S., Taiwan, Peru and Mexico.

Why the decline? The council believes many Japanese municipalities are simply too cash-strapped to pursue sister city arrangements. Local governments also face

growing pressure from taxpayers to ensure the pacts produce results, such as attracting businesses.

Until recently, Japanese municipalities had been forging sisterly ties with Chinese cities. But no such relationships were established in fiscal 2013, likely due in part to friction between the countries over the Senkaku Islands. The islets in the East China Sea are controlled by Japan but claimed by China, which calls them Diaoyu.

The situation is affecting existing relationships, too, according to an official of a Japanese municipality paired with a Chinese city. "We invited the Chinese side to an event last year, but they turned down our invitation, citing scheduling conflicts," the official said. "We still do not have any specific exchange plans. Things aren't going as we intended."

Politics aside, while the overall numbers may be low, there are signs of growing interest in tie-ups between Japanese and South Korean cities, despite the countries' often tense relations.

Inuyama, in Japan's central Aichi Prefecture, became a sister city to South Korea's Haman County in February. "We are absolutely committed to grass-roots exchanges and do not bring up political issues," an Inuyama official said.

The council says Japanese municipalities are increasingly interested in teaming up with Southeast Asian cities, too. Meanwhile, Latin American cities are approaching Japan.

As of the end of April, Japanese municipalities had a total of 1,661 international sister city affiliations. The U.S. accounts for a leading 440, followed by China with 355.

Source : Nikkei Report - 8 June 2014, © Copyright 2014. Nihon Keizai Shimbun, Inc.

## SISTER CITIES NZ SECONDARY SCHOOLS ART COMPETITION

Just a reminder to please promote the art competition to your local schools, or any other forums that may be able to reach the target audience for the competition.

Click [HERE](#) for more information

## TRAVEL OPPORTUNITIES TO CHINA IN 2015

The New Zealand China Friendship Society has a long history of providing in-depth and specialised tours to China. Because of their unique contacts built up over many years they can provide access to this wonderful country that other providers cannot match. "They know China best" and we have successfully demonstrating this to their many clients for over thirty years.

For more information click [HERE](#)



## JAPANESE SISTER CITY STUDENTS EXPERIENCING ROTORUA LIFE



Mayor Steve Chadwick, councillors, RDC staff and visiting Hamurodai High School students at a mayoral reception in the Council Chamber

Thirty-seven Hamurodai High School students from Rotorua’s Japanese sister city of Beppu are to be officially welcomed to the city on Thursday (19 June) by Mayor Steve Chadwick.

Mayor Chadwick will host an afternoon tea reception for the group at the council Civic Centre at 1pm.

The Japanese students arrived in Rotorua on Monday (16 June) and are immersing themselves in New Zealand life by staying with families of Western Heights High School students. They are attending English classes at the school during their week in Rotorua and also integrating with other regular classes and extramural activities.

Mrs Chadwick said there was a long-standing tradition of school exchanges between Beppu and Rotorua and she was looking forward to welcoming the students.

“Annual exchanges between young people of our two communities are a foundation of our sister city relationship.

“Sharing our cultures and our customs with people from other countries open our students’ eyes to the global village we live in.

“I’m also pleased to be able to return some of the wonderful hospitality I received from the people of Beppu during my recent brief visit to Japan.”

A ‘Sister School’ agreement was signed in Rotorua in 2001 between Beppu’s Hamurodai High School and Western Heights High School, with annual student exchange tours becoming a regular feature of the two schools’ links.

Hamurodai High School is one of Beppu’s academic prefectural high schools and was founded in 1982. It is located on the top of a hill overlooking Beppu City and the ocean.

Beppu is in the Oita Prefecture on the southern island of Kyushu and, like Rotorua, is known worldwide for its many hot springs and geothermal attractions.

## NEW CORPORATE MEMBER – VENTURE SOUTHLAND



Venture Southland CEO Paul Casson

Venture Southland has joined Sister Cities New Zealand as recognition of the importance global connections has for the region in relation to tourism, migration, study and business opportunities.

Venture Southland is a joint initiative of the Invercargill City, Southland District and Gore District Councils, and is the agency responsible for the region’s economic and community development initiatives.

Established in 2001, its unique model is known throughout New Zealand as a positive example of regional co-ordination and co-operation, promoting Southland, facilitating economic and community development opportunities and adding value to the region.

Venture Southland Chief Executive Paul Casson said the organisation’s mission was to actively work with groups and organisations to identify opportunities and

facilitate the development of projects and initiatives that will enhance the prosperity and quality of life of Southland communities.

Invercargill is currently developing a relationship with the city of Suqian in China, and Venture Southland has been heavily involved in hosting delegations, representing Invercargill in Suqian and highlighting opportunities for trade between the two cities.

Venture Southland Group Manager Tourism Events and Community Rex Capil says global connections are essential to New Zealand’s continued well-being and prosperity.



Vietnamese student Ky Nhein Quach at Stewart Island





Rex Capil

Mr Capil said a recent quote from Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment Minister Steven Joyce summed it up perfectly.

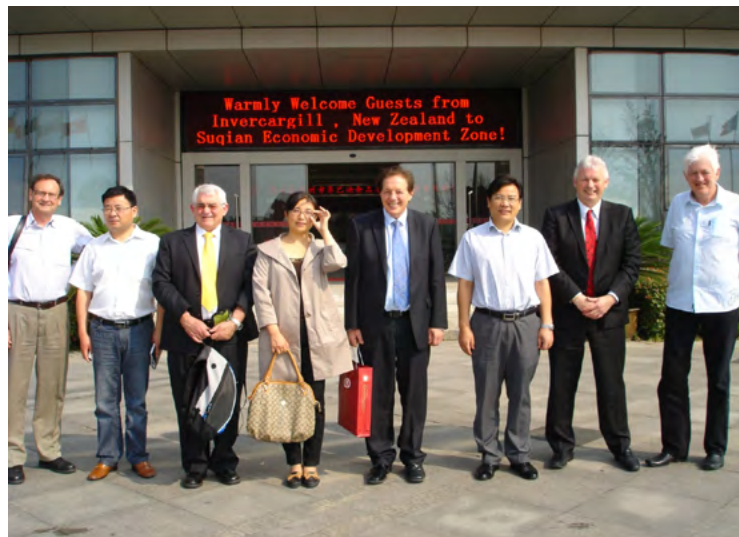
“Through international education we build our people-to-people links with the world, increase cultural understanding and receive significant economic benefit while these students study, live and travel in New Zealand,” Mr Joyce said in a public statement.

Southland is a national leader in the international student education market and prides itself on high quality education facilities that encourage excellent learning environments for students. Low teacher/student ratios mean students easily excel at all levels of schooling from primary, secondary and through to tertiary study.

With more than 600 international students enrolled in Southland schools and tertiary providers, Southland has high levels of student satisfaction and achievement, with many choosing to stay in the region throughout their whole learning career.

Mr Capil said there were obvious economic benefits, but it was important to view the value of international education beyond a solely economic lens. Significant social and cultural benefits resulted from international education activities.

“The economic future of Southland and New Zealand will be determined by our interactions with the rest of the world – and especially our ability to increase our economic and other connections with countries across Asia.”



Delegation from Suqian, China

He said membership of Sister Cities New Zealand was another important step in cementing existing international relationships and building new friendships which were mutually beneficial to the regions involved.

Mr Casson said Southland was one of New Zealand’s leading primary production regions and as most of that production was exported the strength of international ties was crucial to businesses.

Within Southland, Invercargill city has a long-standing Sister City relationship with Kumagaya in Japan, while Southland District has a Sister City relationship with Cinque Terre in Italy and a friendship relationship with Wyong Shire in Australia. Gore District Council has a Sister City Relationship with Tamworth in Australia.

## AN ARTISTIC EXCHANGE - EAST MEETS WEST IN WELLINGTON

On Friday 27th the work of two renowned artists, one from China and one from Wellington, shared gallery space in the historic St James Theatre at the Opening of “EAST Meets WEST - two artists inspired to paint each other’s country”.

Gerda Leenards visited southern China in 2007 and 2008 on an ASIA NZ grant, Yang Songge travelled the length of NZ in 2013 at the invitation of the NZ China Friendship Society.

Both artists have painted from their own cultural perspectives, and have thrown new light on the landscapes that they discovered - Yang Songge has, through his classic Chinese brush painting, reinterpreted NZ scenes which we are all thoroughly familiar with, but which we now pause to re-identify: and Gerda Leenards has produced wonderfully strong panoramas which seem to mirror the longitudinal travel through time and space which is the very basis of traditional Chinese landscape art.

The exhibition was installed by Janet Andrews, chair of the Wellington Xiamen Association, and the Opening



Clockwise from left:  
Janet Andrews, Ambassador Wang Lutong,  
Gerda Leenards, Mayor Celia Wade-Brown, Yang Songge

was a true reflection of east meets west, and a wonderful testament to the power of art to cross borders and cultures, and to encourage new ways of seeing the world.

(The exhibition is on until 29th July at St James Theatre, Courtenay Place, Wellington)

## BLACKTOWN

To commemorate the 30 year Sister City relationship between Blacktown City and Porirua City, a Maori Ceremonial Gateway has been installed in the New Zealand Garden at Nurragingy Reserve (Knox Road, Doonside), Blacktown, New South Wales, Australia.

The Gateway features two 4 metre high totem poles (Pou) with carvings designed to feature traditional Maori elements. The two pou were carved by Ngati Toa carvers and brothers Hermann and Tana Salzmann.

A ceremonial dedication of the Pou took place during the Blacktown Festival week in May 2014.

In addition to the installation of the Gateway, Blacktown Council improved the existing New Zealand Garden within Nurragingy Reserve. It included a new sandstone retaining wall with carved inserts, plants, path resurfacing and upgrades to the pavilion within the garden.

The project is an opportunity to celebrate and acknowledge the 30th anniversary of our Sister City agreement with Porirua in New Zealand", Mayor of Blacktown City, Councillor Len Robinson said.



*Inspecting the Pou with Whitireia Community Polytechnic performers looking on.*

*Making their way up the path to the Pou on the morning of the dedication - from left, Ngati Toa representative Taku Parae, Porirua Mayor Nick Leggett, has a representative from the Durragingy, and the Mayor of Blacktown Mr Len Robinson.*



"Blacktown City is proud of its Sister City relationship with Porirua and at Council we look forward to the continued growth and development of this relationship", Mayor Robinson said.

The partnership has involved numerous cultural exchanges between local artists and the two cities including workshops and exhibitions with traditional Maori artists and numerous performances by Whitireia who have performed for the Blacktown City community during the Blacktown City Festival.



*Councillor Izzy Ford (centre) with Porirua expats living in Sydney, left martin Gray, and right Marae Tiopira.*

## FROM THE BOARD



This diary of events is only as good as the information we receive. If you would like your activities for 2014 listed here please contact us

Newsletter contributons to:  
[editor@sistercities.org.nz](mailto:editor@sistercities.org.nz)

