



SISTER CITIES

NEW ZEALAND

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NEWSLETTER

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Southern hospitality showcased at SCNZ 2017 Annual Conference

By Eirwen Harris Mitchell, Invercargill City Council

Delegates from around Asia, New Zealand and Southland were treated to a real southern experience and plenty of mouth-watering Southland food, at the Sister Cities New Zealand Annual Conference 2017 in Invercargill.

Invercargill Mayor Tim Shadbolt said about 100 people were involved in the Conference and associated Mayoral and Community Forums from Thursday to Saturday 4-6 May.

“The Conference usually alternates between host cities in the North and South Islands every year. In 2016 it was held in Nelson, but when plans to hold the 2017 Conference in the North Island fell through, Invercargill gladly put its hand up to be the host.

“We relish the opportunity to bring people to our city, plus the chance to further the Sister City ideals of peace, tolerance and friendship. Thank you to all the delegates and speakers who came – we loved hosting you in Invercargill.”

The three-day schedule began with the Mayoral Forum and the Community Forum, with the theme: Encouraging Immigrants to the Provinces and Keeping Them. A strong line up of speakers from government, quasi government agencies and a representative of the Southland Filipino Society, Socrates Mallari, gave their perspectives on this.

On the Thursday evening delegates were officially

welcomed to Invercargill at a ceremony and function at the Civic Theatre. Members of Waihopai Runaka and Te Wharekura O Arowhenua assisted with the welcome and Kapa Haka.

The full Conference was officially opened by His Excellency the Ambassador of Japan, Toshihisa Takata, the Mayor of Kumagaya City, Japan, Kiyoshi Tomioka and Mayor Shadbolt on Friday 5 May at the Civic Theatre. The Conference theme was: *Communication Overcoming Distance*.



Mayor Tomioka of Kumagaya, Mayor Tim Shadbolt of Invercargill, and Ambassador Takata of Japan.

In addition to international speakers from Japan, China, and the United States, Conference delegates included speakers from around New Zealand, plus successful Southland businesspeople, such as Dil Belworthy from Glowing Sky and Jane Stanton from the Seriously Good Chocolate Company.

During their stay, delegates visited the Awarua Communications Museum, Te Rau Aroha Marae in Bluff and Richardson's Transport World. After the Conference ended some delegates took sightseeing tours to the

seaside town of Riverton and to visit the glow worm caves in Te Anau.



Above: from left, Mayor Tim Shadbolt, Cyril Gilroy, Marcia Te Au Thompson.



Left: Mayor Tim Shadbolt and President Hiromi Morris with members of the Kapa Haka Group from Te Wharekura O Arowhenua.

Sister Cities New Zealand Awards sponsored by Air New Zealand

On day two of the conference an awards dinner was held at Richardson's Transport World, and the winners and runners up of the awards were announced and presented.



This year's winners:

CATEGORY 1.

Best youth, education or school project

Winner:

Hastings District Council - The Amazing China Face Race

CATEGORY 2.

Best cultural, sport or recreation project

Winner: Wellington City Council - The Capital Cup

Runner-up: Nelson-Miyazu Sister City Association Inc - Nelson Festival Choir / Citizens' Delegation Combined Japan Tour

CATEGORY 3.

Best business or commercial project

Winner: Christchurch China Sister Cities Committee - Discover China on a Sister City Goodwill citizens' tour

How Grassroots Rugby Brought Two Cities Closer

By Aaron Liew, Sister Cities New Zealand Youth Subcommittee member

Wellington and Sakai City in Osaka, Japan have a long standing sister city relationship that dates back to 1994. Since the signing of that agreement, the people of Wellington and Sakai have made many exchanges, even one that involved the current Deputy Mayor of Wellington, Paul Eagle, where he was a part of the Wellington City Council Rugby team that toured Sakai in 1996.

In 2015, Sister Cities New Zealand President Hiromi Morris was contacted by Sakai Rugby School to see if an exchange was achievable to celebrate their 30th anniversary as a school. They had toured Wellington in 1997 for the 10th anniversary and 2007 for the 20th anniversary. With the help of Sister Cities New Zealand, Wellington Sakai Association, Wellington City Council, Wellington College, St Mark's School and Ponoke Rugby Club, and JET AA, and Scots College, the Sakai Rugby School was able to tour Wellington for a short period of time in late March. The tour party consisted of 45 junior players (ranging from 12-14 years) and 12 coaches which included the rugby school's former and present headmaster, medical personnel and 7 female players.

The Sakai Rugby School, a voluntary organisation, is a club where the players, coaches, volunteers and spectators gather on the weekends and help organise

games and practises. Not only do the players learn about the game, but the school enforces rules and regulations to which these players follow, to help them shape to be better people for the future.

The players were split between age group teams with Under 12, 13 and 14, where they played against teams from St Mark's School, Wellington College, Scots College and Ponoke Rugby Club. The Sakai Rugby players did fairly well with 4 wins out of 6 matches, considering the cold and windy Wellington conditions, something they are not used to. From these games over two different days, players from both Japan and New Zealand were able to have cross cultural exchanges - whether it was on the field at an aftermatch sausage sizzle, sharing a meal and a joke at the Willis Street Food court or even exchanging warm friendly gestures out on the street or during school visits.

With guidance from Wellington College 1st XV Coaches, Lincoln Rowles and Alex Taimalietane, the players were put through their paces as to what rugby in New Zealand is all about, and how it differs from rugby played in Japan. Although the players only had two sessions, it was well received and not only did the players learn something, but their coaches were also observing and were able to take away something from the sessions.



In addition the players were able to experience Maori culture. On the 25th of March, Waiwhetu Marae in Lower Hutt graciously opened its doors for the players and coaches to stay over for the night, something visitors to New Zealand do not usually do and even an experience many Kiwis cannot say they have done themselves, which made this the more memorable and special. They were welcomed with a powhiri, something they were all accustomed to by now after their first powhiri at Wellington College. Following the powhiri, the players and coaches were taught the traditional haka done by the All Blacks. What was great about this was that the students now understood what the haka meant and were able to perform it with a lot of passion and heart. They were also treated to a traditional hangi and had a fun cross cultural session where everyone performed things from classic Maori waiatas, traditional Japanese songs, a poi performance and even a karate demonstration from some of the players themselves!

On top of the cultural and sporting activities planned, the visitors from Sakai were treated to experience some of Wellington's more well-known tourist attractions. On one of their last days of their trip, they were able to familiarise themselves with places like Te Papa, Weta Cave and the summit of Mt. Victoria. They were also treated to a tour of the New Zealand Rugby Union where they were able to see the Webb Ellis Trophy and the Bledisloe Cup, and Westpac Stadium.

The 6 days for our visitors from Sakai Rugby School went by like a flash. I think this was a great experience for all. What made this visit memorable, especially for the young players, was was their first trip overseas. As a member of the Youth Sub Committee, I had been longing for an event like this, where my interests helped bring local kiwis and our Japanese visitors together in the form of rugby. I feel like this trip definitely promoted people to people relationships. For example, players were able to interact with kiwis kids who also play the same game they do and the coaches were able to learn from other coaches.

There were significant formal events - meeting the Japanese Ambassador to New Zealand, and attending an official welcome reception by the Wellington City



U14 Rugby - Sakai Rugby School (Japan) v Wellington College, by Masanori Udagawa

Council, but it was the local grassroots level of meeting people which made this trip special in my opinion. I am thankful and lucky to be involved as a planning coordinator and a local tour leader and an interpreter to look after the visitors and to be a part of something that I am sure will happen again in years to come. To me, it was great to have everyday people being able to experience another country and culture. I hope in the future, whether it is sporting or cultural, that more exchanges like this can happen, and that people of all ages can have an experience in a different country and meet people from their sister city.

Aaron Liew visited Sakai in 2004 when he was attending Wellington College through the educational exchange programme and continued his Japanese studies at Victoria University. He participated in the JET (Japan Exchange Teaching) programme (2011 - 2015) as an Assistant Language Teacher based in Tendo, Yamagata Prefecture which is Marlborough's sister city. On his return to New Zealand in late 2015 he joined SCNZ Youth Subcommittee and was an active member until he shifted to Palmerston North recently for work.



Masterton strengthens its sister city relationships

Jonathan Hooker, Chairperson

Masterton District Council International Relationship Committee

During May 2016, our Mayor Lyn Patterson and nine others visited our Sister City Changchun in China. While we were there Jayne Gasper from St Matthews Collegiate in Masterton signed a Sister School agreement with No 30 Middles School of the Chaoyang District of Changchun City. Almost to the day the Principal Zhang Jing, two teachers and an official from the Education Department visited St Matthews here in Masterton to further the relationship. For two days, they spent time sharing culture in classes as well as watching our local Teachers in action.

Earlier in the same week we hosted Mayor Shinno from our Japanese Sister City Hatsukaichi in Japan. We appreciated that President Hiromi could come and be part of this visit. Ambassador Takata and Mr Hamada from the Japanese Embassy also travelled from Wellington for this occasion.

This was the first time that we had hosted a Mayor from Changchun despite the 19th years of the relationship. Also visiting were Mr Niita, City Council Chairman, a Kendama expert and Mr Takeda the Managing Director of Woodone the parent company of Juken NZ which has a significant joint venture mill on our boundary. Our Sister City relationship came out of the relationship

with past Mayor Bob Francis and the late President of Woodone Mr Nakamoto. Hatsukaichi is Woodone's home base and Juken is a significant local employer and contributor to the local economies.



Hiromi Morris, Mayor Lyn Patterson and Mayor Katsuhiro Shinno of Hatsukaichi



Mayor Lyn Patterson and Mayor Katsuhiro Shinno of Hatsukaichi



Signing of a sister school agreement in Changchun

Children's Art Exhibition to Sakai, Japan

Wellington and its sister city Sakai connect through children's art

By Aiko Collins, Wellington City Council

A special ceremony was held on 10 April 2017 to celebrate the return of artwork exhibited at the Sister Cities Children's Art Exhibition in Wellington's sister city, Sakai.

Wellington City Councillor Nicola Young presented official certificates on behalf of the Mayor and offered congratulations to the proud young recipients.

Three Wellington based artists, Rieko Woodford-Robinson, Kumiko Matsumoto and Joyce Wu organised the Children's art exhibition in partnership with Wellington City Council as a part of the Wellington Japan Festival in November 2016.

More than 180 children aged between 3 and 7 had their creative artwork exhibited. Selected pieces were then chosen to be sent to and exhibited in Sakai. Artwork recently returned home to Wellington, to be presented back to their young owners.

Due to the popularity of the exhibition in Wellington last

year, Woodford-Robinson, Matsumoto and Wu will work together with the Wellington Sakai Association to run another successful exhibition in 2017.



Photo by Tom Yuan: Nicola Young, Wellington City Councillor and Frances Yamada, President of Wellington Sakai Association featured with the young artists

Minoh Art Association members visit Lower Hutt

Linda Goss-Wallace, Hutt City Council

In 2015 members of the Minoh Art Association travelled to Lower Hutt on a Mayoral delegation to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of Minoh and Lower Hutt's Sister City relationship.

During that visit, Mr Minoru Kugo, President of Minoh Art Association met Mr David Balm, President of the Hutt Art Society and they discussed the possibility of exchange and exhibiting each other's artworks.

Last year Minoh City exhibited 24 pieces of Lower Hutt's art and this year the Odlin Gallery in Lower Hutt is exhibiting 39 pieces of Minoh's art.

The exhibition "Different Body, Same Minds" was officially opened on May 1st by the Japanese Ambassador Toshihisa Takata after speeches from Mr Kugo, Mr Balm and Mayor of Lower Hutt, Ray Wallace. It will run for 4 weeks until 28th May.



Ambassador Takata, Minoru Kugo (President Minoh Art Association), David Balm (President Hutt Art Society), Mayor Ray Wallace, David Bassett (Deputy Mayor Lower Hutt City).

A delegation of 10 guests from Minoh Art Association were hosted during the day by Hutt City Council's Sister Cities Projects Manager, Linda Goss-Wallace where they experienced local sightseeing, history and facts around the city, a visit to Hutt Minoh Friendship House, Southlight Studio, ArtSpace Gallery, The Dowse Art Museum, and an afternoon tea reception with Mayor Ray Wallace, Deputy Mayor David Bassett, Trustees of the Hutt Minoh Friendship House and Senior Council Staff.

A special walk along the Hashimoto Memorial Walkway beside the Civic Buildings was also enjoyed as the group remembered their former Mayor who signed the original document of Cooperation between the two cities 22 years ago.

The highlight of the day was of course, attending the opening of their exhibition of amazing art works at The Odlin Gallery that evening. The

opening was attended by around 80 people including Lower Hutt's Deputy Mayor, Councillors and Sister Cities New Zealand's President Hiromi Morris who enjoyed meeting the delegation from Minoh and seeing their beautiful art works.

Presidents' Kugo and Balm have discussed the possibility

of future exchanges of tutoring artists between their organisations.

Mayor Ray Wallace said "The Art Exchange has been a great way to further enhance and strengthen our relationship with Minoh City."



Minoh Art Association delegation on red bridge leading to Hashimoto Memorial Walk (photo by Linda Goss-Wallace)

Young people are at the heart of sister city relationships

Marcus Boshier, Sister Cities New Zealand

A couple of days prior to the conference I was at an art exhibition put on by the Lower Hutt Art Society, showcasing pieces of art from Lower Hutt's sister city Minoh. At that event during a conversation I was told "young people are at the heart of sister city relationships." This sentiment was echoed at the recent conference, and I believe it to be true.

Almost exactly one year ago the SCNZ Youth Sub-committee was established. This was an important step for SCNZ and its focus on young people and its commitment to youth development. Last year SCNZ received funding through the Ethnic Communities Development Fund to run a project called Korero; a project designed to engage young people on matters of global significance. Also, the Youth Sub-Committee has initiated a Youth Tour; cv a youth led, youth focussed cultural and educational experience for secondary school students in the Wellington area. So, there are exciting things happening for young people.

It occurred to me at conference, however, that in spite of all the good things that are going on we hear of very few and I wondered what we can do to better showcase what sister cities is doing for your region's young people and foster and develop that.

At conference I posed some questions to the attendees with this in mind. They were:

- What are your greatest successes?
- How is SCNZ and your sister city relationships relevant to young people?
- At what point in a young person's development can SCNZ have an impact? How?
- What can young people, and in particular the Youth Sub-Committee, do to benefit you and your sister city relationships?
- What are the barriers to engaging more young people?
- How do the needs for young people differ between rural and urban areas?
- How can we share our stories?
- How can we connect young people and groups of young people, such as youth councils, up with SCNZ?

I would love to hear back from you in relation to these questions. I would welcome stories from you that we can share and celebrate, and we always welcome hearing from young people who want to get involved. My email is marcus@scnz.org.nz