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**REPORT 7**  
*(1215/52/IM)*

## **2008 NEW ZEALAND SISTER CITIES CONFERENCE – REPORT BACK**

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### **1. Purpose of Report**

To report back to the Committee on the attendance of Councillor Hayley Wain at the Sister Cities New Zealand Conference held in Rotorua from 10 to 12 April 2008.

### **2. Executive Summary**

The purpose of attendance at the conference was:

- To underline Council support for Sister Cities New Zealand and sister city relationships
- To maintain Wellington's commitment to supporting and building on long-term international relationships
- To gain information to assist with the Council International Policy and International partnership meeting which will be held in Wellington on 30 May 2008
- To develop further the potential for cultural programmes and economic ties.

### **3. Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Committee:

1. *Receive the information.*

### **4. Background**

The Conference is held annually in New Zealand. The Rotorua District Council along with Sister Cities New Zealand organised the conference in Rotorua this year. Councillor Hayley Wain and Tom Yuan, International Relations Manager, attended the three day conference.

Through presentations, workshops, panel discussions and social and networking opportunities the Conference covered:

- The potential of international sister city relationships
- Benefits to the communities involved
- Ways to encourage business development and commercial opportunities while promoting cultural tolerance.

These topics are in line with the Council's policy in regard to sister cities. Wellington City Council is committed to on-going support for its existing sister and friendly city relationships.

## **5. Conference Details**

The theme of this conference is "Tatou-tatou", which means "we together". This is relevant to the sister city concept that aims to stimulate interaction between people of different countries and cultures on a people-to-people basis.

There were 137 delegates at the conference, including officials from 13 Councils in NZ, members from community associations, representatives from Japan, China, South Korea, Australia, USA, and Embassies' representatives including the US Ambassador to New Zealand, William McCormick, Mr Takamichi, Consulate-General of Japan in Auckland and Ms He Ta, First Secretary of the Embassy of China.

The conference was excellent and enjoyable.

We attended the Sister Cities New Zealand Annual General Meeting, which was held at Rotorua District Council on April 10.

Hiromi Morris, the President of the Wellington Sakai Association, informed the Council before the conference that she was nominated by one of the directors of Sister City New Zealand as a candidate for director of Sister City New Zealand. This nomination is also supported by her committee. This was a welcome development as Ms Morris has been President of Sakai Association since 2004 and has helped building a closer working relationship between the Council and the Wellington Sakai Association in her position.

The four people elected to the Board were Hiromi Morris, Porirua City Councillor Hemi Matenga, Graeme Barsanti from Marlborough Sister City Committee and Roger Matthews from North Shore City Council.

This year conference's programme is highlighted by the 2008 CLAIR<sup>1</sup> Forum, which was organised and sponsored by the Japan Local Government Centre (Sydney).

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<sup>1</sup> Council of Local Authorities of International Relations.

The CLAIR forum introduced and overviewed NZ-Japan exchanges and relationship. Japan is NZ's third largest import-export business trading partner. New Zealand and Japan have similar approaches to developing trade and investment. New Zealand has 47 sister cities in Japan and has a very strong people to people link.

Peter Tennant, President of Sister Cities NZ, began the welcome. The Hon Winston Peters gave a key note speech on the Japan-NZ relationship and he did emphasise the growing importance of the sister city movement to the government.

Many guest speakers took the opportunity to talk about their involvement, personal insights and experience in the morning session. After lunch the forum mainly consisted of a question and answer session. The Conference participants were then divided into discussion groups to discuss a range of key questions about the future of sister cities' movement.

The Air New Zealand Awards Dinner was at Skyline Skyrides on the 11<sup>th</sup> of April.

The morning programme of the conference on the 12<sup>th</sup> concentrated on youth. A workshop on the role of sister cities was held, with youth from around the Rotorua region participating.

The Governor General Hon Anand Satyanand described the growing multicultural nature of New Zealand society and emphasised the importance of tolerance and understanding at a person to person level.

The Conference ended with an excellent display of Maori culture by a group of local children and the passing of the Sister City flag on to the 2009 host town of Cambridge.

## **6. Discussion**

During the three days of the conference, a wide range of issues were discussed such as:

- considering why some New Zealand Councils and their communities do not appear to embrace the Sister Cities concept, and how to devise a marketing plan to encourage full local government membership of Sister Cities New Zealand Inc, whether they have Sister Cities or not;
- Design a system to enable members to keep in touch with school leavers who have been involved in sister city exchanges, and encourage their ongoing support, wherever they may subsequently be domiciled;

- How do we encourage young people to become involved in our Sister Cities Committees;
- How to convince Mayors and Councillors to better promote publicly the social and cultural values of Sister City relationships rather than focus on economic outcomes;
- What positive and negative effects has globalisation had on sister Cities New Zealand Inc. and what will the role of the organisation be looking towards 2016;
- The challenges of collecting statistics on sister city activities to enable better promotion of the movement and to clearly demonstrate its value to communities;
- Considering the content of the CLAIR forum, listing practical ways in which Sister Cities New Zealand Inc. as an organisation, can work with members and Japanese partners to turn the talk of more exchanges into action.

## **7. Conclusion**

The Conference was a success. The annual Sister Cities New Zealand Conference again presented a valuable opportunity to network with other organisations and individuals working in this area.

Report prepared by *Councillor Hayley Wain*

<b>Supporting Information</b>
<p><b>1) Strategic Fit / Strategic Outcome</b></p> <p><i>This project supports Outcome 7.2.B – More actively engaged: Wellington will operate an open and honest decision making process that generates confidence and trust in the Democratic system</i></p>
<p><b>2) LTCCP/Annual Plan reference and long term financial impact</b></p> <p><i>Relates to C534: Elections, Governance and Democratic Process</i></p>
<p><b>3) Treaty of Waitangi considerations</b></p> <p><i>There are no Treaty of Waitangi implications</i></p>
<p><b>4) Decision-Making</b></p> <p><i>This is not a significant decision</i></p>
<p><b>5) Consultation</b></p> <p><b>a) General Consultation</b></p> <p><i>Not required</i></p> <p><b>b) Consultation with Maori</b></p> <p><i>Not required</i></p>
<p><b>6) Legal Implications</b></p> <p><i>Nil</i></p>
<p><b>7) Consistency with existing policy</b></p> <p><i>This report is consistent with existing Wellington City Council policy</i></p>