



Dunedin Workshop, Wed 11th February 2009

Present:

34 delegates from South Island City Councils and Sister City Committees

Welcome:

SCNZ Inc.'s Dunedin-based director Russell Duff introduced President Peter Tennent and fellow directors Bill Woods and Graeme Barsanti, and welcomed the delegates.

Theme of the Workshop:

“What works, what doesn’t” - both on the local and international level. “How to create, maintain and make the most of the opportunities afforded by Sister City relationships”.

Opening Address: Peter Tennent, President SCNZ Inc. Mayor of New Plymouth

Aim to establish the connections, create opportunities, and turn them into something concrete.

“Business follows on from the people to people connection”.

When taking a delegation overseas be prepared to sponsor a member of the Press.

Mayoral presence can help to open doors and economic development agency representation can help close deals.

Do your homework first – determine delegation members’ interests and set up meetings in advance.

Clearly advise officials at the other end just what is wanted.

Utilise the Prime Minister’s office and make contact with the NZ Embassy in countries visited.

Check the Sister City website for useful contacts.

Look for publicity opportunities.

Devise ways to make yourself and group memorable – eg business cards in both languages, photos, song etc

Invest in an APEC card (\$168) to fast track through airport queues.

2010 Shanghai Expo - Important that NZ is well represented and groups use the opportunity

Bill Woods, Vice President SCNZ Inc.

Was invited as New Zealand delegate to Beijing for the 25th Anniversary Sister City Movement Celebration.

Finding - NZ perceived as a friendly country and others want to deal with us.

Suggested possibility of an International Sister City Conference being held in NZ.

Delegates were then invited to explain how their organization operates, share some of their successes and new initiatives and outline some of the difficulties they face.

Malcolm Harris:

Chair Christchurch – Kurashiki Sister City Committee

Variety of student exchanges ongoing and successful resulting in a good injection of goodwill and money into Christchurch.

Issue: Christchurch City Council is disappointed that there are not more business outcomes.

Sue McFarland, International Relations Officer, Christchurch City Council

Christchurch has six sister cities and budget of \$86,000 (no increase in 10 years and unlikely this current year).

Acknowledged friendship provides the key and allows for people to develop mutual understanding. Commented on some differences in focus between the relationships eg Adelaide and China links are Council driven, while Korea, Christchurch (England) and Seattle have more community involvement. Education is providing many opportunities.

Economic Development Unit is working to establish university links with Adelaide.

Community Association in Seattle is active. Christchurch is working to utilize the connection possibly with a science and technology focus.

Also looking to promote the Ellerslie Flower Show and Marathon Race within sister cities.

Barrie Suter, Timaru Sister City Committee

Timaru has four Sister Cities. 3 Councillors and 5 members of the public form the committee, plus there are various working parties.

Eniwa, Japan:

Annual student exchanges successful.

Book exchange between libraries.

Interest shown by Japanese in pre-school education.

Museum personnel exchanges.

Retail shop in Japan selling NZ products proving viable.

Reciprocal shop in Timaru struggling.

Orange, Australia:

National Field day mixed success.

South Island Masters Games (2yrly) will make effort to encourage Aust. to participate.

General re delegations –City Council more focused on trade and business links.

Cr. Graeme Barsanti, Marlborough District Council

Two sister cities in Japan.

Interactions based on Youth. Excess of 500 students exchanged since inception 1989.

Sister City Youth exchanges partly funded by Council including a teacher. Students encouraged to take part in fundraising activities.

Ski field – 3mth employment for NZ students.

Weddings – 3 between Marlborough and Japanese people.

New initiative – developing a link with Tuscany – focus wine and winemaking.

Problems: Having trouble with (Japan end) trying to export wine and children's playground as sister city gifts.

Cr. Paul Duffy, Southland District Council

2 Councillors, 5 community members form their sister city committee

Australian link reasonably active - council staff exchanges have been successful

Schools and playcentres involved

Patchwork Quilters' group establishing link

Youth Ambassadors Exchange in February

Link being developed with Cinque Terre, Italy – environmental interests a common theme – both have major Heritage National Parks

Problems: Annual mayoral change in Aust SC makes continuity difficult

Perhaps having sister city group led by Council has been detrimental because of councillors' workloads.

Malcolm Wong, Dunedin – Shanghai Sister City Association

Aim of organisation – “To promote and facilitate good relations between Dunedin and Shanghai”
Association arose from the 11 year link between Garden Trust and Shanghai Museum.

2008 celebrating Chinese Year culminated in the opening of the Chinese Garden. Also formal re-signing of the Agreement between the two cities.

Structure: links to business, Chamber of Commerce and DCC, sport, culture and education

Strengths:

Association is able to facilitate introductions.

Trade delegations – the Chamber of Commerce relationship is established.

Education – involvement with Chinese students studying in Dunedin

Museum – exchange of exhibitions

Issues identified:

Voluntary organisation – limited time to devote

Expectation we're a source of funding

General funding constraints.

How to give members added value.

Peter Chin, Mayor of Dunedin

Four sister cities (three active)

Fixed budget \$60,000

Patron of Dunedin- Shanghai Association and initial Chairman of Chinese Garden Trust

Garden established as lasting memorial to role the Chinese played in NZ's history.

Funding support from the Government – views the Shanghai link as desirable for NZ

Garden handed over from Garden Trust and now run by DCC and generating funds through entry charge and hire.

Outlined the process, the benefits and some of the difficulties encountered in establishing the Garden.

Lack of money a stumbling block when trying to make an impression in Shanghai.

University and Polytechnic links being established

Otago Chamber of Commerce have established good relationship and exchanges

Ongoing relationship between Shanghai and Otago Museums – reciprocal curations

Observations:

Important to welcome international students and visitors to city

Be prepared to secure the contract and follow up projects once contact established

Cr. Syd Brown, Deputy Mayor of Dunedin

Two official visits to Shanghai - on both trips his position of office accorded great respect by the Chinese.

Presentation of “Festivals Unique to Dunedin” well received.

Media accompanying first delegation provided valuable feedback

Outcome – request to send more delegations – orchestra, arts and cultural exchanges

- Irish Delegation to the festival interested in NZ as result of seeing video.

Small delegations from China arriving regularly in Dunedin.

Finding: Establishing relationships first is the key to doing business.

Cr Kate Wilson, Dunedin

Questioned if anyone had links with an African country.

Responses from floor: Christchurch tried with Mozambique but communications problems and fizzled out after three years.

School link with South Africa resulted in three sportspeople coming to NZ and playing for a local club.

India – More interested in business leaders and sporting personalities. A belief that local (India) Mayors and Councils don't hold much influence.

Asked whether Dunedin had reciprocated in some tangible form to show our presence in Shanghai, in return for our gift of the Chinese Garden in Dunedin. Response - numerous financial difficulties in achieving this. Looking at a proposal for a garden replicating the Octagon. Suggested a Maori Gateway or something similar.

Sharron Verberne – Heazlewood, Chair Dunedin – Otaru Sister City Society

15 member committee with sub committees, Council representation and secretarial support

Long history – established 1980

Strong and valued people to people links built up over the years – long serving members on both sides

Well established Youth exchanges and educational links

Numerous cultural exchanges over time – art, Museum, music, choirs, sporting links

Exchange of City gifts to mark anniversaries – Children's playground for Otaru

Japanese Garden in Dunedin

Annual Japanese Speech Scholarship

Annual Cherry Blossom Celebration – growing support from local Japanese

Taiko Drummers – visit by group brought out from Japan - Asia NZ Foundation gave assistance

Quarterly Newsletters

Establishment of Youth Committee

Pam Jemmett, Chair Dunedin – Edinburgh Sister City

Established in 1970's but waned, then re-energised in 2004-5

Now an incorporated society and developing plans to foster relations between the two cities.

2006 International Festival - small delegation accompanied the Mayor

Developing university links

Primary school pen pal initiative

John McLashan College looking to establish a sister school

Art and culture - Musical compositions, sculptures

Future events – Homecoming 2009 (big event in Scotland)

Rugby World Cup 2011 possibility of hosting Scottish team in Dunedin to be followed up.

Difficulties: Travel costs make exchanges difficult to sustain.

Also different structure in Edinburgh Council creates problems.

Alan Richardson, NZTE, Government Economic Development Agency

27 offices world wide, many in Asia

Involved with businesses wanting to grow internationally and will assess business development possibilities and their viability.

Observations: Look for niche markets.

Businesses can exploit sister city relationships and also sporting and cultural links can provide a platform for business people to build on.

The role of Mayor can open doors.

NZ Concept Centre in Shanghai – built as a NZ themed centre to facilitate business meetings and opportunities. (\$35 day pass) Contact Nicky Smith in advance - www.CHINAFTA.GOV.T.NZ
www.nzcentral@nzte.govt.nz, www.nicky.smith@nzte.govt.nz

Summary of Day's Proceedings

General Findings:

Key understanding is that relationships have to be formed first, and then business follows on from established relationships.

Sister City organizations are usually driven by dedicated and long serving members.

Positive support from Mayors and Council fosters strong associations and enhances public perception. Community driven links especially benefit young people through creating educational, sporting and cultural opportunities. Successful and ongoing student exchanges in all sister city organizations reported.

Realisation that not all sister city relationships have the same focus eg China – business, Japan – community. However, sister city links can be a vehicle for establishing business opportunities. Many successful and increasing number of links being established within tertiary education and between museums.

Mayors participating in delegations help to open doors.

Mayoral hospitality within their own city can lead to opportunities being leveraged.

Press members on delegations provide valuable feedback and promote community support.

Funding continues to be an issue. Many councils' sister city budgets unchanged or reducing. Average \$3000 -\$5000 per sister city group plus some secretarial assistance.

Some members reported that reduced funding this year for annual conference will make participation difficult.

Suggestions:

Make more use of SCNZ Inc's website

Circulate your Sister City newsletters (and send an attachment to SCNZ Inc.).

Share information between societies and coordinate activities of visiting people within NZ.

Contact Air NZ re support with group airfares.

Invest in an APEC card

Utilise the Prime Minister's Office, NZ missions overseas and NZTE

CLAIR willing to discuss support for Japan/ NZ celebrations

Think of ways to make yourself/your delegation memorable when meeting e.g. take business cards in both languages, photos, pictorial pamphlets, DVDs

Be prepared first to secure the contract and then follow up on projects once contact has been established.

Be aware of cultural differences when giving gifts. Don't give a gift of a clock to Chinese (relates to funerals), similarly, don't give flowers.

Pictorial books about your city/country are acceptable but not personal ones.

Don't open a present in front of a Japanese person unless they invite you to.

Register for the 2009 SCNZ Conference in Cambridge in April