



Porirua Workshop, Tuesday 10th February 2009

Present:

20 delegates from member councils and Sister City committees

Four apologies, including President Peter Tennent due to flight delays.

Welcome:

Vice President Bill Woods welcomed the delegates, and invited Mayor Jenny Brash to speak on Porirua's sister city links.

Bill Woods

Recognising the importance of sister city links in the opportunities they give to young people, and how sister cities can make them appreciate a whole different world.

Sister cities about people-to-people, and economic development is a goal but not the primary focus. It comes later as a result of the relationship.

Cr Hemi Matenga (Porirua) , Board Member SCNZ Inc.

Recounted his first overseas experience as part of a sister city delegation to Blacktown, Australia. The impression it left on him as a young person and enthusiasm for sharing the opportunities with others.

Roger Matthews, North Shore City Council, Board Member SCNZ Inc.

Presentation on North Shore's links with Pohang, Korea and Qingdao, China. Both focus on positioning for business opportunities, but also youth links with Qingdao.

Korea is a good candidate for sister city links.

Qingdao has seen spectacular development with Olympic yachting held there.

International education – Chinese parents will look at their sister cities as destinations.

If considering doing business in a place in China, always talk to NZers with experience of the city first. Contacts can be very helpful. Learn from others and use NZ Govt/NZTE knowledge as well.

Working together for NZ Inc.

Challenge - North Shore has no elected representatives who are committed champions of sister cities.

Darcy Nicholas (Porirua)

We should be investigating economic clusters of NZ cities that can work together with their overseas connections. Is SCNZ Inc looking into this?

SCNZ needs to take a lead otherwise it will become redundant.

Brian Cross (Sister Cities NZ Executive Officer)

A need to get the governance right, with representation from all sectors of community led but not controlled by council. Some good examples around NZ.

Councils should be the facilitators, not the doers.

Get the public involved and they'll be more supportive.

Kath Crawshaw, Gisborne Sister Cities Committee

A very successful artist exchange scheme with Palm Desert.

Similar governance issues as elsewhere.

Peter Coates, Wellington Sakai Assn.

Many good things happening at community level between Sakai and Wellington – arts, sports, etc. But we all need to get the message out there better.

Gaylene Kells (Porirua City Council)

We should explore more opportunities for exchanges happening within New Zealand to overlap, to create more general interaction. Different communities working together.

C Lipscombe (Wellington Xiamen Assn).

Agree with previous speaker. Need to work together for the wider good.

Hiroki Morris (Board member SCNZ)

Most of us are volunteers and need support from councils. There's a lot that can be done by enthusiastic community groups.

Jenny Hopkins (Marlborough Sister City Committee)

Two Marlborough links with Japan mainly around school exchanges. Suggest a Sister City week in communities to generate more public interest - a national celebration.

Cr Jonathon Hooker (Masterton)

Agree with previous speaker. Getting public and local community support is a very big challenge. Sister cities are historic and current councillors may not be as interested as their predecessors. Documents signed but for how long are they expected to operate?

David Hancock (Hutt City Council)

Public celebration of sister cities linked to future conferences.

Experiences many requests for information on cost of council involvement – negativity from the public despite positive council reports in media on sister city activities.

Morning Summary

Publicity needs to improve. Not only does it advertise sister city activities better but it shows the public that councils are right behind the relationships, and consider them important.

Governance - getting the system right. The importance of having a sister city champion within the community's leadership.

SCNZ to be more active in coordination role, but resources needed.

More support needed from central government for this national resource.

Graeme Waters and Peter Lund of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade were introduced Presented on the NZ – China FTA and associated topics. Graeme is head of the China Unit at MFAT and Peter has been closely involved in FTA implementation.

Graeme Waters

China's recovery is essential to the global economy. The hope is that China will reorient its expenditure from export to building up its social structure. NZ has a definite advantage with food and beverage sales to China. Conversely wool sales suffering as it is used in Chinese exports. PM has indicated China as a priority. Official opening of NZ Centre in Shanghai later in 2009. Has already opened its doors and cities/districts as well as corporates are welcome to use it. The 2010 Expo will be very big – NZ investing three times what it did at Aichi 2005, with four times the pavilion space. Aichi hosted 122 countries and 22 million visitors, Shanghai aiming for 220 countries and 70 million visitors. NZ Day 9 July 2010 – all welcome to be involved.

In response to a question from Chris Lipscombe, advised there will be no Aichi Leveraging Fund equivalent. The Expo budget allows for a variety of support activities.

Peter Lund

FTA with China signed April 2008 – the first between China and an OECD country. Came into force October 08 after four years of negotiation. A comprehensive agreement, covers goods & services, investment, IP and cooperative agreements on labour and the environment. Will eliminate tariffs on 96% of NZ exports to China, the last by 2019.

(other 4% mainly paper and wood products due to Most Favoured Nation rules)

The FTA is an important message to the world economy facing increased protectionism. Increases NZ's profile in China and provides leverage opportunities.

In response to a question from Brian Cross, the FTA has no special rules on freeing up Chinese tourism to NZ. The sector is working with China to improve inbound quality over quantity. Easier for Chinese to get specialist jobs in NZ – 800 occupations with Chinese characteristics listed. Working holiday scheme for Chinese in NZ – not reciprocal.

Details on NZ Immigration website.

In summary MFAT staff urged all delegations to China to take advantage of NZ missions and agency offices there.

Summing Up

Bill Woods - a good ay for information sharing. Clearly sister cities need champions in the community and councils. Local government support essential. Friendship leads to business. Opportunities for young people especially .

Peter Tennent – It's all about creating opportunity, and making a difference. Thanks to all who attended