

7. SISTER CITY QUARTERLY REPORT

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The purpose of this report is to provide an update on activities undertaken by the Sister City Committees over the last four months.

SISTER CITIES' GARDENS' OPENING

This has been the most significant event within Sister Cities for some time. The Governor General, Sir Michael Hardie-Boyes carried out the official opening of the Gardens on 17th February. Four of the six visiting delegations were led by the Mayor, with the other two being led by mayoral representatives. This event was the first time that Mayors from our sister city committees were in Christchurch at the same time.

The following delegations made up the visiting contingent:

Adelaide – Councillor Bruno Ventura

Christchurch, England – Mayor Eric Spreadbury and Mrs Spreadbury accompanied by six citizens (including a 94 year-old woman)

Gansu Province – Mayor Feng Yunhai and a delegation of seven officials

Kurashiki – Mayor Nakada Takeshi and Mrs Nakada accompanied by a delegation of 23 citizens

Seattle – Dr John and Mrs Eve Bollard, immediate past Honorary Consul to New Zealand, in Seattle

Songpa-Gu – Mayor Lee and Mrs Kim, accompanied by 19 citizens, some of whom were part of a Trade Mission to Christchurch.

The delegations were in the city for between three and five days and on Friday 16 February all delegates were taken to Manderley Farm, Akaroa, to see sheep shorn, and visited key attractions within the city.

The programme for the weekend of the opening of the Gardens included a formal opening ceremony on Saturday afternoon, where each for the Mayors or Mayoral representatives delivered a message of congratulations and raised their national flag. Following the main formalities each then went on to formally unveil a plaque and artwork at their individual garden.

During the evening the Mayor and Councillors hosted the visiting delegations and Sister City Committee members to a barbecue to acknowledge the contributions made to the new gardens.

SISTER CITIES' WEBSITE

The newly designed Sister City website has recently been opened on the worldwide web. Each of the committees is researching additional material that is being added to the site as it becomes available. The web site layout reflects the design elements of the Sister City brochure recently produced by the International Relations team in consultation with the Sister City Committees.

The Sister City web address is: www.christchurch.org.nz/SisterCities

INDIVIDUAL COMMITTEE PROJECTS

Kurashiki – Christchurch Sister City Committee

- A very successful 2000 Student Exchange to Kurashiki took place from 18 September to 2 October, with 14 students from 11 Christchurch High Schools taking part in the exchange. As usual the students were 'home hosted', and the experience was both challenging and rewarding with many firm friendships being established. The trip was led by Chairman of the committee, Newton Dodge, and Kay Mason, with Ailsa Dodge assisting in an unofficial capacity.
- A Christchurch Adult Delegation of 9 people, including Deputy Mayor Lesley Keast, visited Kurashiki from 2 October to 11 October.
- Peter Mitchell, Legal Services Manager, while in Japan to speak at a Conference in October, took the opportunity to visit Kurashiki, where he met with a member of the legal staff at City Hall to discuss freedom of information and privacy issues.
- From 23 November to 28 November the Kurashiki Committee hosted the disabled exchange visit of a 12-year-old girl, Tomomi, with Cerebral Palsy. Michael Gorman (original founder of the Kurashiki Sister City link) also attended, accompanied by two assistants. Tomomi had a brilliant time and wanted to become a 'Kiwi kid', was happy to eat Weetbix, but Marmite was going to be a problem! Before she left she stated that she will be back to live in ten years!

Christchurch, England Sister City Committee

- Christchurch committee has been seeking sponsorship for the funding of a Lynch Gate which the committee hopes to build in the Sister Cities' Gardens.
- An electronic communication project between the two Christchurch cities has been under way. Research by Brian Priestley has shown there are several local schools which have the technology and the enthusiasm to undertake this programme. The committee is currently seeking schools with equal enthusiasm and technology in Christchurch, Dorset.

Songpa-Gu – Christchurch Sister City Committee

- Students from Songpa-Gu have provided art works for an exhibition at the CoCA Gallery. The exhibition opened on 16 February and will continue to 17 March 2001. This year high school-aged children have submitted works which focus on the theme 'This is me!' (what is important to me, what do I feel strongly about, what I want to be in 10 years' time, how do I fit into my community, where did I come from, etc).
- A Korean carver for the Sister Cities Gardens has carved two large Pou Pous (the Korean version of a totem pole) here in Christchurch. These were completed and in place in time for the opening of the Gardens. The committee has also arranged to have three large stone statues sent from Korea for installation in the Gardens. The statues, a lighthouse two metres high and weighing 1.2 tonnes, and an old man and old woman, both of which are 1.2 metres in height and 300kgs in weight, are currently in transit and are expected to arrive late January, hopefully in time for the opening, although they will probably not be permanently located on the site at that time.
- The Committee is endeavouring to organise a business delegation to go to Korea in 2001, and is currently inviting expressions of interest from the business community. At this stage, it is not known if the delegates will have a specific industry focus or be from various sectors, and the committee will base its decision on the responses received.

Gansu – Christchurch Friendly Relations Committee

- A very imposing entrance gateway, some 8m wide and 6m high, has been designed for the Gansu garden at the Sister Cities' Gardens, and will be constructed later this year. It is hoped to have the authentic roof tiles supplied from Gansu.
- With the aim of pursuing the possibility of sporting exchanges between Christchurch and Gansu, the committee sent Greg Hills, of the NZ Institute of Sport, to Gansu for nine days in late October. He was hosted by the Gansu Foreign Affairs Office staff during his stay, and provided with a guide and interpreter at all times. He visited several sporting colleges and facilities, including tennis, badminton, table tennis, hockey, soccer, wrestling, judo and gymnastics. He has recommended that as a first step an annual coaching exchange be set up, and the committee is now following up on this.
- A delegation of eight officials from Lanzhou, the capital city of Gansu Province, visited Christchurch in early December. It was led by Deputy Mayor Mr Li Xi. During their time in the city they visited a Chinese language school, the Canterbury Museum, the Sister Cities' Gardens, the Rewi Alley Memorial Park at Springfield, and had the pleasure of being sung to by the Deputy Mayor at a dinner.

Adelaide – Christchurch Sister City Committee

- Chairman Vincent Chew and committee member Councillor Sue Wells attended the Australian Sister Cities' Conference in Adelaide in early October. They felt the conference was superb, and made many useful contacts and came back with various projects they are now following up on.
- Approaches are being made to investigate the possibility of direct Christchurch/Adelaide flights. The Lord Mayor of Adelaide is particularly keen to establish direct links in tourism, business, education and culture.

Seattle – Christchurch Sister City Committee

- The Chairman of the committee and a committee member joined the Mayoral delegation that visited Seattle for four days in early October. Two other committee members also went, in their roles as members of the business delegation.
- The Chairman and Dave Adamson visited a Native American village called Lummi, 150kms north of Seattle. They met with a carver, and discussed the possibility of having him carve a major feature for the Seattle garden at the sister Cities' Gardens site. The carver is very interested, and the committee is now working through the logistics of this project.
- A Christchurch-based Seattle-born stone carver was commissioned to produce a garden seat, with a Native American design, for the garden. The seat was in place for the Garden Park opening on 17 February.
- Two local high school students went to Seattle in late September for three weeks, as part of the annual Seattle Scholar programme. During this time they attended school, and were each home-hosted by two different families. They were in Seattle at the same time as Mayor Garry Moore.
- Contacts have established between the Seattle Opera Guild and local opera enthusiasts.

MOZAMBIQUE PROJECT

- Carlos Maduela, the young high school teacher brought here in April, has made excellent progress in his English at the Christchurch College of Education. Over the Christmas/New Year period he was home-hosted in Wellington. Visits to local primary schools at the end of the year have been postponed until early February.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS ACTIVITY

- A total of 24 delegations (14 from Japan, 7 from China, 3 from Korea) visited the Council from October to December 2000. The delegations comprised Mayors, Councillors, senior local government officials, or university students. The visits included both in-house presentations and site visits. These visits involved a total of 317 visitors to the city.

Chairman's

Recommendation: For information only.