
MAYORAL TRAVEL TO CHINA

1. Purpose of Report

To seek Council approval for the Mayor to visit China in August 2008.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Council:

- 1. Receive the information.*
- 2. Agree that the Mayor will undertake an official visit to China in August 2008 and that the costs will be met from the International Relations budget (COST01 C145).*

3. Background

The Mayor has been invited by the Beijing City Government to attend the opening ceremony of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games in August, and participate in a schedule of activities to strengthen our sister city relationship with Beijing. This invitation has been extended to all Mayors of their sister cities.

While in Beijing, the Mayor's focus will be on enhancing our sister city relationship. She will seek further opportunities for funding and support of the proposed Wellington Chinese Garden. The Mayor will also take the opportunity to visit Wellington's other Chinese sister city Xiamen, and stop over briefly in Hong Kong at the request of Julian Ludbrook, Consul-General of New Zealand (Hong Kong), who has arranged a schedule of meetings and events.

Other reasons for the trip include:

- supporting the New Zealand Governor General and central government's programme of attendance at events (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade to confirm specific activities)
- promoting Wellington through projects such as a display at the World Botanic Gardens Exhibition, and attending the function for the Wellington Garden in China
- encouraging business development and commercial opportunities, such as Ninox television company's cooperation with a Beijing television station, an education exchange project, and the opening of a Wellington corner at the Xiamen City Library.

4. Discussion

4.1 Purpose

The overall purpose of the visit is to enhance relationships with our Chinese sister cities Beijing and Xiamen. Mayor Prendergast's visit will help promote Wellington on the international stage and create business opportunities for Wellington companies at a time when trade between New Zealand and China is expanding in the wake of the recently signed Free Trade Agreement.

The Free Trade Agreement opens up a range of new possibilities for Wellington companies in China. Important aspects of this are - the way in which relationships developed and strengthened over time are critical from a Chinese (and New Zealand) perspective, and the way in which city government is regarded. The involvement of city government and city officials can be invaluable in terms of "opening doors".

Mayor Prendergast will visit Beijing, Xiamen and Hong Kong. There will be high-level meetings with senior central government officials and the Mayors of each city. The New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade is very supportive of these visits and our ability to maintain strong relationships with key Chinese officials.

Our status as the capital has enabled us to establish a sister city relationship with Beijing in 2006. That is alongside a context where central government maintains a country-to-country relationship and is responsible for the political position of New Zealand in respect of matters like international treaties and human rights. The city-to-city relationship between Wellington and Beijing is an important component of these connections between the two countries.

4.2 Draft Itinerary

The itinerary is not fully confirmed yet, but the following is a list of activities already identified for the trip.

Beijing (7 - 11 August)

- Mayor Prendergast will be hosted by the Mayor of Beijing. The Beijing Government will arrange two full days' activities, including attending the Opening Ceremony of 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, paying a visit to the Beijing Planning Exhibition Hall and attending the reception for Sister Cities Mayors.
- Official meetings with the Deputy Mayor of Beijing, Beijing Foreign Affairs Office and Beijing Landscaping Bureau to discuss their possible support for the Chinese Garden in Wellington.
- The Mayor will appear on television in Beijing to talk about the Sister City relationship between Wellington and Beijing and also promote business opportunities in Wellington.

- NZ Ambassador Tony Brown will arrange for Mayor Prendergast to join the Governor-General of New Zealand the Hon Anand Satyanand and Susan Satyanand for a luncheon at the New Zealand Embassy in Beijing.
- NZ Olympic Committee will arrange for Mayor Prendergast to attend one of the NZ team's functions and some matches.
- Meeting with Madam Li Xiaolin, Vice President of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC).

Xiamen (11 – 13 August)

- The Xiamen Municipal Government will host the Mayor's visit.
- Based on the Memorandum of Understanding for Co-operation between the Cities of Wellington and Xiamen in 2003, Xiamen will be happy to provide technical and material assistance for the Chinese Garden in Wellington. Mayor Prendergast will seek clarification of Xiamen's support with respect to the Garden and ongoing maintenance.
- The sculpture "Whalerider" designed by Anneke Borren will be displayed in the Wellington Garden for the Xiamen Garden Expo.
- Attending education and business activities such as attending the opening function for the Wellington Corner at Xiamen City Library, and paying a visit to the Xiamen King Long United Automotive Industry Co Ltd.
- Holding a meeting with the Xiamen Culture Bureau regarding the Artist Residency Programme and paying a visit to Xiamen Hospital to discuss medical student exchanges.

Hong Kong (13 - 14 August)

- A Wellington-themed Reception will be hosted by Mayor Prendergast at the NZ Consulate-General's Residence.
- Business calls on Director of the HK Academy for Performing Arts, Permanent Secretary of Home Affairs and Artistic Director of the HK International Arts Festival.
- An afternoon tea with 12 HK student ambassadors who recently returned from NZ and several students who have spent three weeks in Wellington language institutions.
- NZ Chamber of Commerce Breakfast.

5. Timing of visit

The scheduled timing for the trip is 6-15 August 2008.

6. Cost

The approximate cost for the Mayor is estimated as follows:

China	
Mayor's travel	\$8896
Accommodation	\$192
Meals	\$124
Transport	\$248
Incidentals	\$140
Total	Approx. \$9600

These costs would be met from the International Relations (COST01 C145) budget. Both Beijing and Xiamen local governments will cover the accommodation, meal and transportation costs for Mayor Prendergast during her stay in Beijing and Xiamen.

7. Conclusion

Council approval is required for the Mayor's travel to China to allow the relevant travel arrangements to be confirmed. There is good basis for these visits in terms of fitting with the City Council's international relations commitments and strengthening the Sister City relationships with China.

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Supporting Information

1) Strategic Fit / Strategic Outcome

The recommendations in the paper support Council's overall vision of Creative Wellington – Innovation Capital, and this project is a strong fit with the economic development strategy .

2) LTCCP/Annual Plan reference and long term financial impact

Funding from Cost01, C145..

3) Treaty of Waitangi considerations

No direct implications for Treaty of Waitangi considerations.

4) Decision-Making

This is not a significant decision in terms of the Local Government Act 2002.

5) Consultation

a) General Consultation

None required

b) Consultation with Maori

No specific consultation with Maori.

6) Legal Implications

No legal implications.

7) Consistency with existing policy

The recommendations in the report are consistent with existing policy.