

Register now for 2004 NZ Sister Cities Conference

Prime Minister Helen Clark will officially open the NZ Sister Cities Conference 2004 in Christchurch from 24-27 March. We understand this is the first ever NZ Sister Cities Conference to be opened by the Prime Minister.

Excellent speakers, challenging workshops and plenty of networking opportunities are just some of the reasons to attend the 2004 NZ Sister Cities Conference (24-27 March) in Christchurch.

Christchurch Deputy Mayor Lesley Keast, Chair of the Conference Organising Committee says the conference promises to be a rewarding event for Mayors, Councillors, city officials and volunteers involved in sister cities programmes.

"Sharing the Knowledge" is what it's all about and through some great local speakers and the success of their sister city experiences we'll be doing exactly that. With day themes of Peace & Friendship, Culture and Education/Economy there promises to be something of interest for everyone."

Highlights of the conference programme include NZ Ambassador to Korea David Taylor, Australian High Commissioner to NZ Dr Allan Hawke, peace activist Dr Kate Dewes, Professor Tom Furness, founder of the Human Interface Technology (HIT) Lab recently set up at Canterbury University, an off-shoot of the Seattle lab, and Jennie Lee from the City of Casey, Australia, who will share her extensive experience and knowledge on young people and sister cities.

A multi-cultural lunch at Christchurch's recently developed Sister Cities Gardens, A 'Dine Around', a fun mystery evening, an afternoon tour and the Air New Zealand Awards dinner will all enable ample opportunities for valuable networking with sister city colleagues from around NZ, Australia and Asia.

For anyone wanting to establish friendships in China, Japan and Korea - this is the opportunity. A multi-provincial Chinese delegation led by Madame Li Xiaolin will attend the conference, along with NZ Ambassador to Korea David Taylor, who, as a keynote speaker, will talk about 'Business Elements in Sister City Relationships'. The Japanese Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR), Sydney has made a special commitment to the conference by sponsoring the Air New Zealand Awards Dinner. Its Director General, Keisuke Tsukada will attend the conference dinner.

We are very pleased that Mme Li Xiaolin, Vice President of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC) will return to New Zealand this year, leading a 17 person multi-provincial Chinese delegation to the conference, one of three Chinese delegations which will be attending. New Zealand now has 20 formal sister city relationships with China and several others are being explored. This is a great opportunity for further links to be considered.

Full details of the conference programme are available on the conference website www.sistercitiesconference2004.org.nz. It is possible to register online.

If you would like any further information or a conference programme posted to you please contact Sue McFarlane, ph 03 941 8959 or email Sue.McFarlane@ccc.govt.nz