

Subject **Local Government New Zealand Mayoral Forum, Xiamen, China
6-8 September 2019.**

Prepared By Meng Foon (Mayor)

Meeting Date 08 October 2015

Report to COUNCIL for noting

SUMMARY

Thank you all for your support for my visit to Xiamen to attend the Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ) Forum and the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC).

I have a montage of photographs to support this report which are for Council records.

70th Anniversary Commemoration of Victory in the War of Resistance against Japan 1945-2015 in Beijing

Prior to the forum I visited Beijing to attend the Commemoration of 70th Anniversary of Victory in the War of Resistance against Japan 1945-2015 at the invitation of the Chinese Embassy in New Zealand – the first I have received from them since becoming mayor. It was a great honour to be invited.

It was the first time a military parade had been held in Tiananmen Square. The parade was 15 – 20 kilometres in length consisting of about 12,000 troops and various military hardware which ended with a fly over by fixed wing drones and choppers. The first vehicles in the parade were for the veterans and their wives which I thought was the best part as it acknowledged those who had been part of the struggle.

Mayoral Forum in Xiamen

The purpose of the forum was to build on relationships made during President Xi visit to Auckland for the first mayoral forum.

The investors who travelled with me were:

- Jacky Ming Yang – investor in Longbush Juice
- Alan Lai Chairman and controlling owner of PGG Wrightson who is investing in a new \$6m facility in Gisborne.
- Willian Yuan – CEO Bank of China, New Zealand

Xiamen city is about 1.5 hours flight to the north of Hong Kong. It is a very busy city with a population of 4.5 million people and a skyline forest of construction cranes. They have a beautiful beach which is public space. Tourism is the main industry with about 60 million tourists visiting annually.

The forum started with welcome speeches and responses where local government representatives were led in and was followed with a banquet that evening.

The following day consisted of mayoral presentations from 12 New Zealand mayors and 13 Chinese mayors from various regions.

Each mayor was given five minutes to present. My presentation was in mandarin and focused on presenting the many sectors of our economy and giving confidence to investors that we already have a large number of Asian investors in Tairāwhiti such as:

- Juken New Zealand Ltd – Japan
- PGG Wrightson – Chinese, Hong Kong
- Hikurangi Forest Farms – Chinese, Malaysian
- Ernslaw One – Chinese, Malaysian
- Matawhero Honey – Chinese, China
- Cedenco – Japan
- Longbush Juice – Chinese, China partnership

Roger Dickie gave me some brochures and Barry Foster of <http://alchemybeverages.com/FirstKnight.aspx> asked me to push honey mead products. Some of Roger's brochures were taken from the trade table so hopefully he will be contacted.

I believe Chinese city leaders now know where Gisborne is and that networking will open doors for new enterprises. The PGG Wrightson networks should be of future benefit to our region.

I hear that Chinese people are ready to invest but want to know what proposals Tairāwhiti has to offer.

In attendance were John McKinnon, New Zealand Ambassador in China and Rebecca Needham Consulate General in Guangzhou.

John McKinnon commented that it was a big deal for the mayors of the larger cities to be at this two day event as it received a lot of media attention and resulted in many collaborations.

A declaration was signed on a huge board reaffirming our commitment to work together.

Huawei Group, Fuzhou city in Jiangxi Province

Following the forum I went to Fuzhou city in Jiangxi province with Chairman Lai of PGG Wrightson to visit one of their transport logistic businesses known as the Huawei Group consisting of:

- 2000 taxis
- 200 London style taxis
- 500 trucks
- 250 city delivery vans
- 500 buses

All the vehicles are APP integrated (those little things on your iPhone) which track movement, time, pricing, driver revenue, etc.

The Huawei Group also have a large seafood and food wholesale distribution building about four times the area of Pak "N" Save which they are further expanding.

China is not slowing down at all, it is still buzzing with enterprise and expansion. While China started off on a lower Gross Domestic Product base, it is now developed - 7% GDP is a ton of economic activity.

Asia is at our door step and there is a great opportunity to build on the contacts and relationships made through this visit.

As the future of trade is mainly in the APEC region it would be good for Activate Tairawhiti to establish an APEC Asian Pacific economic department. Activate Tairawhiti could also identify Tairawhiti businesses for investment by Chinese.

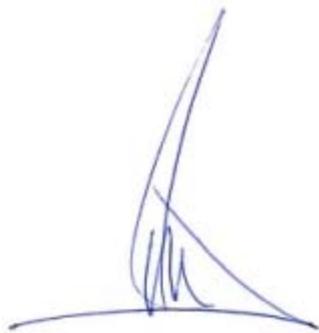
I declare that I had more than \$300 worth of benefit in kind from my host during this visit which was mainly in the form of airfares, train tickets, accommodation, meals, entertainment and some gifts most of which I have given to Makaraka School pupils for Chinese language week.

I have a lot of information for you to read in your own time.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Council:

- 1 receives the report**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Meng Foon', written over a horizontal line.

Meng Foon
Mayor