

ROTORUA LAKES COUNCIL

Mayor
Members
COUNCIL

**BUSINESS CASE - MAYOR'S ATTENDANCE AT SISTER CITY 100 YEAR ANNIVERSARY
COMMEMORATIONS**

Report prepared by: Tania Togatama

Report reviewed by: Gina Rangī

Report approved by: Gina Rangī

1. TE PŪTAKE**PURPOSE**

In May 2023 Mayor Tapsell received an invitation from the Mayor of Beppu City to attend the Beppu City 100 year anniversary celebrations. The celebrations are scheduled for the 6th and 7th April 2024.

The purpose of this report is to advise Councillors of the upcoming 100 year anniversary celebrations of Beppu City Council - a Sister City of Rotorua since 1987, and to seek Council approval for travel and accommodation costs for the Mayor, supported by an interpreter, to attend the commemorations in Beppu City.

This report also includes a recommendation that to optimise this opportunity, the Mayor visit Rotorua's Sister City in Wuzhong, China - a Sister City of Rotorua since 2000.

**2. HE TŪTOHUNGA
RECOMMENDATION**

- 1. That the report 'Business Case - Mayor's Attendance at Sister City 100 Year Anniversary Celebration' be received.**
- 2. That Council approve the cost of flights and accommodation for Mayor Tapsell, and an interpreter, to attend the 100 year anniversary celebrations of Beppu City Council, Japan, 6th and 7th April 2024.**
- 3. That Council approves the additional cost of flights and accommodation for Mayor Tapsell to visit Rotorua's Sister City in Wuzhong, China.**
- 4. That Council note that income generated by delegates visiting Rotorua Lakes Council will exceed the cost of this proposed travel.**

3. TE TĀHUHU BACKGROUND

Rotorua Lakes Council has four sister cities: Beppu (Japan), Klamath Falls (USA), Lake Macquarrie (Australia) and Wuzhong District of Suzhou City (China). These relationships are long standing and were undertaken via the international Sister Cities programme between 1962 and 2000. The international programme seeks to foster communications across borders to promote the mutual exchange of ideas, people and materials in cultural, educational, youth, sports, municipal, professional and technical projects.

Over recent decades Council has seen a decline in active contact with some of its sister cities, however the relationships between Rotorua and our sister cities in Beppu and Wuzhong are enduring.

Beppu City, Japan

Rotorua has had a Sister City relationship with Beppu City since 1987. When established, the relationship was seen as being mutually beneficial due to both cities being sited in geothermal locations, both being recognised as Spa Cities and both having strong interests in tourism. Former Mayor Graham Hall notes that over the years “ successive Mayors of both cities, with strong support from their communities, have progressed a mutual exchange of ideas and people with culture, education, youth, sport, and municipal and business projects.”

In recent years, prior to 2019 and the Covid pandemic, Rotorua Lakes Council and others in our community regularly hosted delegations, rugby tours, school (Western Heights, John Paul College and Rotorua Boys High School) and University visits from Beppu. There were also rugby tours, community delegations and school visits to Beppu over this time. Mayor Chadwick visited Beppu on two occasions in 2014 and 2016 to foster good relations and support spa/tourism opportunities.

The relationship was particularly active between 2016 and 2019 when Rotorua Lakes Council provided advice and support to Beppu City Council on preparing Beppu as a host city for the 2019 Rugby World Cup and supported Beppu’s efforts to host the All Blacks.

A current initiative being explored by the Beppu Chamber of Industry and Commerce is a proposed mutual exchange program through rugby for high school students, supported fully by Beppu City’s business community.

Wuzhong District, China

Rotorua established its Sister City relationship with Wuzhong District, Suzhou City, in 2000. At that time, the relationship was seen as beneficial due to Wuzhong’s strong linkage and close proximity to Shanghai; and its fit with Rotorua’s target markets - education and tourism. While this relationship has not seen the same level of activity as the Beppu relationship, there is regular contact. The last visit of a Mayor and Councillor to Wuzhong was in 2017.

4. **TE MATAPAKI ME NGĀ KŌWHIRINGA** **DISCUSSION AND OPTIONS**

In May 2023 Mayor Tapsell received an invitation from the Mayor of Beppu City, Mr Yasuhiro Nagano, to attend the Beppu City 100-year anniversary celebrations. The celebrations are scheduled for the 6th and 7th April 2024 (See attachment 1).

As part of the invitation, Beppu City Council has offered to cover the costs of lodging, meals, transportation upon arrival in Beppu City, and attendance at events for the mayor and entourage, totalling three persons for two nights.

Council's Sister City Relationship Policy and Mayoral and Elected Representatives International Travel Policy requires that requests for travel that relate to Sister City relationships be supported by a business case that outlines the benefits of the travel against the following criterion:

- The travel/activity must support council's vision, business objectives and aspirations for the future as encapsulated in the Long Term Plan, or
- The travel must support council's current priorities and/or flagship projects.

This proposed travel to Council's Sister cities in Japan and China has two key objectives, based on renewing our city's international relationships, that have been seriously affected by the two-year closure of Rotorua's borders during Covid 19.

1. The first objective, **to renew the close community ties between Rotorua and its two most significant sister cities**, is an acknowledgement to the citizens of Beppu and Wuzhong and the many individuals and groups in our own community who have their own relationships with Beppu City and Wuzhong, that this significant relationship has resumed.

As well as attending the commemorative events in Beppu, the Mayor's Office is preparing an itinerary for Mayor Tapsell that will include meetings with Mayor Nagano and with members of the Oita Prefecture New Zealand Friendship Association – re-establishing the civic ties between our cities. It will also include a visit to Beppu Shosei High School – a sister city school that has a strong and active relationship with Western Heights High School. 8,000 students from Beppu have visited Rotorua since the exchange programme began in 2001. Exchanges have recently been re-established for social, cultural and economic benefit.

The Mayor's Office is also in contact with Wuzhong City Council to identify similar opportunities to meet with Council leaders and identify exchange opportunities.

2. The second objective, **to renew and seek new commercial relationships between Rotorua and its two most significant sister cities** is an acknowledgement that business to business relationships between our communities has also suffered due to the border closures during Covid.

The Mayor's Office is also working through their counterparts at Beppu City Council to seek meetings with the representatives from the Beppu Chamber of Industry and Commerce.

A current initiative being explored by the Beppu Chamber of Industry and Commerce is a proposed mutual exchange program through rugby for high school students, supported fully by Beppu City's business community.

An opportunity for Mayor Tapsell to view an Onsen Spa and share information on Rotorua's spa industry, including recent developments, is also being investigated. The strong cultural elements of these geothermal offerings also make this a unique opportunity for sharing insights and learnings for success.

The Mayor's Office is also in contact with Wuzhong City Council to identify similar opportunities to meet with Council leaders.

See attachment 2 for a copy of the Mayor's draft itinerary.

5. TE TINO AROMATAWAI ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The decisions or matters of this report are not considered significant in accordance with the Council's Significance and Engagement Policy.

6. NGĀ KŌRERO O TE HAPORI ME TE WHAKATAIRANGA COMMUNITY INPUT/ENGAGEMENT AND PUBLICITY

Consultation on this matter is not being undertaken as the policies that relate to this business case gives decision making powers to council.

7. HE WHAIWHAKAARO CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 Mahere Putea Financial/Budget Considerations

The estimated costs for flights and accommodation related to Japan and China are included in the table below, noting that:

- Beppu city will cover the costs of lodging, meals, transportation upon arrival in Beppu City, and attendance at events for the mayoral party, totalling three persons for two nights.
- Income from income generating delegations hosted since August 2023 by Mayor Tapsell will exceed the cost to Council of the proposed travel. The current income generated is \$3,800.00. This income is expected to increase before the Mayor travels in 2024. In the past this has averaged \$23,500.00 per year. Therefore the cost of this travel will eventually be balanced out.

Option 1:

Fly Auckland-Tokyo-Oita-Tokyo-Auckland (No China stopover/visit)

Air New Zealand/Air Nippon = \$2270 per person

Option 2:

Fly Auckland-Tokyo-Oita-Tokyo-Shanghai-Auckland \$3045 per person

Accommodation costings

Tues 2/4	Auckland - to be arranged - PC sum	\$250	
Wed 3/4	Overnight Tokyo Narita - Hilton Tokyo Narita	\$235	
Thur 4/4	Amanek Beppu Yula-Re	\$454	
Fri 5/4	Amanek Beppu Yula-Re	\$454	
Sat 6/4	Not required		
Sun 7/4	Not required		
Mon 8/4	Amanek Beppu Yula-Re	\$454	
Tues 9/4	Amanek Beppu Yula-Re	\$454	
Wed 10/4	Own arrangements		Subtotal Akl/Japan \$2301
Thur 11/4	Own arrangements		
Fri 12/4	Own arrangements		
Sat 13/4	Own arrangements		
Sun 14/4	Own arrangements		
Mon 15/4	Suzhou Marriott Hotel	\$235	
Tue 16/4	Suzhou Marriott Hotel	\$235	
Wed 17/4	Shanghai - Ramada Plaza Pudong Airport	\$250	
			Subtotal China \$720
	ACCOMMODATION TOTAL		\$3021

Total - airfares & accommodation

Option	Airfares	Accommodation	Total
1 - Japan only	\$2270	\$2301	\$4571
2 - Japan/China	\$3045	\$3021	\$6066

Total costs:

Projected cost for Mayor Tania Tapsell and Interpreter to attend Beppu celebrations and various meetings 3 days in Beppu:

Mayor \$6066 (return via China)

Interpreter \$4571 (return from Tokyo)

\$10,637

7.2 Kaupapa Here me ngā Hiraunga Whakariterite Policy and planning implications

The proposal for travel to China by the Mayor and the Interpreter on behalf of Rotorua Lakes Council relates to the following council policies:

- Sister City Relationship Policy (see attachment 3)
- Mayoral and Elected Representatives International Travel Policy (see attachment 4)

7.3 Tūraru Risks

If travel is approved it is likely that there will be interest from the media and others in the community related to costs.

There have not been Mayoral visits to Beppu or Wuzhong since 2016 and 2017 respectively. If civic and commercial links with our sister cities are not maintained they may be difficult to re-establish.

7.4 Te Whaimana Authority

In accordance with the Sister City Policy and the Mayoral and Elected Representatives International Travel Policy this business case may be approved by a recommendation from the Chief Executive to council.

8. NGĀ ĀPITI HANGA ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Invitation to Mayor to attend Beppu City 100-year celebration.

Attachment 2: Mayor's proposed itinerary.

Attachment 3: Sister City Relationship Policy

Attachment 4: Mayoral and Elected Representatives International Travel Policy

Attachment 1: Invitation to Mayor to attend Beppu City 100-year celebration



Beppu City Hall
1-15 Kaminoguchi-cho
Beppu City, Oita 874-8511
JAPAN

25th May 2023

Mayor Tania Tapsell
Civic Centre 1061 Haupapa Street
Private Bag 3029
Rotorua Mail Centre Rotorua 3046
NEW ZEALAND

Dear Ms. Tania Tapsell, Mayor of Rotorua City,

It is a great pleasure to be sending you this letter for the first time from your sister city, Beppu City, Oita Pref., Japan.

I am NAGANO Yasuhiro, Mayor of Beppu City, recently elected to my third term as mayor of Beppu City in the April 23rd mayoral election.

I assume you have been very busy doing a lot of duties as Mayor of Rotorua since taking office as mayor last October. In the meantime, we have heard that you will give birth to a baby girl next month. We would like to offer our heartfelt congratulations.

We concluded a sister city agreement with your city in July 1987 and celebrated the 35th anniversary of our affiliation last July. We have had a sister school relationship, mutual school exchanges, and sports exchanges such as rugby, which have been invaluable for our children. In addition, both cities share a common resource in the form of hot springs, and we are proud that we can continue to cooperate with each other in many ways in the future.

I have been informed that Mr. Nishi, Chairperson of the Oita Prefecture NZ Friendship Association, Chairperson of the Beppu City Rugby Association, and Chairperson of the Beppu Chamber of Commerce and Industry, will be visiting your city to propose a mutual exchange program through rugby for high school students. Beppu City's business community will provide full support for the program, and Beppu City is also looking forward to the promotion of exchange.



As you may be already aware, he has often promoted mutual exchange between students of the two cities and has provided much support for our sister city exchange programs. We would like to ask for the cooperation of your city in this mutual exchange.

In the coming year, our city will celebrate its 100th anniversary. A ceremony is planned for April 2024, to which our exchange cities will be invited. On the occasion of the 90th anniversary, we were honored to have Mr. and Mrs. Chadwick, Mayor of Rotorua. We are afraid that the ceremony will be held while your child is young, but we would be delighted if you could join us.

We will inform you of the detailed schedule and content of the ceremony once they are determined.

Rotorua is going to be a cold season from now on, please take good care of yourself.

Sincerely yours,

NAGANO Yasuhiro
Mayor of Beppu City

Attachment 2: Draft Mayor's proposed itinerary

Tues 2 April	Drive or fly to Auckland - TBC
	Overnight Auckland - to be arranged
Wed 3 April	Fly Auckland to Tokyo
	Overnight Tokyo Narita
Thur 4 April	Fly Tokyo to Oita. Transfer to Beppu TBC
	Overnight Beppu
Fri 5 April	Meeting with Mayor Nagano TBC
	Overnight Beppu
Sat 6 April	Welcome reception - Beppu 100 year celebration - confirmed
	Accommodation met by Beppu City - confirmed
Sun 7 April	Hot Springs Festival - Beppu 100 year celebration - confirmed
	Accommodation met by Beppu City - confirmed
Mon 8 April	Visit to Beppu Shosei High School and meeting with Mr Kenji Nishi (Honorary citizen of Rotorua) TBC
	Overnight Beppu
Tues 9 April	Visit to Onsen Spa TBC
	Overnight Beppu
Wed 10 April	Fly Beppu to Tokyo - to check - own arrangements on arrival
Thur 11 April	Own arrangements
Fri 12 April	Own arrangements
Sat 13 April	Own arrangements
Sun 14 April	Own arrangements
Mon 15 April	Fly Tokyo-Shanghai. Transfer to Suzhou TBC
	Overnight Suzhou
Tues 16 April	Meetings to be arranged. Mayor of Wuzhong and other contacts at suggestion of Mayor?
	Overnight Suzhou
Wed 17 April	Left clear for further meetings if required. Transfer back to Shanghai afternoon.
	Overnight Shanghai
Thurs 18 April	Fly Shanghai to Auckland
Fri 19 April	Fly or drive to Rotorua

Attachment 3: Sister City Relationship Policy**8.5 SISTER CITY RELATIONSHIP POLICY**

Date Adopted	Next Review	Officer Responsible
8 December 2016	1 December 2019	Group Manager, Strategy

Policy Purpose:

To guide decision making in relation to council's sister city relationships.

Policy:

Rotorua Lakes Council (Council) has four sister cities: Beppu (Japan), Klamath Falls (USA), Lake Macquarrie (Australia) and Wuzhong District of Suzhou City, China. These relationships are long standing and were undertaken via the international Sister Cities programme between 1962 and 2000. The international programme seeks to foster communications across borders to promote the mutual exchange of ideas, people and materials in cultural, educational, youth, sports, municipal, professional and technical projects.

Over recent years Council has seen a decline in active contact with the majority of its sister cities. As part of the 2016 review all relationships are considered null and void unless contact is initiated and sustained by current sister cities and when that contact is considered beneficial to Council.

Proposed travel that relates to a sister city relationship needs to be supported by a business case that outlines the benefits of the travel against the following criterion:

The travel/activity must support council's vision, business objectives and aspirations for the future as encapsulated in the Long-term Plan, or

The travel/activity must support council's current priorities and/or flagship projects.

The business case to be approved by a recommendation from the CEO to council.

Generally travel costs of accompanying persons will not be paid for.

At the conclusion of the travel the elected representative/staff member is required to provide a written report to council.

This policy does not include travel by elected representatives that has been undertaken at the request of and paid for by other international, national or local organisations; including Rotorua Economic Development. Such travel may be undertaken at the discretion of the elected representative.

Attachment 4: Mayoral and Elected Representatives International Travel Policy

8.3 MAYORAL AND ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL POLICY

Date Adopted	Next Review	Officer Responsible
8 December 2016	1 December 2019	Group Manager, Strategy

Policy Purpose:

To guide decision making in relation to international travel undertaken by the Mayor and/or councillors as elected representatives of the Rotorua District, that is not covered by 23.1 Sister City Relationship Policy.

Policy:

There are occasions when the Mayor and/or elected representatives may be invited or required to attend international events overseas as representatives of Rotorua at the cost of the ratepayer.

Proposed travel needs to be supported by a business case that outlines the benefits of the travel against the following criterion:

1. The travel/activity must support council's vision, business objectives and aspirations for the future as encapsulated in the Long-term Plan, or
2. The travel/activity must support council's current priorities and/or flagship projects.

The business case to be approved by a recommendation from the CEO to council.

Generally travel costs of accompanying persons will not be paid for.

At the conclusion of the travel the elected representative is required to provide a written report to council.

This policy does not include travel by the Mayor and/or elected representatives that has been undertaken at the request of and paid for by other international, national or local organisations; including Rotorua Economic Development. Such travel may be undertaken at the discretion of the elected representative.