

China recognises Invercargill - Suqian relationship



Invercargill is the 2018 recipient of an award by two prominent Chinese organisations for its contribution to its sister city relationship with Suqian.

AN email on Wednesday this week from the Foreign Affairs Office in Suqian advised that Invercargill has been named as a recipient of the China International Friendly City Award for Exchange and Co-operation. This award honours foreign friendly cities that have made outstanding contributions to exchanges and co-operation between friendly cities in various fields.

The award has been conferred by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC) and China International Friendship Cities Association (CIFCA). Representatives of the CPAFFC were in Invercargill in May 2017 to attend the Sister Cities New Zealand national conference.

The email from Suqian included a letter from the President of the CPAFFC and CIFCA and the Mayor of Wuhan City to Mayor Tim Shadbolt. The letter has invited Mr Shadbolt to lead a delegation to the 2018 International Friendly Cities Conference in Wuhan, China from 14-16 November, where the

award ceremony will take place. **This invitation has only just been received in the last few hours (at the time of writing) and the opportunity for this to be discussed has not yet occurred.**

In advising Invercargill of the award, Suqian Foreign Affairs representative Wang Xiaohui made the following comments: "Since Suqian and Invercargill became sister cities in 2013, we have kept close contacts. We have successfully co-operated in the fields of education, sports, trade and culture. This award not only honours Invercargill, but is also recognition for our co-operation, and encouragement for the next exchange and further co-operation."

Ms Wang also included an aerial photograph of progress of the New Zealand garden in the Santai Mountain Forest Park, which shows the distinctive koru design of the pathways beginning to take shape. Suqian has also made inquiries about including Maori carvings in the garden and we are hoping to meet with Dean Whaanga to discuss this next week.

Scooter is at your service!

BY MARK RADCLIFFE - Information Services Manager



The Scooter Team: Grant Smith, Mario Leano, Karen Drummond, David Whelan, Mark Radcliffe and Bjorn Patterson. Absent, Phillip Brown.

COUNCIL'S Information Services team introduced a new Service Desk system called Scooter in mid-August. Using Scooter staff are able to:

- Search for tips, tricks and help with performing IT-related tasks, and solutions to known issues.
- Log a request for help with an issue or a new service.
- Track and review your requests.
- View status notifications for any current IT issues, outages or upcoming maintenance.

By having visibility of all issues through Scooter, the Information Services Team and other support staff across Council are able to track and prioritise their workload, and quickly get issues to the right resource.

In conjunction with the launch of Scooter we established a single phone number to contact the Information Services Team, for when staff are unable to log a request through Scooter or for urgent issues. However, preference is for a request to be logged using Scooter, as this will help the issue to be assigned to the correct team or person more quickly.

Calling from within ICC: ext. 6600

Calling from outside ICC: 03 211 1600

Scooter has certainly proved popular – in less than a month since its launch, 325 calls have been logged across a whole range of subjects ranging from issues logging in, to more complex queries around Pathway and Objective.



Minerva moved for preservation

THE statue of Minerva is to be temporarily removed from its location outside the Museum and moved inside, to protect it from the elements while preservation treatment options are considered.

Museum staff advise that a conservation assessment carried out in March 2016 revealed that the statue was suffering from a number of serious problems that if not halted or slowed, would accelerate and spread, eventually resulting in structural failure.

Councillors may receive calls from members of the public who notice that assessment work is being conducted on Minerva. A report on this will be presented to the Infrastructure and Services Committee later this month. The report explains that during her temporary relocation the site will be occupied by site huts that will function as temporary offices for staff.

Who is Minerva?

It would be fair to say that the Greek goddess Minerva was a popular woman in her day, with her vast and diverse responsibilities as a patroness making her a go-to deity for many people. Among the fields of expertise over which she presided were medicine, commerce, the arts and crafts, music, poetry, and warfare. In the ancient world she was closely associated with the Greek goddess Athena, with both women acting almost interchangeably as icons of wisdom and rational thought, courage, inspiration, civilisation, law and justice, and artistic skill, particularly in the fields of spinning and weaving.

What is a Greek goddess doing in Invercargill and why is she significant to the city?

On 28 June 1870, a public meeting was held to discuss the establishment of an organisation dedicated to fostering popular education in the city. As a result of this meeting, the Invercargill Athenaeum was founded. Within a year a site had been obtained on Dee Street and the architect Angus Kerr was commissioned to design a building to house the new institution. A prominent feature of the design was a statue surmounting the roof, and in 1874 the organisers placed an order with Turner and Allen in London to supply them with a statue of Minerva, “the goddess of knowledge”.

The statue was cast, and arrived at Bluff aboard the barque Bolden in 1876. It was hoisted to the top of the building and unveiled with great pomp and ceremony on Saturday 1 July.



Photographer unknown, Untitled (Athenaeum, Invercargill), 1875-1881

At the time of the unveiling, the President of the Athenaeum Committee expressed the hope that it would be recognised by the people of Southland as “symbolic of the patronage of learning and wisdom, and the fine arts, which are the chief characteristics of advanced civilisation” and that she, and the values that she stood for, would long remain.

The early years did not run smoothly. Against advice, the committee had selected cast iron over bronze, meaning that the goddess soon sent streaks of rust down the façade of the building. As a result, a gutter had to be added to allow water to run off without defacing the pedestal. There were also factions who disapproved of Minerva’s presence, one suggesting that the statue should be replaced with a statue of Peter McEwan (the first President of the Athenaeum committee). But Minerva withstood both the elements and ideological attacks, keeping a watchful eye for many years over the books, journals, and museum collection (the foundation of the present-day Southland Museum and Art Gallery) that its subscribers were enthusiastically amassing.

In the early 1940s, Minerva was removed from the Athenaeum building due to safety concerns. The museum’s Director, John Sorensen, requested that the statue be relocated to the present site in Queens Park. While the building for which it was originally purchased is long gone, the statue lives on as a reminder of this structure and its legacy, which includes both the public library and museum collections. Minerva also remains the most prominent, and indeed rare, representation of womanhood in the central city – an important reminder of the massive contributions that women, both collectively and as individuals, have made to the local community.