

A photograph of three people walking in a park. On the left, a man in a white t-shirt and blue jeans. In the center, a woman in a white top, a yellow cardigan, and a red and black plaid skirt. On the right, a man in a red and blue striped shirt and brown pants. They are all smiling and looking towards each other. The background is filled with green trees and a paved path.

# International Relations Plan

Palmerston North

SMALL CITY BENEFITS, BIG CITY AMBITION

2018/21

Te Kaunihera o Papaioea  
Palmerston North City Council





To fulfil the vision of small city benefits, big city ambition the Council has adopted five goals. The Economic Development Strategy was developed to achieve **Goal 1: An innovative and growing city**, and this plan shows how the Council will contribute to achieving this goal through international relations.

To make the best use of the city's talents and resources and allow it to fulfil its potential, Council will strengthen regional, national and international connections to key markets. Council's goal is to build on the city's strengths and create new ones to ensure it has the strong, diverse and sustainable city economy that is fundamental to Palmerston North's future.

Many of the priority sectors have a strong international correlation, and Council's goal is to refocus and strengthen the city's international partnerships, including Sister Cities, to

support these emerging sectors and encourage investment, students, and visitors to the city. International education currently contributes \$68 million to the city economy. While other parts of New Zealand have recently experienced growth in international student numbers, Palmerston North's share has remained reasonably static. CEDA has a lead role in helping develop the region's international education sector, following the establishment of a leadership group in 2014.





**The purpose of the International Relations Plan is to *diversify the economy to reduce reliance on our traditional industries (Priority 3, Economic Development Strategy) and support an 'innovation economy' to underpin growth into the future (Priorities 3 and 4, Economic Development Strategy).***



## Where we are now



- Palmerston North is a hub of international activity, including education, research, science, business and trade - all part of what makes our city a prosperous, vibrant and innovative place to live.
- Our city has a lower international profile than larger New Zealand cities, which puts us at a disadvantage for attracting overseas opportunities and investment.
- Palmerston North has two Sister Cities – Missoula, USA (since 1982), Guiyang, China (since 1992), as well as a Friendship City with Kunshan, China (1996) and is exploring potential relations with Wageningen, The Netherlands, and Mihara, Japan.
- Most people are unaware of Palmerston North's international partner cities, their history, and current activities.
- Sister city activities have traditionally focused on cultural and educational exchange, but in recent years have begun to focus on economic connections and benefits.
- In 2015 the Council undertook a review of international relations activity and confirmed support for our international partner city relationships, while directing efforts towards greater economic outcomes.
- An international relations office was established in late 2016 with an increased focus on developing strategic international partnerships that support priority sectors.
- PNCC plays a role in helping to grow international education in our region through the Regional International Education Strategy 2016-2020, International Education Leadership Group and scholarships.
- Palmerston North is also signatory to the China New Zealand Mayoral Forum Xiamen Declaration to support ongoing sub-national cooperation with China to achieve economic development outcomes.
- The Mayor and PNCC have a role in formally welcoming international visitors that have economic, social or cultural significance for the city, on behalf of the community.
- Our city international relations activities are informed by central government strategy and capitalise on shared efforts.

## Where we want to be



- Palmerston North has an international reputation and competitive edge, attracting talent, investment, businesses, visitors and students to our city.
- International city partnerships (e.g. Sister Cities) are a platform for economic, educational, and cultural exchange.
- We have regular, positive dialogue and cooperation with our international partner cities, including digital connections.
- PNCC has prioritised a set of key international city partnerships and is focused on managing them well.
- Economic channels with international partner cities support the trade of goods and services.
- Our city is well-connected with international networks and institutions, supporting local growth and innovation.
- High-value business with international partners enhances our regional brand and drives better returns.
- Priority and emerging sectors in the region are supported to forge valuable international connections.
- International relationships support the flow of ideas and initiatives, allowing us to 'Think Global, Act Local'.
- The community is familiar with our international city relationships and has the opportunity to get involved.
- Young people have the opportunity to learn about other cultures and languages through our international relationships and education providers, supporting their future participation in the global community and economy.
- Our city is internationally recognised as a preferred destination in New Zealand for international education and research.
- We support Rangitāne o Manawatū having a key role in welcoming important international guests to our city, and increasingly as key partners in the economic development objectives of international relations.

## How we're going to get there

### Day to day / ongoing actions to achieve the purpose

- Promote our city's interests, objectives and brand to international partners.
- Effectively manage inbound and outbound official delegations, and relationships with embassies and high commissions.
- Encourage and support international partners to actively participate in our local economy.
- Welcome and encourage quality overseas international education providers that are partnering with institutions in our city.
- Encourage international business and investment opportunities to our region, especially in priority sectors.
- Help local businesses to access new export markets, integrate with global value chains and connect to international knowledge networks.
- Sponsor scholarships to help local education providers to attract international students and encourage exchange.
- Participate in the China New Zealand Mayoral Forum - ongoing (biennial).
- Develop agreements with existing international partner cities, and support their implementation.
- Develop criteria to assess and prioritise international city partnerships.
- Facilitate the establishment of Sister School relationships between local schools and international partner cities.
- Promote our international relationships at public events, such as language weeks and cultural festivals, and support our partner cities to do the same.
- Acquire valuable knowledge and insight from international partners in areas of mutual interest (e.g. city management, environmental sustainability, emergency management).

### Specific programmes to achieve the purpose (with timeframe)

- Establish an International Relations Policy to guide international partner city activity and visitor protocols (by end of 2018/2019).
- Develop cooperation roadmaps that plan out key activities with our priority partner cities (by end of 2018/2019).



## Actions contributing to Council's strategic themes

### a) Smart city practices

- Seek out valuable international networks and innovators, and share ideas and knowledge with our international partner cities which can be usefully applied to local issues of interest.

### b) Sustainable practices

- Ensure maintenance and momentum of international relationships through clearer policies, priorities and roles.
- Use international relationships to seek out best practices on common environmental sustainability issues.

### c) Iwi partnerships

- As a city, manaakitanga is strongest when practiced alongside mana whenua. We therefore will prioritise our partnership with Rangitāne o Manawatū to strengthen our key roles in welcoming international guests and leading civic engagement on behalf of the community.
- Work with iwi regionally to identify opportunities for Māori business and cultural exchange via international relationships and partnerships.



#### d) Strategic partnerships

- We work closely with the Central Economic Development Agency (CEDA) to market our region and attract international talent, investment, businesses, visitors and students to our city.
- We coordinate with community partners (e.g. Massey, UCOL, IPU, business networks, firms and community groups) to organize international activities and visits, and to identify ways for PNCC to add value to local efforts.
- We partner with national agencies, including MFAT, MBIE, NZTE, LGNZ, the diplomatic corps, Sister Cities NZ and the Asia NZ Foundation to align objectives and make the most of central resources and networks.

---

#### Measures of success


- Actionable agreements signed and implemented with our international partner cities
- Increase in activity with international partners, including business, education, tourism, digital and community initiatives
- More local events and activities that support international relations awareness, capability and business

---

Note: There are no specific Long-term plan levels of service for this plan.

---

#### Actions, and contributing programmes, considered but not funded in this plan

- Explore the establishment of voluntary groups interested in supporting partner city relations through community-led activities.
  - Establish active digital channels to communicate and collaborate with our key international partner cities.
- 
- A decorative wavy line in a light orange color that spans the width of the page, starting from the left edge and ending with a small loop on the right side.



**Palmerston North City Council**

W [pncc.govt.nz](http://pncc.govt.nz) | E [info@pncc.govt.nz](mailto:info@pncc.govt.nz) | P 356 8199 | Private Bag 11034, The Square, Palmerston North, 4442

ADOPTED JUNE 2018