



SUBMISSION

SISTER CITIES NEW ZEALAND SUPPORT FOR AN ALLIANCE BETWEEN AIR NEW ZEALAND AND AIR CHINA TO ESTABLISH DIRECT FLIGHTS BETWEEN AUCKLAND AND BEIJING

The Board of Sister Cities New Zealand is delighted that Air New Zealand and Air China are forming an alliance to establish routine direct flights between Auckland and Beijing. We therefore support their application to the Minister of Transport to gain approval for this alliance.

Sister Cities New Zealand's mandate is to establish international outreach on a people to people basis. We work to enhance existing Sister City relationships and where appropriate, look to assist local authorities in establishing new relationships.

The Sister City movement is a very regular user of the airline network, particularly Air New Zealand. The re-establishment of an Auckland Beijing direct link will provide greater choice for Sister City groups, particularly when travelling to northern China.

In supporting the approval of this application, we would make the following points:

- The number of Chinese sister city relationships is 32 out of the total 150 relationships in place nationwide and is the second largest number with any country.
- We receive constant queries from cities and towns across China looking to form new relationships with counterparts in New Zealand.
- Following the signing of the Free Trade Agreement in 2008, the number of mayoral visits, business delegations, and tour groups initiated by the Sister City movement have been steadily increasing over the last few years.
- We expect this trend will continue since an MOU was signed between Local Government New Zealand and CPAFFC (Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries) for establishment of Mayors' Forum last November when President Xi Jinping visited New Zealand. Already more New Zealand mayors are now travelling to China to support business, tourism and education opportunities and to renew old friendships and to establish new ones.
- Air New Zealand has been a primary sponsor for our organisation for the last 10 years. We are delighted that they are prepared to make a contribution to the ongoing growth and development of the Sister Cities movement.

Finally the establishment of this alliance will assist the ongoing development of the relationship between New Zealand and China particularly as people from both countries are coming to see the other as a great tourist destination.

The Board of Sister Cities New Zealand

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