

Memo

12 February 2019

To: The Mayor, Councillors, Independent Maori Statutory Board Members, Executive Leadership Team

Cc: Marguerite Delbet, GM – Democracy Services
 Jacques Victor, GM - Auckland Plan Strategy & Research

From: International Relations Unit

Subject: Refresh of the Global Partnerships and Strategy Unit and Global Engagement Activity Update – February 2019

Summary

This memo outlines the refresh of the GPS Unit and Auckland Council’s global engagement activity in February 2019. It also notes the activity outcomes in December 2018 and January 2019.

Action: For information

The GPS team has been undertaking a strategic refresh of its position and role in the Council group over the last few months. The main objective was to ensure the function is fit-for-purpose, sustainable and continues to achieve demonstrable benefits for the Council and the city.

Following a review including discussions key Council management, staff and a range of stakeholders, the following changes were proposed and took effect on 09 February.

- The GPS Unit will relocate from the Auckland Plan, Strategy and Research Department in the Chief Planning Office to Democracy Services in the Governance Division. This aligns to the Governing Body’s responsibility for Auckland’s international formal partnerships.
- The GPS Unit will be renamed “International Relations” in alignment with the sectoral norm for such functions in local government.
- The International Relations team will be made up of the four incumbent GPS staff members, including a new International Relations Manager.
- There is a net headcount reduction in this realignment of five FTE, however no staff have lost their roles.

Kimberley Wu, an Advisor in the team, has been appointed the International Relations Manager. Kimberley is highly capable and qualified, having spent five years with Council and holds a master’s degree of International Relations from Cambridge University.

GPS Manager, Nick McDonnell, having completed the review and realignment of the function finished with Council on 08 February. Nick is joining Air New Zealand to work on the Prime Minister’s Business Advisory Council as Public Policy Programme Manager.

The refreshed International Relations team will begin to communicate this change and some new focus areas with a wider group of stakeholders over the coming weeks.

Date	Key Activity – February 2019	Location
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3-5 February	Newcastle business delegation visit to Auckland to leverage. Virgin Australia's new direct flight service.	Auckland
4-5 February	Hamburg e-culture expert group visit to Auckland for smart cities focused conference	Auckland
12-13 February	Kakogawa student with special needs delegation annual visit to Auckland	Auckland
28 February	Visit to Council by MFAT Public Diplomacy Officers from European and African Embassies	Auckland

Key Activity - December 2018 & January 2019

The following is a list of key global activity facilitated by GPS and outcomes achieved:

Date	Activity	Location	Outcome
21-22 Jan	Visit by Buenos Aires City Council delegation focusing on Auckland's waste management and sustainability strategy.	Auckland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Best practice exchange.
29 Jan	Visit by Director of Japan Local Government Centre (Sydney office)	Auckland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussed a proposal from Fukuoka City to set up student Skype exchanges with Auckland schools
4 Dec	Mayor Goff opened the public address by Beatrice Fihn, Executive Director of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN – Nobel Peace Prize winner in 2017)	Auckland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Profiled NZ's nuclear-free stance and Auckland as the centre of that movement, and Auckland as a city for peace.
5-7 Dec	Nuclear Disarmament: Global Youth Forum (opened by Mayor Goff)	Auckland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Mayor engaged with youth leaders from the US, Japan and the Pacific and demonstrated Auckland's support for this MFAT-organised forum
6-8 Dec	Cr Darby attended Global Mayors' Forum and 2018 International Urban Innovation Conference	Guangzhou, China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivered presentation entitled 'Putting people first: Pedestrians and priorities in Tāmaki Makaurau – Auckland Demonstrated Auckland's support for the NZ-China relationship Reaffirmed the strong Auckland-Guangzhou sister city partnership
6 Dec	Ambassador of Vietnam to NZ called on Auckland Council	Auckland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussed the proposed visit by Mr. Nguyen Thanh Phong, Chairman of the People's Committee of Hochiminh City (the Mayor) to Auckland in April 2019.
13 Dec	First tri-city conference call with LA and Guangzhou re Tripartite-related activity linked to Techweek in Auckland 2019	Auckland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To progress proposed themes/focus sectors Advanced Tripartite programme Promotion of Techweek19

Next steps

- The International Relations unit will provide an update on key international activity each month.
- Enquiries about the information listed above or requests for additional information or support from the team can be directed to Kimberley Wu, International Relations Manager; (kimberley.wu@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz Mobile: 021 225 4035).