

## Speech for the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Sister City Relationship between Tendo and Marlborough

Your Worship, Mr John Leggett, Mayor of Marlborough,  
Mr Leo McKendry, former Mayor of Marlborough,  
Councillor Gerald Hope, Chair of the Marlborough District Council sister city  
committee,  
Councillor Nadine Taylor,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Kia ora.

Thank you very much for inviting me to the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the sister city relationship between Tendo City of Yamagata Prefecture, Japan, and Marlborough District, New Zealand. I am honoured to stand here before the current Mayor, and the former Mayor, who signed the original agreement, along with several others who have worked so hard to create and maintain the friendly relationship that we are celebrating today. This relationship is a result of 30 years of efforts and devotions from people on both sides: Mayors, Councillors, City and District Council officials, and countless volunteers and delegations from each city.

Earlier this year, Palmerston North hosted the annual Sister Cities Conference, at which the sister city agreement between Mihara City in Hiroshima Prefecture and Palmerston North was signed. This brings the number of sister city relationships between Japan and New Zealand up to 44; continuing to be the highest number that New Zealand has with another country. These 44 different relationships are widely varied in many ways, such as how long they have been established for, the reasons for officialising the relationship, or how active the relationship is. Since being signed in 1989, the relationship between Tendo and Marlborough has been strong, positive and very active; a true role model for newer sister cities to look up to.

As you know, the people of Tendo and Marlborough originally began communicating for the reason of fruit export, with each area being major cherry growers in their respective countries. The sister city relationship works, at its core, to promote mutual understanding and friendship through bilateral exchanges on a personal level, leading to mutual understanding and friendships between nations. Both Tendo and Marlborough have been

immensely successful in this, and for the relationship to have been brought about by cherries, with the very high regard that Japanese hold for the cherry blossom, this is very pleasing!

I am sure that many of you are aware that Japan will be hosting several global events very soon; namely: the Rugby World Cup, which starts within 80 days, the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2020, the World Masters Games in Kansai in 2021, and the World Expo 2025, to be held in Osaka. With these, I expect that there will be a large influx of New Zealanders visiting Japan. In fact, recently, the number of New Zealanders visiting Japan has been increasing year by year! I hope that many of you will be able to visit Japan to enjoy these exciting events while immersing yourselves in our country's culture and hospitality, especially alongside the people of Tendo city in particular.

Thank you.