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Chinese visitors star struck by New Zealand night sky

When you live in New Zealand it's easy to take things like the night sky for granted, but 12 Hauraki teens got to experience it through new eyes recently. Looking at the stars was a trip highlight for many of the 12 Chinese exchange students hosted by Paeroa, Waihi and Hauraki-Plains college students from 8 – 14 August.

"[New Zealand has] fresh air, sunshine, beautiful views, [you] can see the stars at night. In Jiading [you] can't see stars," said 16-year-old August Ma at a get-together for the students and their host families in the Paeroa War Memorial Hall last Thursday evening.

August was impressed with the wide range of opportunities available for college students in the District. Farm units, big playgrounds, woodworking classes and students working on a motorbike construction project are all things you wouldn't encounter at his school in Jiading, he said.

Sixteen-year-old Eva Yang, who only has pet goldfish at home, fell in love with her host family's black Labrador, Joneyvl Chen, also 16, experienced milking cows for the first time, and 17 year old Yuli Zhang enjoyed having a spa outside underneath the stars. Yuli also liked going to Waihi beach which she describes as "long" without the huge number of people you would find on Chinese beaches.

"Life step [in NZ] is slow but [the country is] beautiful. [the trip has] broadened my horizon and enriched my knowledge" said Yuli, who after trying fish and chips one night, ate it for lunch three days in a row.

In September, the 12 host students will travel to Jiading, 20 km from Shanghai, on a reciprocal visit. Part of the Hauraki-Jiading sister city partnership established in 2001, the Hauraki group's trip is



Above: Paeroa College year 13 student Amber Flemming and Jiading exchange student Joneyvl Chen check out the Waihi mining scene.

subsidised from the Council's sister cities fund, with the students also organising fundraising activities. Paeroa head girl Phoebe Buchanan says she would recommend hosting an exchange student to all her peers.

"It's a good chance to show Chinese students this jewel we call home. I'm hoping to get a better understanding of our culture through the comparison to Chinese culture," she said.

Hauraki District Council Community Development Officer, John McIver, who organises the exchange

every year, said each exchange brings different visitors but one thing that's always consistent is the level of engagement and participation exhibited by the Chinese visitors. This year was no exception. After delivering some heartfelt speeches at the Paeroa get-together, they entertained their hosts with a variety of impromptu singing and dancing performances. Hauraki students reciprocated with a rousing rendition of popular waiata, Te Aroha, led by Paeroa College principal Doug Black.

Originally from the U.K, he told the students he understands what travel does in terms of broadening the mind.

"I hope you've had experiences you wouldn't have had otherwise and that you've also had an exchange of cultures and learnt things you wouldn't have learnt otherwise," he said.

Waihi College teacher Justin Harper who grew up in a little place called Otaki, told the students he'd once had the privilege of going on a student exchange to a college in Levin, "which for those of you who know your lower North Island geography, is about 20 km away," he added.

"Kiwi kids – please look around today and make sure your Mums and Dads know how appreciative you are of this opportunity. I would have moved heaven and hell to have the opportunity you have," he said.

The Council believes the educational exchange component of the sister city agreement to be a small but valuable long term investment for when today's students become tomorrow's economic and political leaders in their respective countries.

WATER LEAKS

Are you vigilant with your water use and then surprised when you get a large water bill?

It's a good idea to do an overnight leakage test now and again. See how on our website http://www.hauraki-dc.govt.nz/services/rates/water_meters

This is a good way to find a leak in your plumbing system. The leak could be from the meter to the house or within the house. Any more than ten litres lost per hour is very significant and should definitely be investigated. Dripping taps and faulty toilet cisterns can waste a surprisingly large amount of water especially over the six months until a water bill comes out. Leaks are not always visible – just because you don't see a large wet or green patch on your lawn doesn't mean you don't have a leak.

This time of year it is quite common for pipes to burst with the cold frosty weather. When water freezes it expands, putting pressure on old pipes that have deteriorated over time. Water leaks and broken pipes can be a big problem for any homeowner. As water in supply pipes is under pressure, if a pipe or fitting springs a leak, the water usually sprays out with considerable force. Apart from wasting a large amount of water it has the potential to damage your home depending on its location. A pipe under the house may go unnoticed unless you detect a drop in pressure.

While there is Rates Remission Policy that includes remission of excess water rates to assist ratepayers who have excessive water rates due to a fault (leak), it is better to be vigilant to avoid the situation in the first place. It is your responsibility to have leaks repaired. If you need assistance you should contact your plumber. Currently Council's Remission Policy credits up to 50% of the excess consumption i.e. you pay what you normally pay plus half of the excess.

If you discover a leak on the roadside of your meter, or in the meter box, whether it is an emergency or not please call us. Our 24 hour, seven day service number is: (07) 862 8609 or 0800 734 834 (from within the district).

Put your earthquake plan to work

You may know what to do if an earthquake strikes while you're at home. But what if you're at work?

Indoors, your first action should still be to **Drop, Cover and Hold** – move no more than a few steps, drop to the floor, take cover under a desk, table, workbench or other sturdy piece of furniture, and hold on to it. If there's no suitable furniture nearby, sit on the floor next to an interior wall away from windows, and cover your head and neck with your arms.

When the shaking stops, help anyone who is injured, and select a leader. While it is frightening to stay in a building immediately after an earthquake, it's much safer than going outside unless there is obvious damage to the building.

Check to see what damage has occurred in the surrounding area; then work as a team to establish a safe route out of the building. Do take items such as your wallet, bag or coat. If you have a grab-bag or getaway kit, take it.

Use the stairs, not an elevator. Go to a safe clear place, which should be pre-arranged – bearing in mind that your normal fire evacuation assembly point may not be appropriate. After an earthquake, the location should be away from buildings, trees, streetlights and power lines, as these may fall and injure people.

If you're already **outside**, **drop to the ground and stay there until the shaking stops**. Then head to the pre-planned safe area.

Take a 'roll call' to ensure everyone is accounted for, and keep a note of when people leave and their intentions, such as walking home. Arrange to travel in groups where possible.

A great way to practise this response is to join ShakeOut 2015, the world's biggest earthquake drill, at 9:15 am on 15 October.

Over 70 Hauraki workplace participants have registered so far, and we're taking part as a Council. Your business or organisation can sign up at www.shakeout.co.nz.

Ngatea's on the move – find out how

The Hauraki District Council have embarked on a marketing campaign around Ngatea, promoting the township as the ideal town to relocate to. Join them and hear Marketing Consultant Jillian O'Neill share the launch of the campaign and hear how you can help promote your town for growth.



PUBLIC NOTICE

Creative Communities Scheme funding for local arts



Applications for funding assistance to local arts projects and initiatives within the territory of the Hauraki District Council are now being received.

The scheme's three funding criteria are:

- 1. Broad community involvement**
Your project will create opportunities for local communities to engage with and participate in arts activities;
- 2. Diversity** – Your project will support the diverse arts and cultural traditions of local communities, enriching and promoting their uniqueness and cultural diversity; and
- 3. Young people** – Your project will enable and encourage young people (under 18 years) to engage with and actively participate in the arts.

Application forms are available from the Council offices at: William Street, Paeroa; Rosemont Road, Waihi; Orchard Road, Ngatea.

Applications close 4:00pm Friday, 25 September 2015

for further information contact:
 Administrator - Creative Communities Scheme
 Hauraki District Council
 07 862 8609
 toll free within district 0800 734 834

Langley Cavers
 Chief Executive
 Hauraki District Council

PUBLIC MEETING
 Wed 2 September,
 7.30pm
 War Memorial Hall
 No RSVP required –
 all welcome

