



# HDC NEWS



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## China trip opens a world of opportunity

Their tickets are for China, but Paeroa College head girl Miranda Hodgson and Waihi College head boy Luke Fraser will have feet in many camps from August 1 to 9. The 17-year-olds have been chosen to attend the Jiading International Youth Friendship Camp with students from Japan, Korea, Ireland, Germany, Poland, Hungary, Serbia, and Montenegro – whose cities or districts, like Hauraki, have sister city partnerships with the Shanghai district of Jiading.

The young friendship ambassadors will share information about their respective homes and cultures, visit local tourist spots together, and take part in cultural experiences such as learning calligraphy, handcrafts and Chinese traditional manners. As guests of the People's Government of Jiading they'll be hosted in a hotel, paired with roommates from other countries.

Miranda and Luke are sharing in the expenses of their actual travel (airfares, visa and insurance), together with the Council. Part of the cost will be met from our sister cities fund, which we also use to support local students taking part in the Hauraki-Jiading annual educational exchange.

The pair will be accompanied by Councillor Julie Bubb, who with the other ward chairs interviewed six camp nominees and then had the tough job of settling on just two promising leaders: outgoing, high achievers able to speak clearly about their district and country. "We would have loved to send them all," says Julie.

In her own words, Miranda is an "enthusiastic, determined and confident young Maori woman; a leader by example who's committed to guiding and motivating others within a team environment". The accomplished all-round student and athlete has already travelled to Australia to represent New Zealand on the touch field, and says sporting opportunities have opened the door to many friendships. "Different cultures have always appealed to me. Now I want to broaden my horizons through exposure to the rich culture that China has to offer."

Meanwhile she has had an introduction to

Mandarin, thanks to lessons offered at Paeroa College as part of the Mandarin language programme established in the Ohinemuri Schools cluster in 2014.

Luke has likewise stood out academically, as a leader, and as a competitive sportsperson – particularly in basketball and football – as well as being a keen musician. He's looking ahead to university studies in health and medicine; and after visits to Australia and a year living in Papua New Guinea is "passionate about travelling and experiencing different cultures".

He adds that one aspect of cultural immersion he's especially looking forward to is "the food" – and Miranda says the same.

Julie has made one previous visit to China as a member of a Council sister city delegation. "This is an amazing opportunity for our students to mix [with their overseas peers] on a different level and get a wider view of the world," she says. I'm excited to be going with Luke and Miranda."

Last year, Joseph Goddard of Paeroa College and Tyla Watford-McGraph of Hauraki Plains College attended the inaugural Jiading International Friendship Camp, together with Hauraki Plains College teacher Denise Casey. Julie says Denise's tips and insights have been much appreciated and will definitely help in preparations for the 2016 trip.

"We didn't know what to expect," remembers Denise. Only on arrival in China did the group realise they should have prepared a power point presentation and a cultural performance. And despite English being the official language of the event, not everyone was proficient, so communication was a challenge – as was acclimatising to temperatures in the 40s.

However the mixing and mingling was definitely unforgettable.

This year's Hauraki representatives are taking everything on board, and are meeting and planning to make the very most of what Miranda describes as a "once in a lifetime opportunity".

## It's a Doggy New Year

As the saying goes, every dog has its day. For our District's approximately 4300 canine residents, that day is Friday, 1 July: the beginning of the new registration year for all dogs aged three months or over.

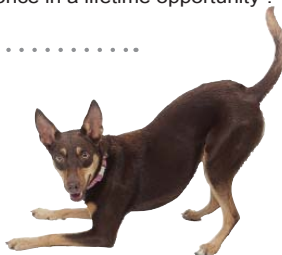
### Want to take care of registration from home?

If you're renewing an existing registration and there are no changes to the registration details, you can head to the Council website - [www.hauraki-dc.govt.nz](http://www.hauraki-dc.govt.nz) - and make the appropriate payment using the online credit card or debit card payment option we introduced last year. (Or you can pay by internet banking, but you will still need to sign and return the registration form).

If you have any changes to make to the information on your notice, or are registering a dog or puppy for the first time, you'll need to contact us so we can enter the correct details in the system.

### Prefer the "old dog" way?

You can continue to register your dog by mail; or in person at our Ngatea, Paeroa or Waihi offices. There we can accept payments by cash, Eftpos, credit card or cheque; and can issue tags on the spot.



### Want to pay less for registration?

Prompt payment of fees will ensure there are no penalty fees.

Apply before July 15 for our Responsible Owner scheme. For approved owners who meet the conditions, annual dog registration is reduced by \$30.

Have your dog de-sexed, thus qualifying for a \$15 rebate (a veterinary certificate must be supplied).

### Where does the money go?

Registration fees pay for the administration of an up-to-date dog database; educational and adoption programmes; dog pound facilities including feeding, care, and homing or euthanasia of stray dogs; general advice on dog care; property visits by Council staff; animal control; and a 24-hour call out service.

We strive to keep registration costs as low as possible, and have been able to hold them at the current level for the coming year. The only change to the fee structure is the introduction of a Responsible Owner Licence transfer fee, for people bringing dogs into Hauraki from another council district where they already hold Responsible Owner status.

## Are you entitled to a Rates Rebate?

Good news for low-income homeowners: the government has increased the thresholds for its rates rebates scheme, making more people eligible for a subsidy.

Ratepayers can now have a maximum annual income of \$24,440, plus \$500 for each dependant, to qualify for a full \$610 rebate. People with an income of up to \$40,000 may still be entitled to some assistance, depending on the rates amount and the number of dependants in the household.

Council will send out letters to Hauraki homeowners who have previously received a rebate, encouraging them to apply again. The Department of Internal Affairs requires people to apply every year for their rebate. Brochures are also being distributed with newsletters from all schools, so those that may be eligible because of dependants have a better chance of becoming aware of the eligibility criteria.

Rebate applicants can make a 15-minute appointment at a council office, with a Customer Services Adviser. Customer services staff are authorized to take the statutory declaration required by the Department of Internal Affairs. Every endeavour is made to ensure that these short interviews are friendly and private.

Alternatively you can call us to post a form to you or download a copy of the application from [http://www.dia.govt.nz/pubforms.nsf/URL/Application-form-2015-16-4-pages.pdf/\\$file/Application-form-2015-16-4-pages.pdf](http://www.dia.govt.nz/pubforms.nsf/URL/Application-form-2015-16-4-pages.pdf/$file/Application-form-2015-16-4-pages.pdf)

If you are completing the form yourself you will need to get the Statutory Declaration witnessed by a Solicitor, JP, Notary Public, Court Registrar or MP, before mailing it to Council.

If you are unable to come into a Council Office, home visits are available by arrangement. Council staff really will go the extra mile to assist!

Wage or salary earners need to bring a summary of earnings and a bank interest statement, for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015 to their appointment. Self-employed workers need to supply an income summary for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015 from IRD or an accountant. Those receiving income assistance need only bring their bank interest statement for the previous financial year, as the council has been instructed to use pre printed benefit schedules for this calculation. If you have received accommodation supplement throughout the year you do need to supply a statement showing the amount of accommodation supplement received.

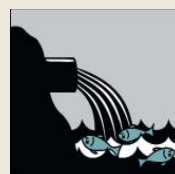
Applicants must have been living at the relevant property as at the 1st July 2015.

**The deadline for applications is 30 June 2016, but we encourage you to apply early in order to gain the benefits of the rebate throughout the rating year.**

## Save our drains for rain

### Keep it clean

To clean up any spills or dirt outdoors, don't just wash the mess down the stormwater drain. Soak it up with rags, sand or newspaper, or sweep it up, for disposal with general rubbish.



### On the farm

- Fence off streams from cattle.
- Plant riparian margins.
- Apply fertiliser and dairy effluent responsibly to control nitrate leaching into groundwater and streams.