

2020

**THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

Statement

Canberra Week in Wellington – November 2019

**Mick Gentleman MLA
Minister for Advanced Technology and Space Industries
Minister for Police and Emergency Services
Minister for the Environment and Heritage**

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November last year presented an opportunity for the ACT Government to reaffirm and expand its relationship with the city of Wellington. The trade mission commenced shortly after Wellington had elected new mayor, Andy Foster.

We had the opportunity to discuss with Mayor Foster a wide of range of policy matters - spanning transport, planning and economic development. Our discussions with Mayor Foster and his fellow Councillors showed that our two cities and our citizens have similar aspirations and concerns. Being able to learn from each other's experiences forms a key part of our sister city relationship.

Mayor Foster and his fellow Councillors were particularly interested in the ways our Government has diversified the economy, rejuvenated areas of the city, as well as helped encourage the growth of the local food and bar industry.

I do want to thank Mayor Foster and Wellington City Council for their partnership and commitment to working together into the future.

Having reaffirmed the relationship, the mission also provided an opportunity to review the diverse and flourishing range of collaborations between Wellington institutions and those here in Canberra that have benefitted through formalised Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) over the years. There are MoUs between:

- Wellington Botanic Gardens and the National Arboretum Canberra;
- Wellington Zoo, Wildlife Reserve Singapore and our own National Zoo and Aquarium; and
- Zealandia and the Woodlands and Wetland Trust.

Meeting with leadership in these Wellington institutions, it was clear that these MoUs are a vital part of their work. The collaboration and partnership they have fostered encompasses teams both here and in Wellington through activities of staff exchanges and information sharing. Each of these organisations values the similarities between the two cities and their people, and the exchange of ideas help to further each institution and conserves our nature, plants and animals.

Being in Wellington just after the celebration of the 50th moon landing, also presented an opportunity to explore future collaborations with the city's space and cyber security sectors.

I was able to meet with the New Zealand Space Agency General Manager Dr Peter Crabtree. We were informed of New Zealand's Space Industry's focus and were able to gain an understanding of where the New Zealand space sector is heading into the future. We also discussed what potential collaboration could be formalised in the future.

Wellington has also connected powerfully with their traditional custodians. In discussions with Space Place, I was struck by how they were able to tell the story of the science of astronomy alongside the

Maori stories of the creation of the universe and stars. This is an area our city's institution can learn from and develop further.

Our mission coincided around the time of the New Zealand Government's announcement of a launch of a satellite to measure greenhouse gas emissions from the agriculture sector – highlighting another common partnership – our commitment to economic development while tackling climate change. There is strong synergy between our sectors in these fields and opportunities for better collaboration.

While the focus of the mission was on reaffirming our existing relationships, I was able to undertake a number of meetings that related to my portfolios of policing and the environment.

I met with Predator Free Wellington, who are trialling methods to remove predators from the city's landscape, helping the return of native birds and wildlife. Particularly impressive was the support that has been built within the Wellington community. It is testament to the leadership shown and the approach taken to have 92% community support

I want to thank the New Zealand Police Minister, the Honourable Stuart Nash, who has been helping lead his country's reforms on firearms.

We discussed the New Zealand Government's strategy around improving community policing, addressing the welfare of police officers

and on how the New Zealand Government intends to progress these issues into the future.

In addition to meeting the Minister, I was able to sit down with New Zealand Police officers based in Wellington to discuss the transformational changes they have been making to policing, their local crime challenges and their use of technology.

I want to also acknowledge our High Commissioner in New Zealand, Her Excellency, the Honourable Patricia Forsythe AM. We had a productive meeting, allowing me to expand her insight and knowledge of the range of innovative activities our city is undertaking in Wellington. Her Excellency and the staff of the Australian High Commission, Wellington were very gracious in helping secure meetings and in hosting a reception at the High Commissioner's residence.

We also discussed our admiration of how New Zealand has embraced its first people and how perhaps we could look at welcoming people to our embassies in the language of our traditional custodians.

This mission would not have been possible without the hard work and dedication of Brendan Smyth, the Commissioner for International Engagement, and his colleague Emma Gowling. It was clear throughout the mission the deep and lasting connections that the Commissioner has fostered in Wellington for the benefit of our citizens and businesses. He is held in high regard by the Wellington City Council and leaders across Wellington.

The relationship with Wellington is strong and will continue to deepen as we work collaboratively together into the future.