



THE CAPITAL CHINA LETTER 新中通訊



NEW ZEALAND CHINA FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY WELLINGTON BRANCH NEWSLETTER
Website: <https://nzchinasociety.org.nz/wellington-branch-of-the-nzdfs/>
NZCFS Wellington Branch - celebrating 70 years of promoting friendship, understanding and goodwill between the peoples of New Zealand and China

2024 CHINESE NEW YEAR BANQUET
SUNDAY 18TH FEBRUARY 2024 AT 6:30PM
ARIES RESTAURANT, 7 TENNYSON STREET, WELLINGTON



The Wellington Branch invites you to join us in welcoming the Year of the Dragon at our Chinese New Year Banquet on Sunday 18th February 2024. His Excellency the China Ambassador Dr Wang Xiaolong and Wellington Deputy Mayor Laurie Foon have both confirmed their attendance. The Minister of Finance Hon. Nicola Willis and Hutt South List MP Ginny Anderson will also attend, duties in the House permitting.

The banquet will be held at Aries Restaurant, 7 Tennyson Street, Wellington, at \$48 per person (including limited wine and juice). For table bookings of 10 people, **we're** offering a discounted price of \$460 per table. Book your table now!

To RSVP, please book [online](#) or fill out the form at the end of this newsletter and send via email to wqtnzdfs@gmail.com

BRANCH MEETING 16th November 2022 — MEETING REPORT

Xu Tong is currently the Director of the Chinese Cultural Centre in Wellington. His talk, entitled "My Serendipity with Korowai", covered the finding and temporary return to New Zealand of a korowai or Māori cloak originally presented to Chairman Mao, and his involvement in these events. Director Xu uses the word "serendipity" because, although he ended up having a major role **in the cloak's return**, he feels this came about more through chance rather than any predetermined plan.



Director Xu began by going over the history of the korowai. In 1957, the fifth Māori King Korokī Mahuta decided to present Chairman Mao Zedong with a korowai, a traditional Maori cloak of feathers, which can only be worn by individuals with a very high status. The presentation was recorded by a New Zealand film crew that was in China at the time to film the events taking place as part of the eighth anniversary of the founding of the PRC (side note: the film crew's trip to China was arranged by the NZCFS in response to a request from Rewi Alley).



Director Xu Tong (right) with former Minister of Foreign Affairs Nanaia Mahuta (left) in Beijing. The Honourable Nanaia Mahuta is the daughter of Sir Robert Mahuta, who was the adopted son of Māori king Korokī.

After this, the korowai dropped out of sight, and no-one knew what had happened to it or where it was. This remained the case until John McKinnon, the New Zealand Ambassador to the PRC between 2001 and 2004, began making enquiries. At first, these enquiries had little

success. After some effort, it appeared that the most likely location for the korowai was the Chinese National Museum. However, the museum had no record of the korowai.

Given that the museum appeared to be the most likely location of the korowai, Ambassador McKinnon decided that the only option was to go through all the items stored in the museum to see if any of them was the missing item. During this search, a reference was discovered to a cloak gifted by a chief from Ceylon (now Sri Lanka). Since the Chinese names for Ceylon 锡兰 (Xī lán) and New Zealand 新西兰 (Xīnxīlán) are similar, it was suspected that this cloak could possibly be the korowai mistakenly identified as coming from Ceylon. When the item was actually investigated, this suspicion proved to be correct.

Now that the korowai had been found, the New Zealand Embassy in Beijing requested that it be temporarily returned to New Zealand for exhibition. This is the point at which Xu Tong became involved: he had just returned to China from a posting to Australia, and he was designated to respond to the request. Unfortunately, the korowai had been designated by the Chinese as a Class 1 gift, and such items are hardly ever allowed to leave China.

Despite this, Xu Tong and the New Zealand Embassy persisted in their efforts and, although the korowai remained in China, it was displayed during visits of the former New Zealand Prime Minister John Key and former Minister of Foreign Affairs Nanaia Mahuta. It was during the latter's term of office that the Chinese government finally gave permission for the temporary return of the korowai to New Zealand for exhibition at Te Papa. Xu Tong cites the fact that this happened while a relative of the Māori King who originally made the gift of the korowai was the New Zealand Minister of Foreign Affairs as yet another example of serendipity associated with the korowai.



The talk concluded with Xu Tong answering some questions from the audience, including details about his position in the Chinese National Museum when he became involved with the korowai, and also an investigation into what types of bird had been used to provide its feathers.

In the course of my first ambassadorial assignment I decided to track down a Māori cloak that had been presented to Chairman Mao by Ramai and Rudall Hayward, actress and film-maker, respectively, who visited China in 1957 at a time when there were no diplomatic relations between our two countries. The cloak had been categorised as coming from Sri Lanka, formerly known as Ceylon, and Xilan 锡兰 in Chinese. New Zealand is Xinxilan 新西兰, so the mistake was understandable. The museum authorities were generous in their recognition of the value of the cloak as a symbol of the relationship between New Zealand and China. Much later the cloak was loaned to Te Papa, and honoured there as a taonga, a treasure, for both our countries.

John McKinnon's record of the search for the korowai in "Inside China as an Outsider", his contribution to the book *Encountering China*, published by Massey University Press 2022.

Director Xu also showed some video clips during his talk. Links are shared with the readers here.

- **Korowai's return visit to NZ announced (in te reo Māori)**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7duJNBXKPX4>
- Presenting korowai is only reserved for the most honoured guest
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7behHN5uk3M>
- *Inside Red China* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BliOBkOB4I8>

NZCFS "HANOI TO EVEREST BASE CAMP" TOUR



You can read more about the tour on the [NZCFS website](#). The tour is now fully subscribed. For information on other planned tours to China, email tours@nzcfs.com

NZCFS DELEGATION ACTIVITIES IN CHINA

In October, a delegation comprising three NZCFS officers and three representatives from municipal government and private sector infrastructure companies visited Beijing, Shanghai, and Jiangsu. Read about their activities and achievements in the November issue of the NZCFS national newsletter [online](#).

WELLINGTON-XI'AN BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE

Xi'an International Inland Port Investment & Development Group (ITL Group) owns more than 45 companies with assets totalling almost NZD \$8 billion. They want to share knowledge and business opportunities on real estate, international logistics, port operations, sports, tourism and finance.

The roundtable discussion is scheduled for Friday 15 December 2023 9:30–11.00 am in the Wellington City Council Meeting Room 16.09, 113 The Terrace, Wellington. MC will be National (and Wellington Branch) President Chris Lipscombe. Refreshments will be served.

If this sounds like something you'd be interested in attending, please RSVP to the Council International team at internationalrelations@wcc.govt.nz by Wednesday 13 December 2023.

2024 LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATION

The Asian Events Trust has secured sponsorship from Lee Kum Kee to bring back Lunar New Year celebrations for Wellington. You can read more about the sponsorship [here](#). The Festival Day will be held on Sunday 18 February 2024 at TSB Arena. More details will be available closer to the day on <https://lunarnewyearfestival.co.nz/>

Merry Christmas and a relaxing holiday break to all our members, supporters, and friends from the Wellington Branch of NZ China Friendship Society. We look forward to seeing you at our Chinese New Year Banquet in 2024 and at our monthly member meetings during the year.

恭喜发财!

BRANCH OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE

President: Chris Lipscombe
Vice President and Treasurer: Juping Zhou
Secretary: Vera Xu
Committee Members: Liqin Mi, Paul Sayers
Honorary Advisor: Michael Powles

WEBSITE: <https://nzchinasociety.org.nz/wellington-branch-of-the-nzcfs/>

Booking Form — CHINESE NEW YEAR BANQUET

Sunday 18th February 2024 at 6:30pm
Aries Restaurant, 7 Tennyson Street, Wellington CBD

Please reserve me **place(s) for the Society's Chinese New Year Banquet at \$48 per person**
or **table(s) for the Society's Chinese New Year Banquet at \$460 per table**

Names of person(s) attending banquet:

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Bookings and payment are required no later than Monday 12th February 2024.

To book, please either:

- send an email with number of seats/tables and names to wgtnczfs@gmail.com, or
- book online at [CNY Banquet Online Form](#)

[Pay your 2024 subscription here](#)

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION

To join as a member or renew your membership, you can complete the [online form](#) or the membership form below.

I/We would like to renew/commence membership of the Wellington Branch of the New Zealand China Friendship Society Inc. for 2024 (subscription period January to December):

fulltime student \$10 individual member \$20 family/couple \$30

Applicant:

Given Names

Surname

Contact phone number: _____

Spouse/Partner:

Given Names

Surname

Contact phone number: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Payment total is as follows:		Payment method:	
Membership Subscription:	\$ _____	Payment by internet transfer to:	
Donation to NZCFS Wellington:	\$ _____	NZ China Friendship Society	
Total:	\$ _____	ANZ Bank Account No: 11-7200-0080836-11	

When making internet banking payment, please quote your NAME and the word SUBS, and be sure to email this form separately to wgtnczfs@gmail.com. Tick the box if a receipt is required .

Note: Donations over \$5 are tax-deductible. (Charities Registration No: CC27242)

Privacy Information: On acceptance of your membership subscription, you will become a member of the Wellington branch of the New Zealand China Friendship Society Incorporated ("the Society"). Your membership will expire on the 31st of December of the year to which the membership applies ("the expiry date"). The information you provide on this membership subscription form ("the information") will be held by us electronically in a Register of Members as required by the Incorporated Societies Amendment Act 2005 and will be removed from the current Register of Members following the expiry date. The information will be used by us to tell you about member events and activities and to send you notices of meetings. The information will be held securely by us and will be available for you to view at any time on application to the Secretary. The information may be shared with our parent organisation the New Zealand China Friendship Society Incorporated. We will not disclose the information to any other parties, except where required by law. Non-current members will remain on our branch mailing list as supporters, and we will continue to let you know about member events and activities. If you decide that you do not want to receive emails from us, you can 'unsubscribe' and we will remove you from our mailing list.

Donation Receipts: Following the end of each financial year, you will be sent a receipt for the total amount you have donated in that year. If you are a New Zealand tax resident earning taxable income in that year, you can claim a tax credit for the amount you have donated.