

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Official Opening of the Kamagaya-Whakatane Japanese Garden by the Mayor of Kamagaya – Kiyoshi Shimizu and His Worship the Mayor of the District of Whakatane – Colin J Hammond JP on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2003 was a landmark event for the Sister Cities relationship between the two Cities.

The successful completion of this project signifies the strengthening of the relationship between the citizens of Kamagaya and Whakatane as they have worked side by side to create a garden that we are all proud to be a part of.

The support, dedication and commitment of the Kamagaya Gardeners Union, local Whakatane businesses, service groups, organisations, and individuals in the generous donation of their time and money, has exceeded all expectations.

When the garden was first proposed the Garden Committee devised a ‘Statement of Intent’ and a set of objectives which the Committee wished to see as a result of this project.

The ‘Statement of Intent’ is detailed as follows:

*‘To encourage and promote international exchange through the development of an authentic Japanese Garden in Whakatane by strong commitment and participation of both Sister City Communities at minimal financial burden to either community’.*

The objectives of this Community project include:

- Promotion of the Sister Cities relationship between the people of Whakatane and Kamagaya by undertaking a joint community project.
- Promotion of a solid understanding and appreciation of Japanese gardens.
- Promotion of an appreciation of both Japanese and New Zealand cultures.
- Promotion of the Whakatane District both nationally and internationally by providing another top class attraction for our District.
- Promotion and encouragement of community pride and participation in the development and maintenance of this garden.



## BACKGROUND

The development of a Japanese garden in Whakatane to further the Sister Cities relationship between the two Councils was first proposed by Mayor Minagawa of Kamagaya - following the signing of the Sister Cities Agreement in 1998 and was continued when Whakatane District Council staff member Jeff Farrell was on a staff exchange in that year. It was further progressed with the support of Whakatane Mayor Tony Bonne, General Manager Barrie Miles, Sister Cities Committee and the Council. Approval to proceed was granted in December 1998.

The proposal continued to progress during several reciprocal Sister Cities visits undertaken during 1999 and a mutual agreement to progress with the garden was confirmed in April 2000 by both Councils during an official Mayoral visit to Kamagaya by His Worship the Mayor Colin Hammond and a Sister Cities delegation of 20 citizens including the Chairperson Barney Gray.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2000, the Whakatane District Council Recreation and Community Services Committee resolved:

1. That an area of 1500m<sup>2</sup> be set aside for the development of a feature Japanese Garden; and
2. That the following design criteria be considered in the preparation of the Concept Plans;
  - Be low maintenance
  - Simplicity of design and style
  - Japanese theme/style including traditional features e.g., pergola, rocks, sculpture, and use of bamboo to be included
  - Use of plant material readily available in New Zealand and where possible utilising suitable New Zealand native species
  - The development of a full Management/Maintenance Plan to ensure that the garden is maintained and managed to achieve and maintain design principles.
  - Any structures meet the relevant Building Code of Practice.

Several two-way exchanges of garden ideas and the concept designs for the proposed garden were undertaken during 2000 between staff of the two councils and further developed in February 2001 during the official visit by a Kamagaya Sister Cities delegation. This delegation included Kamagaya Landscape Architects, Masuro Minigawa and Nokura Iwasa who undertook the initial site investigation and site analysis and attended further meetings with Whakatane Parks' staff to further progress the concept.

In August 2001, a further Kamagaya delegation including the Chief of Parks and Recreation Minoru Kogure and Kamagaya Gardeners Union Representative Isao Katsumata, presented the Kamagaya City Councils concept landscape plan to representatives of Kamagaya's Whakatane Japanese Garden Committee.



In March 2002 an invitation from the Mayor of Kamagaya was extended to the Manager Parks and Recreation, Mike Naudé, to visit Kamagaya to study Japanese gardens and receive first hand instruction on authentic Japanese garden techniques. At the conclusion of this visit it was agreed that the ultimate development of the garden depended largely on community interest and funding generated by both communities. The project was marketed and promoted by conducting a series of talks and presentations to local Service Clubs, schools, organisations and media releases. The Kamagaya Gardeners Union pledged the donation of all the major garden features and the ornamentation to be included in the garden.

## THE GARDEN DESIGN AND LAYOUT

The Garden, which is located at the river end of McGarvey Road, is an authentic Japanese Garden which displays three distinct styles of Japanese landscape architecture and incorporates all the qualities of an authentic Japanese Garden namely;

- Utilising and displaying traditional Japanese methods used in garden design and construction.
- Incorporates areas for practical and social activity e.g., Azumaya arbor.
- Incorporate plants that accentuate the changes in season by displaying seasonal changes e.g. Autumn leaf colour.

- **Rojien Style** Garden comprises an open walkway space utilising stepping stones or a tile-paved pathway leading to the pivotal feature of this section – the Azumaya Arbor (Tea Ceremony House/Summer House). This section is enclosed using a traditional bamboo fence. Other features of this garden include a gateway (Mon), Japanese Lantern (Toro), bamboo water feature (Shishiodoshi), stone wash basin (Tsukubai).



The garden is further complimented by the planting of a grove of maple trees that will surround the Azumaya and providing a tranquil space and a pleasant frame through which to view the rest of the garden.

- **Karesansui Style** Garden is a typical rock and gravel Zen garden suggesting the elements of water and sea. The rock islands are arranged in the shape of New Zealand and the circular island connected to the garden by way of a granite bridge represents the rising sun depicted in the Japanese National flag. These two elements symbolise the friendship between the two Sister City communities and also depicts local icon, White Island.



- **Kaiyushiki Style** Garden represents the natural landscape of a watercourse meandering through the hills and mountains on its way to the sea. The dry riverbed of the garden connects the Karesansui garden to the Kaiyushiki garden. The surrounding landscape, is an integral part of the garden as the designers have successfully borrowed and included these features in to the garden.



## THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE GARDEN

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2002 a 6m container packed with fencing materials, garden ornamentation and many interesting garden and construction tools donated by the Kamagaya City Council and the Kamagaya Gardeners Union arrived in Whakatane.

To join three cultures and to commence construction on 10 January 2003, Pouroto Ngaropo, Ngati Awa Maori Cultural Advisor, formally blessed the site. A natural volcanic rock talisman called Te Mauri o Whakatane was buried in the centre of the foundation of the floor of the Azumaya. The talisman represents the life-force of the Whakatane Community and also acts as the foundation for the garden as it was buried between the site of four corner posts which represented the spiritual, ancestral, land and cultural connections of the Community.



Prior to the arrival of the first group of Japanese gardeners, the construction of the three hills and construction of the framework of the Azumaya was completed and various materials required for the project had been sourced and secured. The Azumaya was voluntarily constructed by members of the Whakatane Master Builders Association with the generous contributions/donations made by the local builders, suppliers and engineering works in the district. Major progress on the construction of the Japanese Garden was made during the two weekends of 28 February – 2 March and 6 – 8 March 2003 by members of the Kamagaya Gardeners Union, Whakatane District Council Parks staff, many volunteers and service group personnel from throughout the district.

During the six-day construction period the following aspects of the garden were completed:

- Finalisation of the initial garden layout;
- Positioning of all rocks and rock features;
- Construction of three different styles of Japanese fencing i.e. Kennin Temple style, Koetsu Temple style and Yotsuma style fence;



- Construction of entrance pathway through the Rojien style garden and the placement of stepping stones throughout the remainder of the garden;
- Construction of a dry waterfall feature and dry river course through the Kaiyushiki style garden;
- Construction of the Karensansui style garden with two islands. One of the islands is a rock island in the shape of New Zealand and the second island is a grass mound connected to the rest of the garden by way of a granite bridge.





Between the 20<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2003, the third group of six gardeners from Kamagaya completed the garden with the planting of some 850 trees, shrubs and ground covers. Most schools in the District contributed towards the purchase of trees and shrubs and sent



a representative to plant them during this working bee. The involvement of the school children was greatly appreciated by the members of the Kamagaya Gardeners Union and the Whakatane community.

## THE OPENING

The Official Opening of the Garden was celebrated on the 4<sup>th</sup> July 2003 with a public ceremony. The Mayor of Kamagaya Kiyoshi Shimizu, the Japanese Consul General Tatsuo Mizuno, the official delegation of Kamagaya City and the Kamagaya International Friendship Association (K.I.F.A), were welcomed to the Whakatane Gardens by Iwi representative Mr Pouroto Ngaropo in the traditional Maori way.



The official addresses were made by the Chief Executive Mr Ian McDonald, the Chairman of the Sister Cities Committee Councillor Barney Gray, His Worship the Mayor Colin Hammond JP, Kamagaya Mayor Kiyoshi Shimizu, and the Japanese Consul General Tatsuo Mizuno.

At the conclusion of the addresses, the two Mayors formally opened the Garden by cutting the red ribbon at the entrance to the Japanese Garden, and the unveiling of the official Garden name plaque, located on a rock at the entrance to the Garden.

In keeping with Maori tradition to symbolise purity, the Mayors were led into the Garden by three young ladies, Nicole Hammond, Megan Naudé and Rangipare Ngaropo, where the unveiling of the Kamagaya International Friendship Association plaque was undertaken by their Chairperson Mrs Yasuko Okamoto, the unveiling of the Sponsorship Board by Mayoress Karla Hammond and Councillor Barney Gray, and the unveiling of the Information Board by Kamagaya gardeners Messrs Toshio Seto, Noboru Minagawa, and Whakatane District Council Parks staff member Mike Naudé and Ian Molony.

The two Mayors and the Consul General were then led through the Garden where the Mayors met on the bridge and shook hands.



They were then served traditional Japanese Tea whilst seated on a bench beside the bridge by several young Japanese girls in kimonos.



At the conclusion of this ceremony, the many guests were treated to afternoon tea in the marquee erected adjacent to the Garden.



The Television One show *Asia Down Under* were present to record the event and it was viewed on their 27<sup>th</sup> July show. Local media were very active throughout the process assisting with the community involvement and an impressive pictorial spread of the opening ceremony.

An official dinner was held at one of the local restaurants to conclude the event and make an official presentation to Kamagaya in appreciation from the citizens of Whakatane for the gift of the garden. A 1.6m x 0.6m stained glass window on Rimu stands, commissioned by a local firm, depicting the scene on the front cover which takes the Japanese Garden, joins it with the Whakatane River flowing out to the sea and incorporating local icons namely; the statue of Wairaka, Whale Island and White Island.

**MARKETING STRATEGY & COSTS**

From April 2002, both the Kamagaya and Whakatane District Council embarked on an extensive public awareness campaign to promote the garden project and invite community interest and participation. This included:

- Involving the local media in the regular press and radio updates on the project.
- Presentations and talks to numerous clubs, groups and service organisations throughout the District.
- Actively seeking sponsorship and participation by local schools, businesses and organizations in the project.
- General invitation to all interested parties to participate in the construction of the garden.

The support, generous donations, both monetary and non-monetary, by both communities participating in the project was exceptional.

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| • Voluntary labour including Council staff, individuals, members of local service groups and school children | <i>180 man days (estimated)</i> |
| • Kamagaya Gardeners Union and Kamagaya City Council staff voluntary labour                                  | <i>180 man days (estimated)</i> |
| • Cash donations   | <i>\$10,800.00</i>              |
| • Azumaya materials and voluntary labour - donated   | <i>\$30,000.00</i>              |
| • Ornamentation donated by Kamagaya City Council and the Kamagaya Gardeners Union                            | <i>\$50,000.00</i>              |
| • Community contribution   | <i>Incalculable</i>             |

**COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION**

The four groups consisting of 17 Japanese gardeners who came to construct the garden and members of the Mayoral delegation which attended the official opening, were all homestayd while in Whakatane. Although the stays were short, a full programme was initiated to ensure each group took in as many sights and activities as possible. For some, it was their first visit, whereas for others, it was their second or third visit. The guests were hosted at various barbecues, went deep sea fishing and enjoyed sushi on



the boat. The Home Hosts opened their homes and also showed them around the district when they were not working on the garden.

Witnessing the Japanese working habits was an experience in itself – the endless meetings and discussions, the need for perfection in every little detail. Apart from one Kamagaya City Hall staff member each trip, the gardeners were all private citizens of Kamagaya and were experts in their field. They all gave their time freely to Whakatane, at what must have been at great personal costs to themselves. Whakatane District Council staff and the community were taught much. Many friendships were developed which will be ongoing for many years to come.

## CONCLUSION

Apart from the original objectives, it was evident as the project progressed that several other benefits of this project were realised. These benefits included:

- Increased public awareness and community interest in the Whakatane Gardens. During the construction period, many residents of Whakatane and visitors to the district have taken the opportunity to visit the site and observe the development of the garden.
- The Council staff, and in particular the Parks Team, have developed professionally by working side by side with the Japanese craftsmen and the volunteers who have participated in the project.
- There has been a considerable investment by the Whakatane community towards this project. The community have invested their valuable time, resources, finances and materials towards this feature garden.
- The use of the area has increased with it being a popular venue for weddings and social occasions.

