

## **VISIT TO YUE YANG, CHINA 2010**

The Mayor of the City of Cockburn, Mr Logan Howlett JP accompanied by the Deputy Mayor, Cr Kevin Allen, Cr Carol Reeve-Fowkes and Cr Lee-Anne Smith with the Finance Director, Mr Stuart Downing and Systems Accountant (and fluent mandarin speaker) Mr Jason Foo were hosted by Mayor Huang Lan Xiang and The Council of the City of Yue Yang in a four day Sister City Visit.

The primary purpose for the trip to Yue Yang was to further develop relations with a growing and important City in the Hunan Province of China. Hunan Province is a big importer of Western Australian iron ore with Yue Yang being a key City in the development of Hunan Province particular and China in general.

Yue Yang is a City of 5.5 million people governed by a central municipal government with a series of smaller regional councils.

### **DAY ONE**

The delegation arrived at the Huanghua International Airport in Changsha and were warmly met by the the Director of the Foreign Affairs office Ms Qiu Hong and a group of senior officers from the Foreign Office of the City. Most large municipal governments in China have a foreign office so as to facilitate foreign trade and visitors. The main airport is some two hours from the City and the delegation were transferred by coach to the City proper. The journey from the airport was on the tollway linking the two Cities and there was a large amount of truck traffic. Trucks are encouraged to travel at night rather than during the day so as to better utilise key pieces of road infrastructure.

After two hours the delegation arrived at Yue Yang. We were met by wide boulevards in the Civic Precincts with modern buildings and architecture lining either side for many kilometres. Since we were arriving at night the true stature of the Civic area was masked.

Finally arriving at the Hotel, the Delegation were met by the Municipal Leadership led by the Deputy Mayor, Ms Song Ai Hua. The foyer of the Hotel Nan Hu was magnificent and each delegate member was presented with a beautiful floral tribute of the flowers of Hunan Province. The Delegation group were clearly impressed. After a welcoming speech by the Deputy Mayor of Yue Yang and Mayor Howlett, we finally made it to the hotel room for a rest.

A formal dinner of welcome was hosted by the deputy Mayor at the Best Western Inn Hotel.

## DAY TWO

A visit to the inland port of Yueyang (or Chenglingji Port Area) on the Yangtze River and the development being planned around the port. A police escort was provided to ensure that the delegation could work its way through peak hour traffic. Clearly security is of great importance with a strong domestic police presence in the general community funded by the Local Council.

Visit to National Park and bird sanctuary to reflect the efforts of the Council in rehabilitating land formerly damaged and the great success.

The trip out and back went past six small jails

The delegation returned to the Nan Hu Hotel for a formal welcome by the Mayor of Yue Yang, Ms Huang Lan Xiang. At the welcoming ceremony, the Mayor Logan Howlett was able to present to the people of Yue Yang a painting done by local resident and artist of national significance Mr George Haynes. The painting depicts the native vegetation of Bibra Lake of the Xanthorrhoea genus. The Mayor of Yue Yang warmly thanked the People of the City of Cockburn for such a wonderful painting. She advised that the painting would be prominently displayed in the municipal offices for all to see and appreciate.

The two councils then formally signed a mutual friendship agreement to foster relationships between the two cities. The Mayor then hosted a welcoming banquet in which the two mayors toasted each member of the delegation with the local wine, a particular fine red made in the French Bordeaux style. (The wine is made in Hunan Province using the expertise of French wine makers).

After the two hour welcoming banquet, the delegation went to a Yue Yang University. This was a testament to the rapid development of a can-do people. The site ten years prior was undeveloped farm land. The delegation were impressed that a comprehensive and modern university was now in place with a very much modern curriculum being taught to keen minds from all over China attending. The University was a veritable mini city with student accommodation for some 10,000 students.

The purpose of the visit was to enable the Mayor, Logan Howlett to present a lecture on the City of Cockburn and the State of Western Australia. The lecture was preceded with a short DVD prepared by Tourism WA on the wonders of WA ranging from Rotto to the Kimberley's to Albany and the wonderful lifestyle enjoyed by many Western Australians. The DVD left the mostly young English speaking audience agog with the sites and sounds of WA. The lecture gave Mayor Howlett the opportunity to brief the audience on the City of Cockburn in particular and Perth in general.

Many students were keen questioners at the end of the Mayor's lecture and many wanted to know how to get to WA. Many questions, including some frank questions on free speech were asked and answered by the Mayor.

## **DAY THREE**

As the mist cleared from the Hotel, the delegation were treated to the wonderful vista's offered by Lake Dong Ting, the second largest fresh water body in the world. The delegation were clearly held in high regard to be afforded such a great location for its accommodation.

### **High school**

Day three kicked off with a visit to a high school. A large welcoming board and banners were hung over the entrance to the school making the delegation welcome. The Mayor led the delegation through the School and we were allowed to drop in on certain classes to introduce ourselves and have brief chats with the young students. Most of the students were learning English which made communication easier. The students wanted to know much about the City of Cockburn and Australia. The delegation were impressed with how hard the students worked and the many hours they studied.

The delegation were formally received by the Principal of the School. At the meeting ideas were exchanged on how students could visit Perth to pursue their academic careers.

### **Power Station**

The vitality of the local economy were best illustrated by the visit to domestic power station. Using modern technology, this coal fired powered power station produced a lot less carbon dioxide than many Australian power stations. There were also talks aimed at potentially selling Australian produced thermal coal to Hunan.

### **Bullet Train Station**

After lunch, the delegation visited a very modern and very new Bullet Train Station. Led by the Station Master resplendent in uniform the delegation were shown around one of China's modern stations. The Bullet train, similar to the Japanese and French TFG, reach speeds of over 300 km per hour. Whilst watching the train line a Bullet train came through the station. It moved so fast, you blinked and you missed it. The Station Master advised the delegation, that the aim of the Government was to link every main city by train in the next ten years. The Mayor was much impressed as was the entire delegation. We asked if they could build our light rail system, the answer lost in translation was yes!

### **Yue Yang Tower**

The final visit for the day was to the Yue Yang Tower. This is a multi storey wooden structure, that was built some 400 years ago with not one nail. The delegation were given special permission to climb inside and to the top. The view over the Yellow River was impressive. The Tower contains many fond memories for the people of Yue Yang in relation to its most famous citizen Mao Tze Tong. The late leader of the Chinese Government, grew up in Hunan Province and visited the Tower. So impressed with the building, Mao wrote a poem about the Tower which is proudly hung in the building.

## **DAY FOUR**

### **Industrial Estate**

Day four kicked off with a visit to one of the many prosperous and rapidly growing industrial estates in Yue Yang. The factory belonged to an international company that had relocated to Yue Yang. Using modern industrial process the company manufacture parts for pumps, much in demand across the world.

The Director of Economic Development for the City then hosted a banquet lunch for the delegation allowing us to meet many prominent business leaders in the community. The banquet was at a training college for the hospitality industry allowing the delegation to view modern TAFE style training in China.

### **Natural Chinese Medicine and Hospital Facility**

After lunch the delegation visited a Chinese Medicine Hospital. The actual building was as big as Royal Perth Hospital and specialised in Chinese medicines but combining them with modern western medicine. The treatments provided to the broader Yue Yang community were impressive with a number of the delegates examined/tested using traditional Chinese medical techniques.

### **Yue Yang Dragon Boat Centre**

The City of Yue Yang is famous nationally for hosting dragon boat racing carnivals on its fresh water lake and to the end the delegation went past the sculpture of the largest ever dragon boat in the world. The City of Cockburn were then presented with replica of the sculpture which proudly sits in the Mayor's Office today.

### **Traditional Tea Ceremony**

The place of tea drinking in China can't be underestimated even today, when they make excellent wine and beer. Every meal and banquet the delegation went too, tea was served. To this end, the delegation were privileged to watch a traditional tea ceremony. The ceremony was impressive as it went through the preparation, the pouring and then drinking of the tea.

To make the trip back to the airport, the delegation were provided with a police and army escort. The trip along the same tollway but during the day demonstrated not only the vastness of the Countryside but also the importance of rice as a national staple in the diet. There were rice paddies for kilometre after kilometre and for as far as the eye could see.