

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Why Asia matters to Dunedin

The Asia New Zealand Foundation will be launching two reports in Dunedin this week and be holding a forum for Dunedin school principals on why the Asian region is becoming increasingly important to the city and for New Zealand.

The release of the two reports will coincide with an initiative called the Asia Aware Principals Forum which is travelling to different New Zealand centres in 2009, beginning with Dunedin on March 5.

It is doing this because school principals are key players in increasing Asia knowledge in communities around New Zealand. The event in Dunedin will be followed by similar events aimed at school principals in Auckland, Wellington and Palmerston North.

The Dunedin Asia Aware Principals' Forum will be held on Thursday March 5 at the Otago Museum.

### ***Why Asia Matters to New Zealand***

The *Why Asia Matters to New Zealand* report for school principals will be launched at the Dunedin Asia Aware Principals' Forum and it outlines why Asia as a region is key to New Zealand's future.

It highlights five reasons for New Zealanders to increase their understanding of Asia:

- A higher standard of living
- Dynamic communities
- Cultural enrichment
- Broader horizons
- International partnerships

The *Why Asia Matters to New Zealand* report calls on school leaders to prepare their students for the more diverse and globalised world they are going to inherit. The vision of the revised New Zealand curriculum is to have "young people who will be confident, connected, actively involved and lifelong learners".



### ***Asians in Dunedin: Not a new story***

The *Asians in Dunedin* report which will also be launched at the Asia Aware Principals Forum on March 5 demonstrates that Asian immigrants aren't new to the city. Significant numbers of Chinese settlers feature prominently in the history of the region, extending back to the gold rushes of the 1860's.

Dunedin's historical linkages to Asia have developed into contemporary connections, demonstrated primarily in the substantial change in the ethnic composition of its population, as well as in the considerable numbers of international students, and the established Asian communities who in some cases have lived in Dunedin for several generations.

Furthermore, Dunedin has the distinction of having two mayors of Asian origin in a row, continuously since 1995. Neither of these arrived with the 'new' Asian migration following the introduction of the Immigration Act of 1987, nor are they necessarily representative of the increased political power of Asian voters. Instead, they illustrate the fact that the 'Asian history' of a place like Dunedin cannot be seen as a product of the past two decades.

With the recent development of the Chinese Garden, along with a youthful and divergent Asian population, the evolving ethnic composition of Dunedin seems to be largely viewed in a positive way.

### **Contacts**

For more information about the Dunedin Asia Aware Principals' Forum and for a copy of the *Why Asia Matters to New Zealand* report, contact Asia New Zealand Foundation education director Vanessa Lee at [@asianz.org.nz](mailto:@asianz.org.nz) or call 027 221 8358.

For more information about the *Asians in Dunedin: Not a new story* report, contact Asia New Zealand Foundation policy and research director, Dr Andrew Butcher [@asianz.org.nz](mailto:@asianz.org.nz) or call 021 0270 8462.

