



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

TITLE **Visit to New Zealand**

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BY **Carwyn Jones, First Minister**

Members will be aware that I have recently returned from a visit to New Zealand. Some time ago the New Zealand Government invited me to visit around the timing of the Rugby World Cup. This presented an ideal opportunity for us to use the World Cup as a platform to raise our profile in New Zealand and beyond.

As well as attending the World Cup opening ceremony and the Wales v South Africa game my five day visit included a number of business and Ministerial meetings in both Auckland and Wellington. I also undertook a range of interviews for TV and radio which provided an excellent platform to raise the profile of Wales.

My first engagement involved the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Oceania Paralympic Committee which agreed that all Oceania Region Paralympic countries – Australia, Fiji, Tonga, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands – will be based in Cardiff prior to the 2012 Paralympic Games. This adds to the agreement signed last year with Paralympics New Zealand which will see the New Zealand Paralympic team being based in Swansea. It was very fitting the event took place on International Paralympic Day. I am also delighted to report that during my 5 day visit Athletics New Zealand announced that they will also be setting up their training camp in Cardiff prior to the London Olympics in 2012.

Other engagements included a lunch with senior New Zealand business people,, a social networking event with tourism operators and journalists and a dinner with the Deputy High Commissioner which was attended by a number of Government officials during which we explored the potential for shared learning and exchange of expertise in the area of public sector management.

The Governor-General of New Zealand also hosted a dinner which was attended by the Deputy President of South Africa, 3 other South African Ministers, the South African High Commissioner as well as their officials. Other guests included the New Zealand High Commissioner and representatives of the British High Commission.

I also visited the Te Papa Museum in Wellington which is the national museum and art gallery of New Zealand. The visit coincided with 'Wales Day'. A number of events had been organised and everywhere you looked there was a sea of red. I received a warm welcome when I addressed the large audience that had gathered at the Museum for the Welsh concert.

I visited the Orakei Marae where I was welcomed in traditional ceremonial style by the Maori community.

My final day in New Zealand involved meetings with New Zealand Government Ministers - the Minister for Education, the Minister for Agriculture, the Minister for Health, the Minister for Maori Affairs and the Prime Minister which provided an opportunity to discuss a wide range of policy areas and explore sharing and learning from each other. The pre-match receptions also provided an opportunity for me to meet a number of other Government Ministers from other parts of the world as well as New Zealand and aided the agenda to raise the profile of Wales on the international stage.

I attach a copy of my programme for the visit for your information.