



Asia Forum

The Asia Forum of Wellington

The Asia Forum Report for 2011

2011 saw another successful year of well-attended and stimulating meetings. As in previous years we have received warm support from a number of distinguished individuals and opinion leaders from various interests and professional backgrounds, both from abroad and from New Zealand, sharing their perspectives with Asia Forum. As usual the Forum continued to focus on off-the-record discussions and an exchange of views on numerous topical Asian issues that have occurred and developed throughout the year.

Asia Forum continues to strive and focus its effort on facilitating informed debate and the concerns of New Zealanders in engaging with Asia. The Forum gratefully values the opportunity to collaborate and cooperate with the NZ Institute of International Affairs, the Wellington Regional Chamber of Commerce, ASEAN-NZ Combined Business Council and the educational institutions and business organisations in Wellington. We also value the support and encouragement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Asia NZ Foundation and the diplomatic community in Wellington.

Our 2011 speaking programme continued the format of previous years with a range of high profile speakers from New Zealand and abroad leading the discussions.

Our meetings were mainly held at Bell Gully law firm and occasionally held at Minter Ellison Rudd Watts, Russell McVeagh, and at Victoria University's Centre for Strategic Studies, who generously provided refreshments as well as their meeting facilities. Our gratitude also goes to Catalyst IT Ltd for hosting our website. Their hospitality, generosity and continuous support are much appreciated.

Highlights for the year

In addition to our regular discussions mostly held at Bell Gully, the highlights of last year included:

The 15th Anniversary Gala Dinner hosted by The Right Honourable Sir Anand Satyanand, Governor-General of New Zealand, Patron of the Asia Forum at Government House, Wellington on Wednesday 22 June 2011 and with keynote address by The Rt Hon Sir Don McKinnon Former Secretary General of the Commonwealth: "Celebrating New Zealand Challenges and Successes in Partnerships with Asia"

Also with the support of Royal Thai Embassy Asia Forum was able to hold a Gala Dinner to Celebrate and Renew New Zealand and Thailand friendship at the Banquet Hall, Parliament House Wellington on Thursday 18 August 2011 where some 260 including numerous parliamentarians, Speaker of The House, Hon Peter Dunne and other high ranking officials from both Thailand and New Zealand attended.

The dinner was officially hosted by The Hon Mr Christopher Finlayson, Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage. The evening entailed the Thai traditional performance "Blessing Dance" followed by a NZ traditional welcoming dance performed by Thai Children in NZ, fashion show by Thai-NZ designer and keynote address by H.E. Mr Saroj Chavanviraj, Chairman of the Thai Foundation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand.

Another highlight is the acceptance by the Governor-General, Lieutenant General Rt Hon Sir Jerry Mateparae to our invitation to be Patron during his term of office, succeeding his predecessor Sir Anand Satyanand. Asia Forum hopes to arrange a meeting to welcome Sir Jerry to the Asia Forum in due course.

Contribution

The Asia Forum has benefited greatly from the support of various organisations, notably and extensively from Bell Gully. However, there are certain running costs, especially pertaining to communications, which have to be covered. The Asia Forum is therefore seeking contributions from organisations or individuals who support our objectives and who wish to join us in providing an opportunity for informed and stimulating discussion of contemporary Asian issues amongst opinion leaders.

Those interested in considering such a contribution should contact Farib Sos, whose contact details are below.

Details on the Asia Forum programme can be found on the Asia Forum website at <http://www.asiaforum.org.nz>

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