

GLOBAL CITIES NZ CONFERENCE 2026

Auckland: New Zealand's Connected, Global City

Measuring Value, Unlocking City-to-City Trade & Building International
Partnerships

 Mayor Wayne Brown (Auckland Council)

 Christchurch Town Hall

 Saturday, 5 September 2026



Measuring Value in City Diplomacy

Transitioning to high-yield trade relationships, tech transfer, and concrete municipal capability for ratepayer return.

Diverse Community & Global Reach

-  **International Demographics:** Over 40% of Aucklanders were born overseas, making it NZ's most connected city.
-  **Vibrant Diaspora:** Includes nearly 300,000 Chinese Aucklanders, forming a key economic and cultural bridge.
-  **Sister & Partner Cities:** 20+ active international relationships based on authentic people-to-people links.
-  **Face-to-Face Engagement:** Direct civic interaction opens commercial doors faster than traditional channels.



Civic Diplomacy vs Central Govt



Mayoral Access & Impact

Global mayors respect civic leaders who control major urban regions. Direct mayor-to-mayor meetings—such as securing access with Mayor Gong of Shanghai right after the US election—unlock high-level dialogues that central ministers cannot access as easily.



Unlocking Strategic Barriers

Where central government bureaucracy saw insurmountable hurdles, Auckland pushed for the Southern Link flight route and secured crucial transit visa waivers. This single breakthrough unlocked immense trade and economic potential across South America and Asia.

Tech Leadership & Global Lessons

Adopting World-Class Tech

Local government in Nansha (Guangzhou) actively drives innovation, deploying driverless autonomous taxis and firefighting drones in real-world urban settings.

In India, direct state leadership in tech capitals like Bengaluru provides crucial scale for Auckland's fledgling agritech, biotech, and software sectors to expand globally.



Strategic Focus in Global Relations



China & East Asia

40-year connection with Guangzhou; direct partnerships yield reciprocal trade, airline route expansion, and clean tech adoption.



India & SE Asia

Forming new city partnerships with Indian tech hubs. Tapping overlooked growth opportunities in fast-growing Indonesia and Malaysia.



South America Link

Establishing Auckland as the natural aviation hub connecting Asia to Brazil and Argentina via the Southern Link flight corridor.

Municipal Resilience & Learning



Making Space for Water: Showcased Auckland's flood resilience program to world mayors at the C40 World Cities Summit in Singapore.



Technical Staff Exchanges: Longstanding exchanges with Fukuoka and Shinagawa to import advanced water treatment and infrastructure methods.

Southern Link Flight Expansion

2x to 4x

Weekly Flights Doubled

Connecting Shanghai to Buenos Aires

By overcoming central government transit visa hurdles, Auckland successfully enabled China Eastern Airlines to double its flight frequency through Auckland Airport.

This major trade route delivers crucial economic yield, positioning Auckland as the primary Southern Hemisphere gateway between East Asia and South America.

Auckland Deal & Tech Ecosystem

- ✔ **NZ Institute for Advanced Technology:** Established under the Auckland Deal to fund innovation corridors and align direct infrastructure support.
- 🚀 **100 Days Tech Campaign:** Mayoral initiative highlighting Auckland innovators daily on social media, reaching nearly 2 million viewers globally.
- 💻 **Auckland Tech Hub:** Auckland hosts 60% of New Zealand's tech sector, fostering major global success stories like Rocket Lab and Halter.
- 📅 **Start-Up Week Momentum:** Scaling up following 4,500 participating companies last year to attract top talent and capital.

Questions & Panel Discussion

Auckland is a connected, global city, built on enduring friendships, and open for business.

 Office of the Mayor | Auckland Council
 mayor.wayne.brown@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz

