

## Road to Peace: Timeline

At times Otautahi/Christchurch has led the country, and even the world, on peace and anti-nuclear issues. Maori, the first people of this land, brought with them, and applied, the principles of *Rongomaraeroa* – the *Mauri* (life force) of Peace - laying the foundations for peace.

This list covers most of the key activities and achievements that have happened to date in Christchurch on the road to world peace:

- **1897** Christchurch women involved in the suffrage movement, which won the world's first votes for women in 1893, called for 'a permanent court of arbitration' to resolve international disputes peacefully. This court was established in 1899 and in 1946 became the International Court of Justice, also known as the World Court.
- **August 1947** Christchurch first marked the anniversary of the atomic bombings of the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In the early 1960s CND organised marches and speeches. Annually since **1976** lanterns have been floated on the Avon River with speeches by local citizens including politicians, mayors and councillors.
- **1960** The New Zealand Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) was headquartered in Christchurch with Mary Woodward and Elsie Locke in key leadership roles. In **1961**, CND urged the New Zealand government to declare it 'will not acquire or use nuclear weapons' and to withdraw from nuclear alliances such as ANZUS. In **1963**, they presented the 'No Bombs South of the Line' petition to parliament with 80,238 signatures (14,564 from Christchurch) calling on the government to sponsor an international conference to discuss establishing a nuclear-free-zone in the southern hemisphere. It was the biggest petition since the one in 1893 demanding votes for women.
- **1973** The government of Prime Minister Norman Kirk (Sydenham MP) took France to the World Court to try to stop it testing nuclear weapons in the South Pacific. Kirk dispatched the frigate *Otago* to protest at the Moruroa test site and sent cables to the leaders of 100 countries. He planned to host conferences for the Pacific region and Commonwealth Foreign Ministers to promote a South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone and a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. These were achieved in 1985 and 1996 respectively.
- **1980** The Christchurch Peace Collective helped initiate a national campaign to declare homes, offices, schools, churches, marae, farms, councils and even cars nuclear free zones. They also called for a national nuclear weapon free zone. Larry Ross had promoted this idea in **1963**. From **1981** his New Zealand Nuclear Free Zone Committee coordinated the nuclear free council campaign.
- **March 1982** Christchurch became the first New Zealand Nuclear Weapon Free city. Lyttelton was the second nuclear free borough after Devonport, followed closely by Heathcote, Riccarton, Rangiora, Mt Herbert, Akaroa, Malvern, Waiwera and others.
- **1986** Retired magistrate Harold Evans initiated a move to ask the World Court to give an advisory opinion on the legality of nuclear weapons. It grew into an international campaign known as the [World Court Project](#). Nearly 4 million declarations of public conscience (including 32,000 from New Zealand) were presented to the Court and over 700 groups worldwide endorsed the project. 74 members of the Non Aligned Movement co-sponsored a 1994 UN resolution asking for the Opinion. In 1996, the Court advised that the threat or use of nuclear weapons was generally illegal under existing international law, and that the nuclear states were obliged to negotiate for complete nuclear disarmament.
- **June 1987** New Zealand became the first country to adopt nuclear free legislation banning visits by nuclear powered and armed vessels. This followed

nuclear free declarations by Belau (1979), Vanuatu (1982) and the Solomon Islands (1983).

- During the **1980s**, the Christchurch City Council hosted various Peace Festivals, and planted a peace tree to commemorate the UN International Year of Peace in 1986. Up to 40 local groups met monthly to organise activities such as peace vigils and marches, 'Give Peace a Dance', street theatre, producing newsletters and peace education material, and seminars. They helped develop and run the Environment and Peace Information Centre (EPICENTRE) in the Arts Centre.
- **1991** Protests against the Gulf War.
- **1995** Protests against renewed French nuclear testing in the Pacific.
- **1996** International Court of Justice gave an historic Advisory Opinion on the legal status of nuclear weapons, that they are generally illegal under international humanitarian law.
- **1998** At Burnham Military Camp, the Lincoln Agreement was signed between Papua New Guinea and Bougainville leaders, ending their nine-year conflict. The government-facilitated talks resulted in the establishment of an unarmed international Peace Monitoring Group.
- **1999** Christchurch joined 242 local authorities worldwide in supporting a resolution calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons. Christchurch also belongs to the 512-strong World Conference of Mayors for Peace Through Inter-City Solidarity (renamed as Mayors for Peace).
- **2000** The UN resolution called for an international conference of the signatories to the Latin American (1967), South Pacific (1985), South East Asian (1995) and African (1996) nuclear-weapon-free-zone treaties.
- **2002** To mark the 20th anniversary of its nuclear free status, the city hosted an exhibition from Hiroshima and Nagasaki which was seen by 20,000 people. The Mayor of Nagasaki also visited to strengthen the relationship between the cities.
- **August 2002** Former Prime Minister David Lange opened the Mahatma Gandhi photographic exhibition at the Canterbury Museum to mark Peace Week.
- **October 2002** The Mayor unveiled a sculpture by Graham Bennett at the newly created Firefighter's Reserve, created in honour of New York firefighters who died on September 11 2001. The sculpture is made from twisted steel girders from New York's World Trade Centre.
- **December 2002** Mayor Garry Moore presented 8 Peace Awards to key Christchurch Peace campaigners and groups to mark the 20th anniversary of Christchurch becoming the first nuclear free NZ city in 1982.
- **August 2003** Peace & Friendship Agreement signed with Hiroshima.
- **2005** Garry Moore was appointed an Executive of [Mayors for Peace](#) and at the 6th General Conference, held in Hiroshima 4 – 6 August 2005, was also nominated and elected one of 8 Vice Presidents representing the Oceania region. In May, the City sent a delegation, including the Mayor and City Council staff, to attend some of the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty Conference at the United Nations in New York.
- **October 2006** A World Peace Bell, gifted to the city by the World Peace Bell Association (WPBA) of Tokyo was unveiled in the Christchurch Botanic Gardens. The pavilion for the bell was gifted by the Christchurch Chapter of the WPBA after two years of fundraising.
- **October 2006** The Christchurch City Council and the Christchurch based Peace Foundation Disarmament and Security Centre co-ordinated a project to gift a sculpture (by Kingsley Baird) to the people of Nagasaki for installation in the Nagasaki Peace Park. The Cloak of Peace – Te Korowai Rangimaire, a gift from the people of New Zealand, was unveiled by Minister of Disarmament, the Honorable Phil Goff. The sculpture was funded by the Government and the cities of Christchurch, Wellington, Auckland, Napier, Waitakere and Whakatane.
- **June 2007** The Canterbury Museum and the Peace Foundation hosted a 'Nuclear Free New Zealand' exhibition at the Museum to mark the 20th anniversary of the passing of the historic Nuclear Free Legislation.

- **December 2007** Dr Kate Dewes, Director of the Disarmament & Security Centre in Christchurch, was appointed by United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to his Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters. She used her five year appointment to follow up on the work she did from 2000-2002 as the NZ Government expert on a [UN Study on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education](#). On UN International Day of Peace, 21<sup>st</sup> September, she received a Christchurch Peace City Award.
- **November 2008** The Christchurch Art Gallery hosted a demonstration as part of an international series of events called 'Cartooning for Peace'.
- **October 2009** The theme for Heritage Week from 16-26 October was 'Doves and Defences: Discover Christchurch in Peace and Conflict' showcasing reactions and responses to peace and conflict and how it shaped our City.
- **October 2009** The Christchurch branch of the [World Peace March for Peace](#) and Nonviolence held a march through the city visiting key peace sites.