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## Newcastle signs up as United Nations city

By Jason Gordon  
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📷 Newcastle university's Caroline McMillen, second from left, United Nations assistant secretary-general Nikhil Seth, third from left, Nuataii Nelmes, fourth from left, at the UN headquarters. Picture: Supplied

NEWCASTLE is now officially endorsed as a city of the United Nations with a historic signing of an agreement in Geneva at the weekend.

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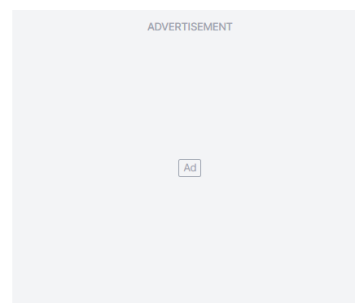
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## Newcastle signs up as United Nations city

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**NEWCASTLE is now officially endorsed as a city of the United Nations with a historic signing of an agreement in Geneva at the weekend.**

Newcastle lord mayor Nuatali Nelmes and Newcastle university vice-chancellor Caroline McMillen joined UN assistant secretary-general Nikhil Seth on Saturday at the UN headquarters, signing Newcastle up as the 15th city in the world to house an international training centre for global authorities and leaders.

The centre, which will attract UN delegations from throughout the world, will focus on advancing environmental sustainability, social inclusion, and enhancing urban government and economic development throughout the Asia-Pacific region.

It will also allow Newcastle to fly the UN flag over government buildings, putting it among the likes of Atlanta, Edinburgh, Shanghai and Kuala Lumpur.

"This is a significant moment in history for Newcastle," Cr Nelmes said from Geneva on Sunday.

"Becoming a UN city, home to the Asia-Pacific training and research arm of the UN, is both a great opportunity and recognition of the importance of collaboration and partnerships for our future growth and prosperity."

Specifically, the training centre will focus its efforts on minimising the risk of man-made or natural disasters around the world.

A delegation working in that area is already booked to visit Newcastle next year.

Cr Nelmes addressed a UN network forum on Friday, Geneva time, noting the transformation Newcastle was undergoing and its ideals and goals which were already in line with those of the UN.

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The UN recently updated its 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which Cr Nelmes said mirrored much of what Newcastle was aiming for.

Newcastle was transitioning to a diversified economy, she said, from the traditional mining, steel and manufacturing base to one focused on "clean and sustainable energy, health and medical research and services, and the creative industries". She noted the work already being done at the university by associate professor Graham Brewer "which varies from the inclusion of Indigenous training and capacity ... and engaging the Pacific Island community through to local projects which address long-onset disaster risk preparedness regarding the future of jobs in our regions".

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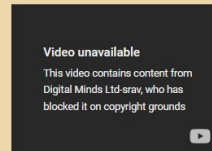
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"There is an opportunity for our city with a \$460million redevelopment program that will take place over the coming years," Cr Nelmes told the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR).

"The partnerships that I have mentioned will all play a role in the planning and delivery. Our role in local government is to ensure that the long-held planning principles that protect the heritage nature of our city centre are protected whilst also ensuring that economic growth is sustained and inclusive.

"One of the most important factors is involving the community in the process. It is an exciting time," she said.

Professor McMillen also described the signing as a "proud moment for the University of Newcastle, our city and region". The agreement will build on the academic strengths of the university and "make a real difference to communities around the world coping with the aftermath of disaster".

■ Cities endorsed by the United Nations as global training and research centres

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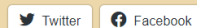
The United Nations Institute for Training and Research is the principal training arm of the United Nations, working in every region of the world.

It aims to empower individuals, governments and organisations through knowledge and learning to effectively overcome contemporary global challenges. In Newcastle, the training centre will focus on research into ways of reducing global disaster risk.

Such disasters include floods and earthquakes, famine, climate change and industrial downturns. Under the agreement, Newcastle will become an official UN city and will be able to fly the UN flag above City Hall.

source:theherald.com.au

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