

Student city, Palmerston North, the international student experience

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Palmerston North has become one of international education's best kept secrets. Massey University has been quietly enrolling international students since the 1960s and is a New Zealand refugee centre, due to the city's interest in engaging with different cultures. The city, a provincial centre of around 80,000, has a population with an average of around 35, and it is this young and open, outward looking focus which has attracted new settlers as well as international students, keen to improve their qualifications at Massey University, New Zealand's defining university, as Vice Chancellor, Steve Maharey is fond of saying. The continual influx of young New Zealanders along with a steady stream of international students has ensured that the Palmerston North community is responsive to student needs and interests. Massey University international student support has a close and mutually beneficial relationship with many local and central government agencies involved in assisting new arrivals in the city. ISS invites community groups to attend all international student orientations, and has been involved with initiatives as diverse as the Ministry of Social Development settlement project for Palmerston North and the Ethkick soccer tournament where Massey's Omani students are kings. Currently local Rotary clubs sponsor several international student events, and Operation Friendship, a local interdenominational church group provides a small gift to all new international students. We are very interested in sharing our recipe for successful community engagement.

Key Words

Young open, outward looking focus