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Auckland exposed

By John Thornton

5:10 PM Monday Nov 29, 2010



John Thornton reports on a fresh attempt to reveal the true Auckland to an international audience.

Auckland's reputation as an international city hangs in the balance with a new global project by a German cultural society.

In a recent Mercer Survey conducted this year Auckland claimed a fourth place in the worldwide Quality of Living category. But is this label as a gentle metropolis genuinely felt by the city's youth?

An urban-exchange project is about to find out, pitting Auckland against some of the foremost cities from across the globe as young journalists share forthright views of the city in an encompassing array of aspects of urban life.

The CityScapes concept is orchestrated by The Goethe Institute, a non-profit group promoting German language and cultural exchanges.

In all, there will be 10 cities in the CityScapes project, as far North as London and as far East as Hanoi.

Twelve subjects will be covered over as many months, starting in January 2011, will be undertaken by the chosen journalists and be presented in the form of a blog, whereby all 10 entries will be compared, distinguished and evaluated.

"CityScapes aims to make visible what unites us and what may divide us" cites Lisa Berndt, cultural officer of Goethe Institute. "It wants to create awareness of the necessity for local action in response to global issues. It endeavours to research the human condition of the young urban dweller of the 21st century."

Three aspiring journalists, two writers and a photographer, are being selected for the project. Nominations close on December 3. One journalist will be a native of the city, the other a relative newcomer to offer an outsider's perspective.

All applicants must be aged between 18 and 32, and will be offered a salary in return for their contributions.

But that's not the only perk. "At the end of the project," adds Lisa, "the urban reporters will be invited to meet in one of the participating cities where they will get to know each other and experts from the field of urban studies, architecture and other topic-related fields."

Lisa says the Goethe Institute chose Auckland over other New Zealand cities because of the "waterfront development which sounds very exciting and looks like will make a big change to the city's atmosphere".

The monthly topics in the CityScapes project

January: My year in the city - work, play and get out of there!

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To find out more, see www.goethe.de/enindex.htm



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By John Thornton



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