

Mobilising Kiwis

Scott Brown is chair of Kea China and heads up consultancy Redfern Associates in Shanghai.

What prompted you to seek work out of New Zealand?

I was literally handed an air ticket in my first year out of university and sent to Beijing for a three-month project, so I can't really claim to have made any well thought out plans of my own. The work was fun, and China in the mid '90s was fascinating and hugely challenging. When the company pulled back a bit some years later I decided to do some travel and ended up staying in China and being offered some good opportunities. Fifteen years later I have my own firm and am getting to do some exciting things.

How are your experiences overseas shaping your understanding of New Zealand?

I deal on a daily basis with a lot of foreign and NZ companies approaching the China market. NZ has a great name and a privileged position in China. Whether we are doing enough to leverage and maximise that is a very different discussion. Our companies don't always demonstrate overseas the very qualities we like to pride ourselves on. We tend to dip in our toes and hope it goes well.

How can offshore Kiwis contribute to New Zealand?

Your average expat is probably more nationalistic than Kiwis at home. Nationals seem to gravitate towards each other in places which are more foreign and remote, like China. I am heavily and proudly involved with KEA up here. I'm proud of the community's efforts in organising events, and assisting others new to the country and friends of NZ. This was evidenced by the fundraising efforts for the Christchurch earthquake where we raised a great deal of money in a short time. People can really mobilise when they feel the call. How many communities of maybe 1000 people can say they have raised almost NZ\$400,000? That says it all. **M**



Scott Brown is a member of Kea, New Zealand's global talent community. www.keanewzealand.com