



Ambassador Virginia H. Benavidez delivers her Independence Day Message during the 114<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Philippine Independence held on 19 June 2012 at the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts in Wellington.

30 June 2012 - Nearly 350 guests joined the celebration of the 114<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Proclamation of Philippine Independence during the Philippine National Day reception hosted by Philippine Ambassador to New Zealand Virginia H. Benavidez at the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts in Wellington on June 19.

Present during the reception were guests from the diplomatic corps, government of New

Zealand, members of Parliament, business sector, academe, churches, various organizations and associations, members of the Filipino community and other groups.

New Zealand's Minister for Courts, Associate Minister of Justice and Associate Minister for Social Development Chester Borrows was the guest of honour.

He pointed out the importance of the Philippines-New Zealand partnership in the Asia-Pacific region and the Philippines' respected voice arising from the country's traditions of openness, democracy and tolerance.

He acknowledged the Filipino community's creative excellence and vital contributions to New Zealand life and the mutual support of the Filipinos and New Zealanders during the Christchurch earthquake and typhoon disaster in Mindanao, respectively.

Minister Borrows also spoke on the significance of the visit of Minister of Foreign Affairs Murray McCully to the Philippines in July and the state visit of President Benigno S. Aquino III to New Zealand in October. He likewise spoke on both countries' on-going and prospective collaboration in the political and defence realms. He also spoke on both countries' increasing economic cooperation, within the context of the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (AANZFTA), and in crucial areas in the dairy industry, development assistance in geothermal energy, forestry and expansion of air, education, information technology, services and tourism links.



Ambassador Virginia H. Benavidez in toast with Hon. Chester B. Buena Vista, Associate Minister of Justice and Associate Minister of Social Development.

The Minister also mentioned the first AGFA Asia Pacific Summit, the New York Business Development Initiative, the Philippine Business Council in New Zealand, and the Philippine Business Association in New Zealand.





Ambassador Virginia H. Benavidez with Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Ambassador to New Zealand Markos Tekle Rike.



Ms. Ivy Rose Padilla, Mr. Matthew Pike and Mr. Hayden Taylor entertain the guests with their interpretation of "Sun and Moon" and "The Prayer."

~~Philippines and the Philippines Embassy in Wellington. The Philippines is celebrating 50th anniversary of its independence from the United States. The Philippines is a country with a rich and diverse culture, and it is proud to share its heritage with the world. The Philippines is a country with a rich and diverse culture, and it is proud to share its heritage with the world.~~



The officers and staff of the Philippine Consulate in Wellington at the reception. (Front row, from left to right) Marissa Punsalang, Marissa Punsalang, and Consul Giovanni E. Atty. Levy Ang-Strang. Mamacalay and Mr. Nige