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New Plymouth takes gold in LivCom awards

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Mt Taranaki. Photo / Mark Mitchell

New Plymouth is one of the best places in the world to live, according to judges in a United Nations-endorsed awards.

The Taranaki city has been awarded first place and a gold award for cities of population up to 75,000 in the International Awards for Liveable Communities (LivCom), held at the weekend in Dongguan, China.

The results were released today.

The awards looked at communities around the world doing the most to address issues ranging from pollution and conservation to poor housing.

There were 50 finalists from five continents judged on enhancing the landscape, heritage management, environmental sensitivity, community sustainability, healthy lifestyles and future planning.

New Plymouth mayor Peter Tenant, who was in China for the awards, said he was thrilled to accept the honour on behalf of the city.

"This is about the entire community - it's about saying 'we live somewhere special and we want to look after it'. For a little old city in New Zealand to win this is something pretty special."

The finalists were divided into five categories according to their population.

Other category winners were Greystones in Ireland, the Broadland District in Norfolk, England, Changxing in China and the Municipality of York in Canada.

The LivCom awards were launched internationally in 1997 and are endorsed by the UN Environment Programme

New Plymouth also won an award for community sustainability. Canadian judge Claudette Savaria said the city had gone from one of the highest levels of unemployment in New Zealand to one of the lowest.

"This is a vibrant, thriving community with high levels of volunteerism, highly engaged and consulted community and highly innovative social solutions."

- NZPA