



Japan Local Government Centre (CLAIR Sydney)

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P R O F I L E

WHO WE ARE

The Japan Local Government Centre (CLAIR Sydney) is one of seven overseas offices of CLAIR, the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations.

CLAIR is a semi-government, non-profit organisation which was jointly established by Japanese prefectures and municipalities to help facilitate their various international programmes.

CLAIR was established in 1988 with the endorsement of The Japanese Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC), which oversees local government. MIC continues to provide guidance to CLAIR.

With head office in Tokyo, CLAIR's international network of offices are located in New York, London, Paris, Singapore, Seoul, Beijing and Sydney.

OUR STAFF

Headed by Director Shinsuke Takigawa, our office has six staff from Japan and three local staff members. The Japanese staff are seconded from local and central governments for a period of two years. Current staff have been seconded from the MIC, and the local governments of Nagoya, Eniwa, Kurihara and Ota Cities.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN JAPAN

Three Tiers of Government

Central Government

e.g. Diplomacy, Defence, Judiciary, Currency and finance, Pension, Health insurance

Local Government

Prefectural Government (47)

e.g. Welfare and health services, Major infrastructure, Industry promotion, Disaster management, Senior high schools, Police

* 6 prefectures have sister state relationships with Australian states.

Municipal Government (1747) (City, Town & Village)

e.g. Welfare and health services, Local infrastructure, Industry promotion, Disaster management, Elementary and junior high schools, Fire defence & ambulance, Urban development plans, Waste management

* 100 sister cities with Australia and 41 sister cities with New Zealand.

Basic Structure of Local Government

Governor / Mayor (executive power)

- [Roles]
- Legally represent the prefecture/municipality
 - Chief executive of the local government (having no seat in assembly)
 - Set strategic plans
 - Draft budget
 - Appointment and management of council staff

Assembly (legislative power)

- [Roles]
- Enactment of by-laws (local acts)
 - Decision of annual budget
 - Approval of annual financial report
 - Decision of important matters stated in national laws
 - Reviewing the Mayor's activities

↑ Directly Elected (Term 4 years)

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Citizens

Major Challenges facing Local Government

- An ageing population
- Youth development
- Funding, maintenance, and improvement of infrastructure
- Developing the local economy to counter negative effects of the global financial crisis
- Reform of primary industries
- Consolidation and revitalisation of communities after amalgamation
- Financial difficulties



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HAT WE DO

-Across Australia and New Zealand

Promotion of Sister City Relationships

CLAIR Sydney supports and promotes sister city relationships between Japan and Australia / New Zealand, in conjunction with Sister Cities Australia (SCA) and Sister Cities New Zealand (SCNZ). We also provide support to Australian, New Zealand and Japanese cities seeking sister city relationships. Currently there are 100 Australia-Japan sister city relationships and 6 sister state relationships, and 41 New Zealand-Japan sister city relationships.

Economic Exchange

CLAIR Sydney supports economic ties and public liaisons between Australia / New Zealand and Japan. We do this by actively promoting regional Japan as a travel destination through conferences and events across Australia and New Zealand.

Promoting the JET Programme and Supporting JET Alumni Associations

- The Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme sends graduates from all over the world to Japan to assist in foreign language education in schools and to develop cross cultural understanding. Since the programme's inception in 1987, a total of 3,398 participants from Australia and 2,453 from New Zealand have taken part and made significant contributions.
- Chapters of the JET Alumni Association (JETAA) across the world build cultural bridges between their home countries and Japan.
The 5 JETAA chapters in Australia and the 3 in New Zealand help promote and recruit for the JET Programme. They also hold various events to promote Japanese culture and to develop and maintain friendships between Japan and Australia / New Zealand.
The JETAA Oceania Regional Conference and the JETAA International Conference are held every year. CLAIR Sydney is a proud supporter of JETAA chapters in Australia and New Zealand.

Support for Japanese Local Governments

In response to requests from Japanese local governments, CLAIR Sydney supports their international activities including organising visits and study tours, holding information sessions, and providing reference materials.

Lectures and Information Exchange on Local Government and Intergovernmental Relations Issues

To promote mutual understanding at a regional level we exchange diverse opinions with related government ministries, local governments and interested organizations regarding common issues in Japan, Australia, and New Zealand. This year we will invite a lecturer from Japan to speak at an annual conference to be hosted by Sister Cities Australia in August. We will also hold a seminar in Sydney in November on the impact of an aging population.

Research on Governments

CLAIR Sydney conducts research on the systems and operations of governance, best practices, and current issues and challenges faced by local, state and federal governments in Australia and New Zealand. Our research can be viewed by the Japanese public on our website and in our various publications.

Research on Multiculturalism

Due to an increase in the numbers of foreigners residing long term in Japan in recent years, the Japanese government has gradually begun implementing multicultural programmes to better accommodate foreign residents. CLAIR Sydney conducts research on policies and practices related to multiculturalism that have been established by various organisations in Australia and New Zealand.

Providing Opportunities for Exchange and Cooperation

CLAIR Sydney organises a study tour for senior local government executives and a training programme for professionals in the public sector from Australia and New Zealand, providing an opportunity for participants to learn about local government in Japan.

Staff Training

Our Japanese staff undergo an internship program by visiting local governments and government agencies. They also attend conferences in order to gain knowledge and experience regarding governing systems in Australia and New Zealand.

PLEASE CONTACT US



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Please visit our website for further information:
<http://www.jlgc.org.au>

To receive a copy of our publications please contact us at :
Level 12, Challis House, 4 Martin Place, Sydney NSW 2000
Phone: (02) 9241 5033 Fax: (02) 9241 5014
E-mail : mailbox@jlgc.org.au