



# Correspondence

## In This Issue:

- |     |  |     |   |
|-----|--|-----|---|
| 1-3 | Welcome to Morioka                                     | 6   | 2014 ALGA National Assembly of Local Government |
| 3-5 | 2014 Local Government Exchange and Cooperation Seminar | 6-7 | JETAA Auckland Activities                       |
| 5   | A delegation from Otsu visits Mosman                   | 8   | Introducing our new interns                     |
| 5-6 | JET Pre-departure Orientation                          | 9   | From The Director                               |

## Welcome to Morioka!

### About Morioka



**Morioka** is the capital of Iwate prefecture and a historical castle town of the Nambu family. Morioka is located in inland Iwate prefecture. With the Kitakami (the Tohoku region's largest river), Shizukuishi, and Nakatsu rivers flowing through the city, and majestic Mt. Iwate towering in the background, Morioka has come to be known as "The City of Water and Greenery".

As the social, political, and economic center of Iwate prefecture, Morioka is roughly a two hour bullet train ride away from Tokyo. Morioka has made remarkable progress in economic development, and with a growing population, is becoming a leading city in Northern Tohoku.

### Tourist Spots

Morioka is home to many interesting sightseeing opportunities. As one of the three great castle sites for the Tohoku region, Morioka Castle Park is a must see destination. Having been mostly destroyed during the Meiji-era, the walls of the castle remain, along with a museum showcasing the history of the area.

Another must see destination is Ishiwari-Zakura (The Rock-Splitting Cherry Tree). The massive cherry tree springs forth from a crack in a huge granite boulder. The tree is thought to be four centuries old, and is considered a national natural monument.



**Mt. Iwate and  
Kitakami River**

Morioka is also home to examples of classical architecture. Such examples range from the elegant touch of the Meiji period (1866-1912) to the Taisho period (1912-1926), and even up through the Showa period (1926-1989). In addition, you can find special

characteristics such as: Giboshi (bronze railing ornaments) which are a national important art object; Nambu Ironware; and even Nambu-Zome (which is a method of dyeing cloth).

## Local Specialties

For those of you with a passion for food, Morioka is home to three well known noodle dishes: Reimen, Jajamen, and Wanko Soba. These three delicious dishes go well with the local sake and beer brewed by the local brew masters who are known as the Nambu Toji. With fresh ingredients from the mountains and the sea, you are sure to find a taste to suit your palate.



**Wanko Soba**

## Festivals & Events

If festivals are your passion, then Morioka will definitely leave you fulfilled. Chagu Chagu Umakko is a parade of about 100 colorfully adorned horses who march a 13km path from Takizawa city to Hachiman-gu Shrine in Morioka. The event occurs on the second Saturday in June of every year, and many people gather along the streets to watch the horses as they make the last leg of their journey.

Held in mid-summer from 1 – 4 August, Morioka has one of their most famous festivals, “Sansa Odori”. On 29 June 2014, the sansa drums set a world record for the largest Japanese drum ensemble, involving an astonishing 3,437

people. “Sansa Odori” is one of the greatest summer festivals in the Tohoku region and has attracted as many as 1.3 million people. With the methodic pounding of the drums, the smooth echoes of the Yokobue (Japanese flute), and the mesmerizing dancing, this is one parade you won’t want to miss.

Occurring annually on 14 and 16 September, Morioka hosts the Dashi parade. Donning gigantic depictions of themes such as famous Kabuki plays and so on, large floats are pulled through the city by revelers with drums and musical accompaniments.



**Chagu Chagu Umakko**



**Sansa Odori**



**Dashi Parade**

## Leisure

If you are looking to “get away from it all” Morioka has many opportunities to both relax and have a good time. Tsunagi Hot Spring is a scenic hot spring located next to an absolutely stunning view. If relaxing in a warm hot spring bath is not for you, then Hachimantai city is home to a top notch ski-resort known as Appi Kogen Ski Resort. You can also experience the wonderful autumn colors and the “Snow Corridor” in Hachimantai city, as well.



**Appi Kogen Ski Resort**

For those looking to explore, Morioka is home to the biggest privately owned farm in Japan, Koiwai Farm. Koiwai offers a charming experience of farm life in Japan.

Other must-see destinations include the world heritage site Hiraizumi and the Sanriku Coast. Morioka is also situated in a good location to access the neighboring prefectures of Akita and Aomori.

Morioka is full of different opportunities for you to indulge all of your senses. We would love to entertain you and warm your heart with the genuine hospitality of our great city.

---

***Applications are now open for the 2014 Local Government Exchange and Cooperation Seminar in Japan!***

---

# 2014 Local Government Exchange and Cooperation Seminar in Japan

*We are offering eligible participants the opportunity to visit Japan*

---

## Seminar details

### ➤ 2014 Local Government Exchange and Cooperation Seminar includes:

- Seminars on Japanese Local Government in **Tokyo** and **Sakaide City** (this year’s host local government)
- Tour of national/local government facilities and cultural sites
- Home-stay with Japanese families
- Feedback/Discussion



## ➤ Seminar Theme:

*~Making the Best use of Regional Characteristics~*

## ➤ Eligible Participants:

- Applicants must be local government executives or executives involved in the promotion of local area international exchange and cooperation.
- In addition, applicants from national organisations, research institutes, or other related organisations may be eligible to participate, providing their backgrounds are related to the theme of the Seminar.
- Up to **6 participants** will be accepted from the following countries through CLAIR Sydney: **Australia** and **New Zealand**.

## ➤ Schedule:

- The seminar will be held from:  
**Sunday 16 to Wednesday 26 November 2014**

## ➤ Expenses:

- Expenses incurred for the Seminar registration and materials will be borne by CLAIR.
- Any expenses prior to arrival in Japan and after departing from Japan shall be borne by participants.
- Expenses incurred during the Seminar period in Japan will be borne by CLAIR.

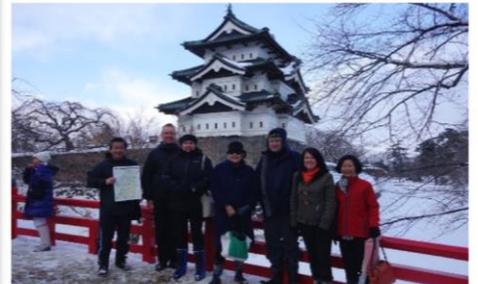


## Application

To apply, please fill in the [Form](#) and send it to [mailbox@ilgc.org.au](mailto:mailbox@ilgc.org.au) by **Friday 1 August 2014**.

- For more details of the seminar, please refer to the [Outline](#).
- Please note that there is a limit to the number of participants (6), the outcome of your application will be made available to you by the end of August 2014.

If you have any questions about the Seminar, please feel free to contact us at [mailbox@ilgc.org.au](mailto:mailbox@ilgc.org.au) or on 02 9241 5033. We look forward to your application.



*2013 Local Government Exchange and Cooperation Seminar*

## About Sakaide City

Sakaide City would like to show you how they make use of their regional characteristics in manufacturing and agricultural industries and how they work on human resources and community development. They would also like to discuss about how Australia and New Zealand utilise their rich resources for Tourism purposes.

Since they are also facing a decreasing population, Sakaide would also like to hear your opinions on multicultural societies.

***They look forward to talking with you about how to promote tourism and further develop the cities.***

*Sakaide City plans to provide the seminar participants with a historical and cultural experience as well as visits to the local industrial places.*

**For more information about the seminar**, please refer to our [Newsletter issue No. 76](#) and [Special Issue](#). Please also visit our website: <http://www.jlgc.org.au/our-activities/the-local-government-exchange-cooperation-seminar/>.

---

## A delegation from Otsu in Shiga prefecture visits Mosman

On 2 June we assisted a delegation from the Otsu Chamber of Commerce and Industry and their visit to Otsu's friendship city Mosman. The two cities have mainly been engaging in friendship city exchange since 2010, yet because Otsu's Rotary members were in Sydney to attend the Rotary International Convention held in early June, they paid Mosman Council a visit. Among the attendees to the meeting were Mayor of Mosman Cr. Abelson, GM Ms. Lee, Director of Mosman Art Gallery Mr. Cheeseman and Rotary members, making the delegation's visit a very constructive one.



---

## The JET Programme Pre-departure Orientation

The Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme started in 1987, aiming to promote grass-roots international exchange between Japan and other nations. Over 6,000 people have taken part in the programme from Australia and New Zealand so far.

This year many young people from Australia and New Zealand will leave for Japan at the end of July and the end of August respectively. They are going to work as Assistant



Language Teachers (ALT) or Coordinators for International Relations (CIR) in Japanese prefectures, cities, towns and villages.

The Pre-departure Orientation were held in each JET recruitment city, and we attended to give the participants some advice. Members of the JET Alumni Association (JETAA) also gave new participants helpful tips based on their experience in Japan.

We expect them to do great work, and become bridges between Australia, New Zealand and Japan!



For more information regarding the JET programme, visit <http://www.jetprogramme.org/>.

## 2014 Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) National General Assembly of Local Government



From 15 – 18 June, we attended the ALGA National General Assembly of Local Government in Canberra, ACT. We promoted CLAIR's activities including this year's local government exchange seminar, Japan tourism and sister city relationships between Australia and Japan. We also met many people at our exhibition booth and made a lot of contacts.

We were very happy to talk to all the people who visited our booth. Thank you very much and we look forward to seeing you again and working with you in the future. Also, we are always happy to offer

information on the Japanese local government system at Australia and New Zealand local government events.

## JETAA Auckland Activities

### ~From JETAA Auckland~

On Monday 7 July, JETAA Auckland, in collaboration with the Japanese Embassy in New Zealand, had the privilege of hosting Japanese Prime Minister Abe's wife Akie, for a Tanabata event. Mrs Abe had joined her husband on this first trip to New Zealand since he became Prime Minister in 2012, and this was her second trip to New Zealand (her first being ten years ago). While we saw Prime Minister Abe only briefly, we were able to share Tanabata celebrations with Mrs Abe during an hour long event at the Villa Maria Estate in Auckland.



Others in attendance at the event included representatives from the Japan-East Asia Network of Exchange for Student and Youths (JENESYS), and Support Our Kids (SOK). JENESYS promote exchange of mutual understanding and development opportunities through school visits and homestays. SOK is a charity set up to help children whose lives have been devastated by the Canterbury and Tohoku earthquakes. After a welcome from our committee president, Amelia Sirimanne, both groups gave presentations to Mrs Abe about their work, and our committee vice president and New Zealand representative for JETAA Shelley Butt shared some of her experiences from the JET Programme.

We then explained to the group the story behind Tanabata; a Japanese star festival based on a legend of two stars, Vega (the Weaving Girl) and Altair (the Cow Herder). They represent two lovers who are separated by the Milky Way, and are only able to meet once a year on Tanabata, which means the seventh night of the seventh – 7 July. Tanabata is usually celebrated in Japan by hanging decorations from bamboo trees, and writing wishes for one’s own hopes and dreams.

To celebrate the festival we wrote down our wishes on coloured card with Mrs Abe and the group, and then hung them on our bamboo tree together. We then had an opportunity to chat with Mrs Abe personally. It turns out that Villa Maria, being a vineyard, was a perfect venue

choice, because Mrs Abe enjoys wine. We asked her about her favourite - Sauvignon Blanc from New Zealand.

Unfortunately there was not enough time in this visit for Mrs Abe to enjoy a wine tour of

New Zealand – after only arriving in Auckland the night before, they had plans to go to Christchurch later in the day, and then depart New Zealand for Australia. Especially with this being such a short visit, we were really thrilled to have such an opportunity to meet with Mrs Abe. To commemorate the day, she gave each of us a beautiful cloth printed with Tanabata imagery.

After the Tanabata event, we accompanied Mrs Abe to the entrance of the estate to welcome the arrival of Prime Minister Key and Prime Minister Abe, who greeted us and shook each of our hands in turn. Mrs Abe then accompanied the Prime Ministers to their next event. Although we were not able to talk with Prime Minister Abe, he seemed as warm and engaging as his wife. It was an honour and great privilege to meet them both. Hopefully one day we will be able to take Mrs Abe up on her offer to host us at their private residence in Japan.



Written by Mrs Abe:

*“Wishing a continued friendship between Japan and New Zealand.”*

# Introducing Our New Interns

## Kathy Lieu



Hi, my name is Kathy Lieu and I have been an intern at CLAIR since mid June. I have just graduated from the University of Technology, Sydney, with a combined bachelor in Business and International Studies.

Like many of the previous interns at CLAIR, I was also fortunate enough to go on exchange to Japan and studied for a year at Kansai University of Foreign Languages in Osaka in 2013.

I had an unforgettable time – I was able to experience part of the Japanese lifestyle as a tourist at times, and at others doing things locals do, like navigating the differences between Australian and Japanese garbage disposal procedures. On a broader level, I was able to realise, to some extent, the daily challenges millions of people face around the world, living in countries where the official language not one's native tongue – like my parents, for

example, who are Vietnamese-born Chinese immigrants who came to Australia in the early 80's. Every 'test' at the supermarket check-out figuring out if I was being asked if I wanted a bag or a receipt (in keigo, no less) was appreciated that much more with this new outlook.

For me, being an intern at CLAIR evokes these same kinds of feelings – every day is both a challenge and enlightening in its own right. Through research, I'm learning a lot about the local government policies we have in place in Australia and realising the vast impact it has on our day to day lives. The possibility that these policies could be used to address issues in Japan is a true eye-opener about the relationship between Australia and Japan; it exceeds the economic capacity we hear about so often.

What I am most thankful for as an intern, is that every day is enjoyable, and time passes quickly! I am incredibly grateful to CLAIR for giving me the opportunity to intern, and for the other staff members who have been welcoming and supportive. This has been, and will continue to be, an interesting experience!

## Yuri Arai



Hello, my name is Yuri Arai and I have been an intern at CLAIR since late June. I am studying at University of New South Wales as an exchange student from Ochanomizu University, Tokyo. Here in Sydney, I have been studying multiculturalism, which has broadened my view of globalized societies.

I am very interested in the work CLAIR does, which connects Japan with Australia, such as promoting Japanese local governments and supporting educational or cultural exchange. As I am thinking of working both for my local community and the world in order to make society more harmonious in the future, working at CLAIR is a great opportunity for me in helping to provide a clear vision of my career. In addition, I would like to learn ways to

build positive relations between Japan and other countries though this internship.

I am very grateful for the opportunity to work in this warm atmosphere with kind and supportive staff members.

# From The Director

## *Local Allocation Tax Grants*

Last month, I attended the 2014 National General Assembly of Local Government. At the conference, the ALGA adopted an urgent resolution which called on the Commonwealth Government to restore indexation of Financial Assistance Grants in line with CPI and population growth immediately.

In Japan, we have the same kind of system as GST revenue grants and Financial Assistance Grants, called Local Allocation Tax Grants.

The LATGs are categorised as general revenue assistance from the central government to local governments. This mechanism guarantees a portion of national tax revenue as a common financial resource for local governments. The LATGs are distributed in accordance with prescribed standards in order to compensate for the imbalance in tax revenue among local governments so that all local governments can maintain a basic standard of services.

Similarly to what the ALGA resolution said in Australia's case, in Japan, the LATGs are vitally important for local government to provide equitable levels of services to all Japanese communities. As the national budget drafting season is approaching, Japanese local governments' greatest concern is how much LGATs are ensured for the next fiscal year.



### **Japan Local Government Centre (CLAIR, Sydney)**

Level 12 Challis House 4 Martin Place Sydney NSW 2000

P: (02) 9241 5033 F: (02) 9241 5014

Web: [www.jlgc.org.au](http://www.jlgc.org.au) Email: [mailbox@jlgc.org.au](mailto:mailbox@jlgc.org.au)

