



***Season's Greetings  
And  
Best wishes for 2015  
From CLAIR Sydney***

**Correspondence**

**Newsletter Issue No.82 December / 2014**

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**Event      Matsuri in Sydney 2014      -Saturday , 13th December-**

**Matsuri in Sydney 2014**

**Date: Saturday 13 December, 2014**

**Time: 11:00am – 7:00pm**

**Venue: Tumbalong Park, Darling Harbour**



Matsuri in Sydney is a good old-fashioned Japanese festival held annually in Darling Harbour's Tumbalong Park, right in the heart of Sydney. The 2013 festival drew an enormous crowd of around 20,000 and was a huge success!

There will be exhibitions, food stalls, stage shows and stage performances – so many things to enjoy!

For the details, please go to <http://matsurisydney.com/>

# Welcome to Chiba Prefecture



Chiba Prefecture is surrounded by sea and rivers and is blessed with nature full of water and green.

Located to the east of Tokyo, the peninsula projects into the Pacific Ocean.

While the southeastern part faces the Pacific Ocean, the western part faces Tokyo Bay. The northwestern part borders on Tokyo and Saitama, and the northern part borders on Ibaraki. Also, the Narita International Airport is located in Chiba prefecture.

There are many tourist spots in Chiba Prefecture, including some of Japan's most popular and famous attractions, such as Tokyo Disney Resort. We would like to introduce an outline of tourism in Chiba prefecture.

**Sightseeing:** The first recommended place to visit is **Naritasan Shinshoji Temple**. Shinshoji Temple has a history spanning over 1,000 years, and has gained popularity and many believers as a temple that opened for common people. In the approaching road before the grandiose gate, there are many restaurants and shops where you can enjoy fresh eel and buy souvenirs. The Great Main Hall, which is the symbol of Shinshoji Temple, is also the place where monks offer prayers for world peace and the happiness of people.



*The Great Main Hall of Naritasan Shinshoji Temple*



*Naritasan Shinshoji Temple with red leaves*

**Festivals and Events:** Seasonal events are held in various parts of Chiba Prefecture. Especially, a traditional Japanese style festival called the "Sawara Grand Festival," which is held every summer and autumn, is very famous. People gather to walk along the preserved district called Sawara, carrying big floats called *dashi*.



*Sawara Grand Festival*



*Preserved district Sawara*



**Experiences:** Chiba prefecture is characterised by its abundance of hands-on experience based tourist spots. For example, in Boso no Mura Museum (“Boso” is an old term of Chiba prefecture) near by the Narita International Airport, you can enjoy making traditional crafts such as Boshu Uchiwa. It is a style of traditional Japanese fans in the style of Boshu, southern part of Chiba Pref.



*Boso no Mura Museum*



*Boshu Uchiwa - traditional Japanese fans*

**Flavors of Chiba:** There is a range of delicious foods in Chiba Prefecture, where you can have fresh seafood, as well as rich dairy and farm products. You can enjoy Chiba-only local dishes and innovative cuisine, such as seafood like Kaisendon (seafood bowl), ramen and curry made with local ingredients. There are also a lot of places where you can enjoy cooking from all over the world, like Western or Chinese, as well as confectionery or sake.



**Educational Travel:** Since Chiba Prefecture is abundant in both nature and culture, it is an ideal destination for educational travel. Students will be able to enjoy a variety of activities such as meeting local students, staying with local families, visiting temples, and experiencing traditional culture. In addition, having Narita International Airport and being adjacent to Tokyo will make their stay in Chiba even more attractive.



For more information, please visit our website and Facebook:



← Click here

**Facebook:** “Japan Tourism-Chiba”- <https://www.facebook.com/Japan.Tourism.Chiba>

# 2014 CLAIR Forum “Revitalise Your City”

This year’s CLAIR Forum, hosted by CLAIR in conjunction with the Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government (ACELG) successfully opened on Thursday 27 November.

This year’s theme was “Revitalise Your City” and presentations were conducted over two sessions of “Advertise local products and tourism” and “Attracting people to your region”.



We invited ACELG Director, Associate Professor Roberta Ryan as a facilitator, Clarence City Council Alderman James Walker and ACELG Associate Alex Gooding as guest speakers to this year’s Forum.

Also, Assistant Directors of CLAIR Sydney - Hiroaki Seino from Aomori, Noriyuki Shiba from Wakayama, Misa Hirasawa from Hiroshima and Hiromi Hakuta from Shikaoi town in Hokkaido delivered presentations at the Forum for the first time.

An audience of around 40 local and state government representatives joined the Forum, making for lively question and answer sessions.



The forum began with a welcome speech from Mr Yasuhiko Tanabe, Director of CLAIR Sydney.

He talked about challenges Japan is facing, particularly the serious issue of local area population numbers, especially the sharp fall in population in rural areas and move to urban areas. He said that Local government as a whole must make strategies to revitalise local areas.



Next, the facilitator Roberta Ryan talked about the common challenges Australia and Japan are facing, remarking that we need to support municipalities and small communities that have problems with depopulation and over-reliance on a single, dominant industry.

She said she looked forward to hearing some practical case studies on how we can address these challenges during both sessions.

## Session 1 “Advertise local products and tourism”

The first session was delivered by Hiroaki Seino, James Walker and Noriyuki Shiba.

Alderman James Walker talked about strategies to revitalise Clarence City in Tasmania, focusing on environment arrangements of the bay area to market the local area as a place of business. He mentioned that Clarence City makes an effort in tourism collaborating with neighbour cities.

The Council is also envisioning a short-stay facility to make it possible to experience farming life. This strategy is integrating tourism and produce. Through farming experience, the visitors get local products, leading to sales promotion of those products – in short, tourism has the potential to promote local produce in the long term.



Messrs Seino and Shiba from CLAIR Sydney explained tourism and local produce promotion strategies in Japan. The rice field art tourism projects in Aomori impressed everyone greatly.

The three speakers' presentations had a common theme: local governments need to think of their own strengths and make active efforts to promote the attractiveness of their region more effectively.



Participants and speakers discussed ways to apply the case studies of Japan to Australia.

Ideas about economic exchange with sister cities being beneficial to increase the vitality of local areas also came up in the post-presentation discussion.



## Session 2 “Attracting people to your region”



Alex Gooding presented on the results of a research project looking at economic growth in regional capitals.

His presentation showed several findings, using five Australian regional capital councils as case studies. Among the features of sustainable regional councils is regard for social capital – looking at such things as the local population and culture as resources for prosperity. One key of successful economic growth he outlined was an effective governance framework. He emphasised the need for shared leadership and effective formal regional structures between regional capital councils and surrounding smaller local authorities.



Misa Hirasawa and Hiromi Hakuta explained ways that their home governments in Japan are attracting people to stay and live in their local region.

In some rural parts of the country, depopulation and the subsequent abundance of disused houses is a big issue. To counter this, local governments are conducting settlement experience projects by using those disused houses as accommodation, in the hope that project participants will grow to love the local area and move there permanently.

As well, Shikaoi town organises farm internship programs for women every year, to give urban people a first-hand experience of the value and appeal of agricultural life. In Hiroshima, existing heavy industry is using the ageing population as an advantage by adapting its technology to aged care and related fields, turning a perceived social disadvantage into a promising commercial opportunity.

Similarly, Shikaoi solves multiple issues with one resource previously considered undesirable e.g. reusing animal waste for biogas electricity generation, powering new industries such as aquaculture and farm greenhouses. The speakers strongly made the point that attracting and keeping people in a region requires changes in thinking.



During the question and answer session, participants discussed the role of mayors and other local leaders in revitalisation strategies, and what power should be allowed for mayoral autonomy when innovative ideas for growth need a strong approach for implementation.

We had a valuable opportunity to hear of case studies of addressing challenges facing local government in both Australia and Japan through this year's Forum. We thank all speakers and participants for making this year's Forum a great success.

# 2014 Local Government Exchange and Co-operation Seminar – City of Sakaide

~ Articles and Photos by Melissa Gibbs,

Deputy Director of Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government (ACELG) ~



*Seminar participants with CLAIR Managing Director*

*Left to right: Penelope Sell, Laurie Mundt, Melissa Gibbs, CLAIR Managing Director, Susan Jones,*

In November I had the privilege of leading a delegation of six Australian and New Zealand local government representatives to Tokyo and Sakaide City as part of the 2014 Local Government Exchange and Co-operation Seminar organised by the Japan Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR).

The Local Government Exchange and Co-operation Seminar has been operating since 1997. It brings together people from Japan, Australia and New Zealand working in local government to exchange information and experiences.

The exchange presents a unique opportunity for Australian and New Zealand representatives to learn more about Japanese local government and culture through site visits, a delightful home stay experience with Japanese families, and formal and informal discussion sessions.

The theme of this year's seminar was "*making the best of regional characteristics*", a subject to which each of the participants had ideas and suggestions to contribute.

The delegation included:

- Melissa Gibbs (delegation leader), Deputy Director, Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government (Sydney, NSW)
- Councillor Keith Yong, City of Perth (WA)
- Laurie Mundt, Economic Development Manager, Ipswich City Council (Qld)
- Milinda Peris, Civic and International Relations Co-ordinator, Christchurch City Council (NZ)
- Penelope Sell, Community Services Manager, Towong Shire Council (Vic)
- Susan Jones, Human Resources and Administration Manager, District of Gore (NZ).



*Seminar participants with Sakaide City Officials*

Like many of its counterparts in Japan, Australia and New Zealand, Sakaide City is striving to build on its strengths to secure its sustainability amidst decreasing population levels and challenges in attracting and retaining an industrial and tourism base.

On the positive side, the City boasts an impressive array of opportunities, including its location in the centre of Kagawa Prefecture on the island of Shikoku with good transport access to Honshu Island (the main island of Japan) via the truly striking Seto-Ohashi Bridge; agricultural products such as red sweet potato (*kintoki-imo*), red carrot (*kintoki-ninjin*) and red mandarin oranges (*kintoki-mikan*); a national reputation for producing high quality udon noodles (which we discovered must be slurped – loudly!) made from high quality Australian wheat ; and the spiritual Shikoku Pilgrimage known for its 88 temple circuit and associated cultural heritage.



*On top of the Seto-Ohashi Bridge*



*The view from the top of the Seto-Ohashi bridge*

Following a series of seminars on Japanese local government in Tokyo and Sakaide City, tours and site visits of national and local facilities and cultural sites, and a home stay with Japanese families, there was an opportunity for an open exchange of views between Seminar participants and City officials about the challenges and opportunities facing Sakaide City.

Australian and New Zealand delegates were able to offer a number of ideas and opinions to assist Sakaide in leveraging its many opportunities and addressing its challenges.



## Ideas included:

- Further engaging with citizens to develop a shared vision for the future of Sakaide City and developing plans and strategies toward this common vision
- Identifying and assisting to meet the needs of business; making it easier for businesses to relocate to Sakaide City; and providing and maintaining supporting infrastructure to retain the businesses already in the City
- Building on the positive relationship with Kagawa University to improve education opportunities for young people
- Providing recreation and education opportunities for families and young people so they don't need to travel outside of the City to access such facilities
- Packaging and integrating tourism experiences to the burgeoning market seeking cultural and spiritual experiences, particularly highlighting the Shikou Pilgrimage and associated activities
- Further promotion and development of tourism experiences focused on the Seto-Ohashi Bridge, which is an easily recognisable and internationally renowned landmark in the city
- Further developing local agricultural advantages through the promotion of red sweet potato (*kintoki-imo*), red carrot (*kintoki-ninjin*) and red mandarin oranges (*kintoki-mikan*), and the promotion of locally produced udon noodles
- Building on the sister city relationship with Sausalito in the United States.

For its part, ACELG is keen to share its research findings with CLAIR and Sakaide City, particularly in relation to the leadership role played by local government in developing regions, as well as research aimed at enhancing local government international alliances, to which CLAIR Sydney is contributing.

Australia, New Zealand and Japan have much to share and the Local Government Exchange and Co-operation Seminar offers opportunities for the formation of country-to-country and, perhaps most importantly, people-to-people relationships to underpin information and knowledge exchange.



*Learning to play the Koto*

It was an honour and a privilege to lead the 2014 delegation to Tokyo and Sakaide City.

On behalf of the Australia and New Zealand delegation, I extend my sincere thanks to the CLAIR offices in Sydney and Tokyo, and to Mayor Hiroshi Aya and staff of Sakaide City, for arranging such a diverse range of experiences for us to engage in.

We experienced everything from mandarin picking, udon noodle making, visits to local schools, a breathtaking climb right to the top of the Seto-Hashi Bridge, the Shikou Pilgrimage to two of the 88 magnificent temples, and a home stay with families of Sakaide City – it was truly a professionally and personally rewarding experience for us all.



*Seminar participants at the udon noodle factory*



*Melissa Gibbs making a presentation on Australian local government to Sakaide City officials*

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## The Chairperson Mr Okamoto's first visit to Western Australia

The Chairperson of CLAIR Mr Tamotsu Okamoto, based in Tokyo, is a former vice minister of Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication. On his first business trip to Australia, he visited Western Australia to attend the Sister Cities Australia national conference and other meetings.

### • Sister Cities Australia national conference

He attended the SCA conference that was held in Bunbury, where he thanked the audience for their continuous cooperation with CLAIR Sydney. He also talked with many participants to realise the current situation of sister city relationships between Australia and Japan, and the current issues that Australian Local Governments face in regards

to sister city activities.

On behalf of CLAIR Sydney, Director Mr Tanabe gave a presentation regarding the Australia-Japan sister city relationships.

He not only explained the history and the current situation of the relationships, but also suggested the possibility of further activities such as school to school exchange and sports exchange program.

This is because Australia and Japan have similar features (low criminality, similar time-zones, interests in each other's languages) as well as differences (hemispheres, cultures). These make exchange easy, yet interesting.



In addition, big sports events will be held in both countries, such as the 2015 Asian Cup in Australia and the 2019 Rugby World Cup in Japan, as well as the 2020 Summer Olympic Games in Tokyo.

He noted that these events will allow for exciting exchange opportunities.

You can download the presentation from our website;

<http://www.jlgc.org.au/about-japan/1110-2/>

## • Visit to Shire of Augusta Margaret River

After attending the SCA conference, Mr Okamoto visited the Shire of Augusta Margaret River to deepen his understanding of Australian local governments and their revitalisation efforts.

The Shire's President Cr Michael Smart and one of its senior staff Ms Annie Riordan, who joined our [Local Government Exchange and Cooperation seminar](#) in 2014, discussed with our chairperson about local produce related activities such as wineries, as well as local tourism activities such as surfing.

CLAIR would like to strengthen relationships with former seminar participants and continue to work with them.



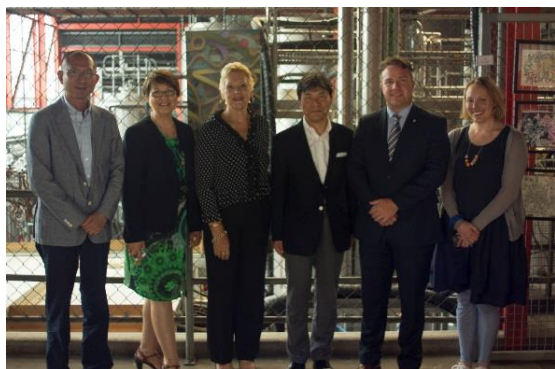


- **Meeting with WALGA Executives**

Mr Okamoto met with executives of the Western Australia Local Government Association, and a senior staff from the WA government to discuss about the current situation and issues of local governments in Australia. He talked with the President of WALGA Mayor Troy Pickard, who recently was also elected President of ALGA, about issues such as amalgamations and reformation in WA, the local financial and tax systems, and the relationship with other governments such the federal and state governments. During their conversation many examples from Australia and Japan were raised.



The three WALGA executives we met during the meeting; President Pickard, Deputy President Cr Lynne Craigie (Shire President of East Pilbara), and CEO Ricky Burges have in the past taken part in our local government seminar. Senior Officer in the WA government, Ms Catherine Colvin, who also joined CLAIR's local government seminar, attended the meeting as well.



Our assistant directors Ms Hirasawa and Mr Hakuta had met Lynne and Catherine in Tokyo when they participated in the seminar. It was naturally a very jovial reunion.

- **Meeting with JETAA WA**

At the end of his business trip, Mr Okamoto had a meeting with the WA chapter of JETAA – the alumni organisation of former [JET Programme](#) participants, which not only fosters friendships, but also help promote Japan related topics by using their experience and networks.

During the meeting, attendees discussed how to strengthen relationships between Australia and Japan, how to further promote Japan, its culture and products in Australia, and how to take advantage of JETAAs, one of the most passionate supporters of Japan. Chairperson Okamoto flew back to Japan with strong will to deepen the relationship between CLAIR and JETAAs.

For more information about the JETAA's activities;

<http://www.jlga.org.au/our-activities/jet-programme/latest-activities/>



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## Okayama Sake & Bizen Pottery Promotion



In order to publicise Okayama sake and Bizen-yaki pottery overseas, a promotional event was held in Sydney.

The participants tasted Sake from Okayama and matching canapés, while viewing beautiful Bizen- yaki which is one type of the most traditional Japanese pottery.

The Okayama sake with a mellow taste and the pottery with great individuality attracted many participants. Some participants tasted the sake in Bizen wares.

We hope that the exhibitors will expand their market overseas.

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## Female Delegation from Fukuoka Prefecture



A delegation from the Executive Committee for Fukuoka Prefectural Women visited Australia for a study tour in November.

They visited organisations and facilities related to gender equality and support for families raising children, engaging in fruitful discussions.

During their stay in Sydney, they visited our office where director Mr Tanabe gave a talk about the past and current state of gender equality in Australia.

Members of the delegation were women from Fukuoka working in a wide spectrum of professions. They were very thankful for the hospitality received during this visit, which allowed them to gain knowledge on support systems for women in Australia.

# Queanbeyan Sister City

## Bi-Annual Student Exchange to Minami Alps

~ Articles and Photos by Queanbeyan City Council ~

On 24 September 2014, 9 students and 3 chaperones headed to Minami Alps city for the bi-annual student exchange.

All participants were home hosted for the week of the visit.

Queanbeyan has had a sister city relationship in Japan since 1992. With Minami Alps city for 11 years and prior to that with Hatta for 11 years before that municipality was amalgamated.

Usually Japanese students come here in August (their summer holidays); and Queanbeyan has been sending students there in our spring holidays (October).



Upon their return the students gave a powerpoint presentation to council to thank them for the opportunity. They said the cultural exchange was a wonderful and enriching experience that they will never forget. The warmth and hospitality that they received in Minami Alps and the extensive schedule of activities they experienced courtesy of their hosts, was at time overwhelmingly generous.

The group visited the Maglev Exhibition centre (500km/h train), Bunkadensyokan Museum, Mt Fuji, Tokyo Disney Resort, Kousai centre where they participated in a traditional tea ceremony, local schools and local fruit farms where they enjoyed picking grapes.

Domo arigato gozaimasu, Queanbeyan City Council



# JETAA Canberra Activities

## 2014 Candle Festival

~ Articles and photos by JETAA Canberra ~



October in Canberra means two things: finally the start of warmer weather and the annual Canberra Nara Candle Festival, the biggest Japanese festival in our nation's capital each year.

Candle Festival 2014 was held on October 25th at the Canberra Nara Peace Park in Lennox Gardens. ACT Events had warned stallholders that numbers were expected to be up on last year's estimated 15,000 attendees but nothing prepared us for the onslaught!

JETAA Canberra runs a yearly "gyouza and beer stall" which has always proved popular. We would like to say it is because of the quality of our barbecuing technique and secret gyouza sauce recipe, but it might have something to do with \$5 Asahi and Sapporo beer . . .



Having learned a lot about what did and didn't work in a high pressure festival environment last year, JETAA Canberra felt we were in a better position this year, but with the weather topping 35 degrees and the decision to run a "drinks only" line to keep the queues moving saw us sell out of beer in an hour and a half, when last year we had some stock left over.

Thankfully JETAA members and volunteers pulled together for (several) quick drink runs and it all worked out in the end. Thanks to everyone that chipped in. We really couldn't do it without you.

Given what we learned this year, next year's event promises to be even bigger and we will be even more prepared!



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# Kanagawa Prefecture's Tourism Promotion Video

A video to introduce Kanagawa to the world has been just completed.

In addition to the famous sightseeing spots of Yokohama, Kamakura and Hakone, Kanagawa has many more to recommend, like Jogashima & Misaki, Oyama, Oiso and Enoshima.

Watch the video and visit the shooting locations to become an expert in Kanagawa!



Kanagawa PR



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## From The Director

### *Election management in Japan*

Electoral systems vary from country to country. For example, in Japan it is totally a voter's right to decide whether to cast a ballot or not, and local governments play an important role in election management.

This weekend, on 14 December, a national election for the House of Representatives will be held. During the election period, Japanese local government staff, especially Municipal Election Management Committee staff members, will very likely be busy.

Before the election, they have to prepare voting lists which are based on the resident registration system. In Japan, people who live in a municipality must be registered as a municipal resident. Then, local government staff deliver voting tickets to all the voters in their municipalities.

On the day of election – almost always a Sunday – they prepare polling stations in places such as schools and public halls. After the balloting hours (In Japan from 7: 00 am to 8:00 pm), they count ballots together with pre-poll votes usually until midnight.

I still remember when I was a staff member of the Central Election Management Council and worked hard with local government election committee staff members for the 1996 national election.