

Correspondence

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Kitakyushu City

The city of Kitakyushu is an international city with one million people, bordering the northern region of Kyushu Island by the Kanmon Strait. It was established in February 1963 by the amalgamation of the five cities of Moji, Kokura, Wakamatsu, Yahata and Tobata.

Kitakyushu has thrived as a gateway to Asia thanks to its convenient location between Tokyo and Shanghai and as an industrial base in Japan.



Mojiko Retro Town

- Streets from the time of the first Western influence -

Since its opening in 1889, Mojiko Port has kept its role as a gateway to the rest of the world. This has meant that the port is full of beautiful western-style buildings, such as JR Mojiko Station.

The green and white building (left) is a wooden structure in the Neo-Renaissance style, where you can find old facilities dating back to before the Second World War. Mojiko Station is the only station in Japan to be designated as an important cultural property by the Japanese government. From the station, you can go along the street lined with historic Western-style buildings and enjoy the atmosphere of Japan from a century ago.

See Mojiko Retro in a New Light

- *The Mojiko Retro Night Fantasy* -

After sunset, the streets of Mojiko Retro are filled with colourful illumination until 9pm on weekdays and 10pm on weekends. You can have a romantic walk among the illuminated buildings or look over the entire town from the Mojiko Retro Observation Room.



Castle Town Kokura - *Castle town of swordsmen* -

Kokura Castle was built in 1602 by Tadaoki Hosokawa, famous for its beautiful Chinese style main tower.

What we see today is the main castle tower, rebuilt in 1959, open to the public as a historic theme park.

There are many interesting exhibitions, including a “diorama of castle town with 1,500 paper dolls” and “seven mysteries of the life of a feudal lord”. Come have a taste of 400 years of history in Nukagura – there is even a pickle specialty store within the castle.

Kokura Castle Japanese Garden

How about a cup of green tea in the lord’s house in front of the castle? At the Kokura Castle Japanese Garden, you can learn about Ogasawara and other schools of etiquette in Japan.

The building within the garden is of Shoin-zukuri type, a traditional style of domestic architecture. In the *tokonoma* (alcove), you can see seasonal paintings or calligraphy to take you back to the time of the warlords.



Invented in Mojiko Port - *Baked curry* -

There are many stories surrounding the origin of this dish. The most plausible one is that in the late 1950’s a café in the Mojiko Port started to serve curry with cheese on top in gratin style.

The perfect combination of curry, cheese, and a lightly baked egg makes it one of the most popular menu items at the Port of Moji.

Invented in Kokura - *Udon noodle stir-fry* -

Udon noodle stir-fry (*yakiudon*) was first invented in post-war Kokura, when people started to use udon instead of soba noodles.

It’s famous for its thick, sticky noodles and the spicy taste of its sauce. You can find *yakiudon* at many restaurants in the nearby arcade.



Presentation for Ikeda City's Mayor on Australia Sister City Activities

The Mayor of Ikeda City (Osaka prefecture) and staff came to our office on 2 February for our Director's presentation on Australian Governments and sister city relationships in Australia. 2015 marks 50 years of sister city relations between Launceston (Tasmania) and Ikeda.

The delegation visited Australia to discuss arrangements for the 50th anniversary celebrations with their counterparts in Launceston.



We can look forward to a further deepening of the relationship between these two cities thanks to the planned exchange of delegations later in 2015, and associated events.

Assisting Hiroshima Convention Bureau's promotion of tourism



Two staff members of Hiroshima Convention Bureau came to Australia to promote their tourism industry through visits to local travel agencies and media.

At JNTO's Japan Endless Discovery Seminar in Melbourne, they gave inside knowledge of tourist wonders in Hiroshima that can't be found online.

Many Australians already visit Hiroshima when in Japan. The Convention Bureau sought to enrich travel agencies' understanding about other attractive places and activities in

Hiroshima beyond the classic route of World Heritage Sites like Miyajima.

During the Q&A and networking reception afterwards, travel agency representatives particularly showed interest in cycling and Zen Buddhist experiences available in Hiroshima. The Bureau's staff left Australia knowing they had success in showing their region's diversity, and await the arrival of even more Australian visitors with open arms.

Interviews regarding women's participation

in the workforce in New Zealand

To research women's participation in the workforce, Assistant Director Hirasawa visited Wellington City Council from 23-25 February. Gender equity in New Zealand has been highly rated globally, as they ranked 7th in the Global Gender Gap Report 2013. It is common for New Zealand women to keep working after marriage or birth, encouraged by the modern society as well as Central Government policy.

Hirasawa had five interviews with a New Zealand local government Councillor, an HR Director, two staff members and a lady working in the private sector. Everyone talked about the environment surrounding working women with their experiences. As well, she got the chance to interview three people who have experience working in Japan as well as New Zealand, providing helpful comparisons for her research.

Flexible working arrangements have been used widely in New Zealand. For instance, a woman who has just come back to the workforce after giving birth can apply for an arrangement to go home earlier than the close of business. As well, it's rare for a woman to quit her job when she gets married or gives birth – this is a new concept for Japanese workplaces; also, if it is even *implied* that she should quit her job at that time, everyone recognises that as discrimination. Both women and men are positively involved in raising children and maintaining a household.

All of this made Hirasawa farther understand why New Zealand ranked so highly in the Human Development Index by the UN and other indicators. She really appreciates the interviewees' cooperation in assisting with her fieldwork.



Wellington City Council

Aomori tourism promotion

Staff members of Aomori prefectural government and hotel industry representatives visited Sydney to promote Aomori tourism from 9 February. CLAIR gave the visitors a briefing on economic and other trends in Australia, and accompanied them to meetings with travel agencies in Sydney.

The Hakkoda Mountains are famous for deep powder snow and are a mecca of backcountry skiing.

Year by year, the number of Australian skiers and snowboarders coming to experience the mindblowing ski

fields has gone up. Through this latest visit and other promotional activities, Aomori's attractive sightseeing spots, including Owani Ski Resort and other places, are introduced to Australians, and we hope many Australians will continue to visit Aomori.



JETAA Queensland Activities

~ Articles and photos by Richard Wilding, President, JETAA Queensland ~

August 2014: Trivia Afternoon

The trivia event is one of the highlights of the JETAA Calendar and this year we had a new venue at the Gardens Club Café overlooking the sun-dappled City Botanic Gardens. Around 40 people attended for an afternoon of warm company and friendly rivalry with teams representing sister cities from around Queensland. The famous Ken and Keith Parker (our favourite Quiz Masters) returned to host another legendary trivia event. Congratulations to the Nerima-Ipswich team for being crowned 2014 champions!



MLTAQ Japanese Speech Contest

JETAA QLD is proud to support the Modern Language Teachers Association of Queensland Japanese Speech Contest on the Gold Coast. This year we provided funding for prizes and members helped judge the entries. We hope that our small contribution will encourage students to consider the JET Programme as a way of deepening their understanding of Japanese people, language and culture.

October 2014: Hanami



October in Brisbane is Jacaranda time and what better chance to welcome the warm sultry weather of spring than a Japanese-style hanami picnic in historic New Farm Park? This has become one of JETAA Queensland's signature events and every year attracts family and friends of JET alumni, our friends from the Consulate General of Japan, staff and students from Griffith University and the University of Queensland.

It provides a great opportunity for Australian students of Japanese to gain an insight into the JET Programme experience; this year, we were also joined by exchange students from Hyogo.

Hanami is a very family-friendly event and we were happy to see a few new families, older children and even parents-to-be come along to chat and join in some games.

This year we also instigated a book-swap with the idea that people can exchange Japanese-related books for reading or study. Recently, the committee has been discussing ways of making the association's events more relevant to older JET alumni whose increasing responsibilities have perhaps meant JETAA events are less accessible. We feel hanami is a good model for events which are inclusive, affordable and convenient enough to encourage a wide range of alumni and community members to stay engaged with JETAA.

January 2015: Oshogatsu Dinner

We returned to Nonbei Sake Bar and BBQ in Fortitude Valley for our Oshogatsu networking dinner. About 20 members, family and friends attended for an evening of great food and the chance to catch up with other alumni after the end-of-year break. We celebrated the Year of the Sheep with some sheepish trivia about Japan and Australia.

Events to come include the University of Queensland Careers Fair, Bento on the Broadwater on the Gold Coast and our AGM in April where we hope to finalise plans some great new events in 2015-16.

Ja, mata!

Richard Wilding, President

Farewell Messages

Our Deputy Director Tsuyoshi Ito and two of our Assistant Directors: Misa Hirasawa and Hiromi Hakuta are leaving Sydney at the end of March to take up their new roles back in Japan....



Tsuyoshi Ito

Deputy Director from Nagoya City,
Aichi prefecture

At the end of March this year, I will return to Nagoya City after two years here at CLAIR Sydney. During my secondment, many Australians and New Zealanders helped me have a productive posting to Sydney, both in the professional and private spheres.

I am especially happy with having the chance to help build relations and deepen exchange with sister city-related stakeholders in Australia, New Zealand and the wider Oceania region.

I will continue our affiliation and pass on the baton to the next generation to have an even more successful term.

As well, life in Sydney was a priceless experience – I will never forget it.

2015 is a milestone for Sydney and Nagoya sister city relationship as it's the 35th anniversary of the sister city relationship. It will be a memorable year. This anniversary is a great chance to further develop the mutual links and grassroots relationships our two great cities hold dear.

I invite all readers of our newsletter to contact me when you next visit Japan (tsuyoshi.ito.03010@gmail.com). There are countless wonders of Japan, off the beaten track, to which I can help introduce you and your travel companions – it will be pleasure to hear from you. I hope that we may have the opportunity to meet again in the near future.

Thank you all very much.

Cheers!

Tsuyoshi



Misa Hirasawa

Assistant Director
from Hiroshima

The time has come for me to say goodbye to Australia, though I do with much reluctance.

I have heard people often say “time flies”, now, this is my turn to understand the feeling behind this phrase.

To live overseas has been my dream since I was a child. When the dream came true, I felt not only gladness but also anxiety. To be honest, I still feel anxiety a bit, but that encourages me to study English and absorb the culture more and more.

I have a lot of memories that I will never forget in Australia including meeting people whom I couldn't have met if I kept staying in Japan, studying English the hardest in my life, researching Australian studies, looking at other Japanese local governments' activities, working with the best ever boss and nice colleagues, fostering my knowledge about Australian friendly culture like people saying "hi" with a smile on the street when you walk past them, feeling the vibe of the most diverse city in the world, and playing the violin at the Opera House!

Everything I've experienced in Australia I will treasure for the rest of my life.

I'm sure I will contribute to my mother organisation, Hiroshima Prefecture, more than ever from this valuable experience.

Last but not least, I really thank you all for your kind support during my tenure. I hope I can meet you in my hometown, Hiroshima!

Thank you and all the best,
Misa Hirasawa



Hiromi Hakuta
*Assistant Director
from Shikaoi Town,
Hokkaido prefecture*

I am afraid to say that this is the last time for me to write an article in the CLAIR newsletter. I will go back to Japan and resume working at Shikaoi Town Council in Hokkaido at the end of this month, having completed my two-year term at CLAIR, Sydney.

Even though this was the first time for not only me but also my wife and two year-old daughter to live outside of Japan, we really enjoyed living in Australia thanks to the kind and friendly atmosphere and people here.

Through my work here, I have met a lot of people in local governments, the wider public sector, JETAA members and so on throughout Australia and New Zealand. Without their support, I am sure that my time would not have been so enjoyable and my work would have not gone as well.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all for their support, cooperation and kindness.

I might not have any further opportunities to live and work in Australia, but Australia will continue to live on in my heart as my second home. Through my work in Shikaoi, I look forward to meeting and working with you in the future to further strengthen the relationship between Australia and Japan.

Arigato!

From the Director

Local government and police services

Japanese local governments are responsible for ensuring the safety of their residents. Before World War II, police services were operated directly by the central government.

After the war, these services were basically assigned to prefectural governments. Each prefecture has its own police safety committee and police headquarters. Some police officers work for headquarters and police stations, another work for *Koban*.

Koban are police substations near major transportation hubs, shopping areas and in residential districts. They form the first line of police response to the public. The Koban system is composed of police boxes (Koban) and residential police boxes (Chuzaisho). Koban are staffed by a relatively small number of police officers (usually 3-5 officers); a Chuzaisho is usually staffed by a single officer. About 20 percent of all police officers are assigned to Koban.

Vigilance at the Koban and Chuzaisho is maintained by standing watch in front, or sitting watch inside, enabling police officers to respond immediately to any incident. While keeping a constant watch, they perform routine tasks, such as receiving crime reports from citizens, handling lost and found articles, counselling citizens in trouble and giving directions.

Outside their Koban and Chuzaisho, police officers patrol their beats either on foot, by bicycle or by car. While on patrol, they gain a precise knowledge of the community, question suspicious-looking persons, provide traffic guidance, rescue the injured, warn citizens of imminent dangers and protect lost children and those under the influence of alcohol or other substances.

I am very proud of the Koban system which every country should introduce. When you go to Japan and lose your way, you should drop by a Koban. The Koban's friendly police officers will be happy to give you directions.



KOBAN in front of Chiba station