



# Correspondence

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## Introducing Our New Director, Katsunori Kamibo



### **Katsunori Kamibo**

Director of CLAIR Sydney

From Ministry of Internal Affairs  
and Communications

It is a great honour to introduce myself as the eighth director of the Japan Local Government Centre (CLAIR, Sydney).

Established in 1994, our mission has been to help develop the relationship between Japanese local governments and those of Australia and New Zealand. As the director, I would like to do my best to foster sister city relationships, exchange information about challenges local governments are facing, and support former and future Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) programme participants. If you are interested in any of these matters, please feel free to contact us.

I entered the Ministry of Interior (now Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications) twenty years ago. For half of my career, I have worked for the central government, and for the rest of it, I worked for local governments.

I am interested in and would like to study Australia's and New Zealand's local government system, and I want to discuss how to promote the welfare of residents through strengthening local governments' roles.

In Japan, each local government is expected to practice administration, according to their own regional realities, using their own judgement and responsibility. To assist this, comprehensive decentralisation reforms were implemented twice, in 2000 and in 2011. I closely worked on the planning of these decentralisation reform initiatives both in the Ministry of Interior and in the Japanese Central Government's Cabinet Office. I would like to share with you what we have learned through these reforms.

I came to Sydney with my wife and two children. I would like to enjoy life in Australia and New Zealand with my family, to try delicious dishes, see fascinating events, wonderful views, interesting sites and experience heart-warming hospitality.

**My recent career is as follows:**

- Apr 2012-Mar 2015 Director General of Finance Bureau, Sakai City Government
- Aug 2010-Mar 2012 Deputy Director, Office for Decentralisation Reform, Cabinet Office
- Jul 2005- Aug 2007 Director, Municipal Administration Division, General Affairs Bureau, Wakayama Prefectural Government
- Sep 2002- Jun 2005 Deputy Director, Crisis Management Division, Cabinet Secretariat
- Apr 2001- Aug 2002 Director, Treasury Division, Finance Bureau, Yokohama City Government
- Apr 1998- Mar 2001 Unit Chief, Decentralisation Reform Division, Local Administration Bureau, Ministry of Interior (now MIC)

Again I am very happy to work with you here and looking forward to seeing you soon.

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Katsunori Kamibo

## Welcome to Iwate Prefecture

### Characteristics

Iwate is one of the largest prefectures in Japan, blessed with fertile land and beautiful nature.

There are numerous mountains, the highest being Mt. Iwate, also known as Nambu Fuji or the “Half-Sided Fuji of the Nambu Fief” for its resemblance to Mt. Fuji. Surrounded by the mountains are cities such as the prefectural capital Morioka and various historical sites such as those representing the Hiraizumi Culture.



In Iwate there are also numerous hot springs and tasteful inns which are perfect for relaxation after long hours of travelling. The coastal area, called Sanriku, is designated as Rikuchu Kaigan National Park.

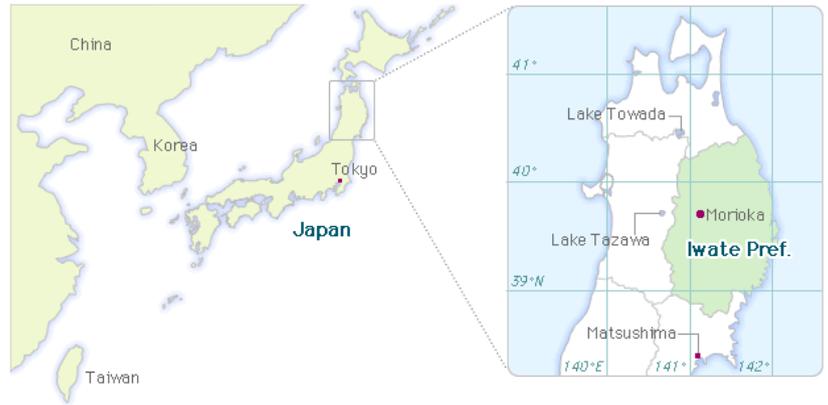
Sanriku boasts a variety of scenic landscapes and is also one of the best fishing grounds in the world, famous for its fresh, wholesome seafood.



Cherry blossoms in spring, beach in summer, colorful foliage in autumn, skiing and snowboarding in winter--any season of the year is the right time to visit and enjoy Iwate!

## Location

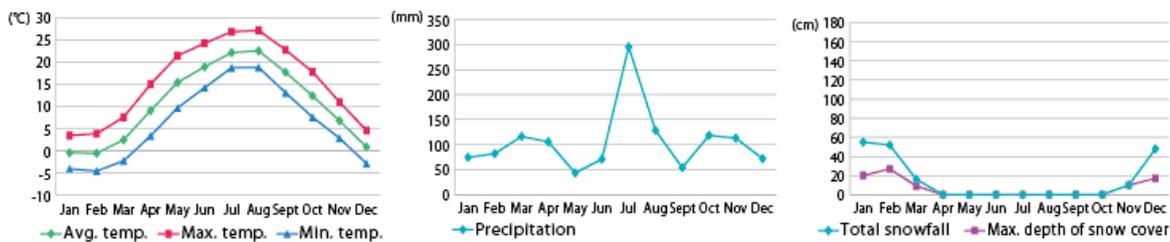
Iwate, located in the northeastern part of Japan, is an oval-shaped prefecture, about 122 km long from its most northerly to southerly point, 189 km wide from East to West. With an area of 15,378 km<sup>2</sup>, Iwate is the second largest prefecture in Japan after Hokkaido. Morioka, the prefectural capital, is located at 39° 42' N and 141° 09' E.



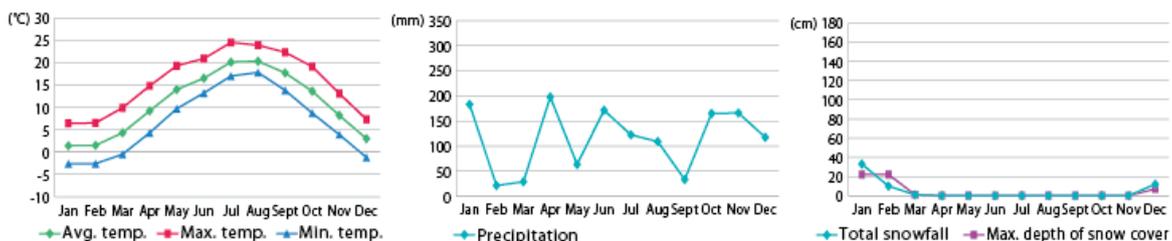
## Climate

Iwate's climate varies widely depending on the area. Most of Iwate's inland areas are mountainous, with the Ou Mountains on the western border with Akita prefecture and the Kitakami Highlands in the east. The Kitakami River flows south between these two mountain ranges, with fertile plains spreading around it. The areas along the Ou Mountains are blessed with abundant and excellent snow, and boast some of the best ski resorts in Japan. The inland areas along the Kitakami Highlands have plateau and basin climates, with a large temperature difference between summer and winter, and between night and day. Morioka, the prefectural capital, has many cold days in winter. The coastal areas have a maritime climate: cool in summer, not so much snow and not as cold as the inland areas in winter. Such varying climates contribute to Iwate's stark and vivid contrast of the four seasons.

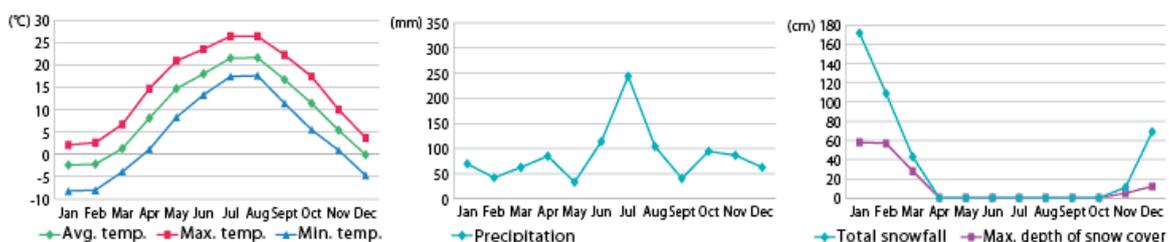
### Morioka (Inland Area)



### Miyako (Coastal Area)



### Hachimantai (Mountain Area)



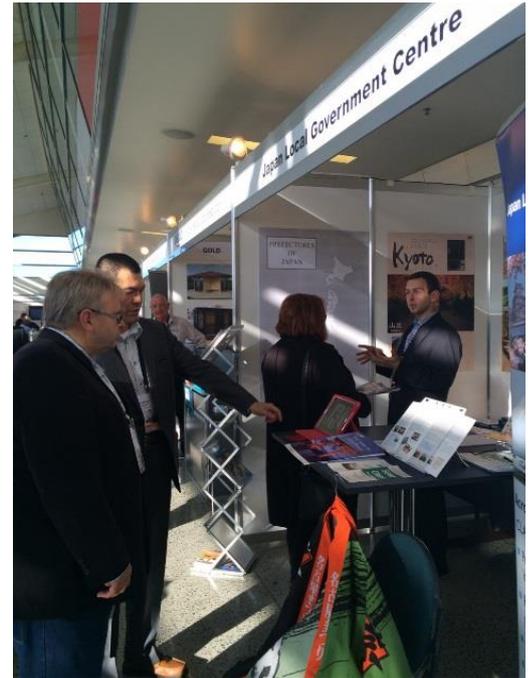
## Local Government New Zealand Conference 2015

From 19 – 21 July, we attended the LGNZ conference in Rotorua, New Zealand. We promoted CLAIR’s activities including sister city relationships and Japanese tourism between New Zealand and Japan.

Past participants in the Local Government Exchange and Cooperation Seminar visited our exhibition booth, as well as many Mayors, councillors and local government staff interested in deepening links with Japanese sister cities and schools in their local areas.

This conference was also a good opportunity for us to get to know about the current issues in New Zealand, such as resource management and growing local talent and economies.

Thank you very much and we look forward to seeing you again and working with you in the near future.



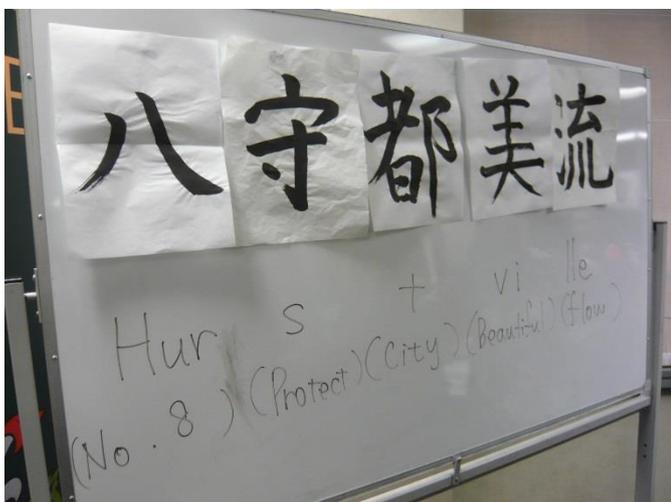
## Students Coming to Hurstville from Shiroishi City

On 27 July, we attended a special dinner organised by Hurstville City Council that welcomed the visiting exchange students from their sister city, Shiroishi City in Japan.

The cities have been conducting a mutual students’ exchange program for over 20 years. This year, 10 students and 2 chaperons visited from Shiroishi.

During the dinner, the students showed the attendees “Rakugo” and “calligraphy”. Rakugo is Japanese sit-down comedy. They also taught attendees how to do calligraphy and they deepened exchanges.

We are sure that this exchange programme offers them a great experience.



## Ube Students Visit Newcastle

Between 31 July - 7 August, 10 Ube junior high school students and two principals visited Newcastle (which is Ube's sister city) to deepen their cross-cultural understanding and the international relationship through homestay, attending a local school, and taking English lessons.

They dropped into our office before going to Newcastle. We talked to them about the Australian way of life and about CLAIR's activities. Also, we exchanged opinions about overseas work postings and life outside of Japan – to which they paid great attention! We hope that one day they will participate in cross-border activities like we do.



## New JET Participants Leave for Japan

Many young Australians and New Zealanders left for Japan at the end of July. They are the participants taking part in this year's Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme.

Farewell receptions were held in mid July and we attended some of them to encourage the new JETs.

We sent the following message to them: "When you feel stressed, you are most likely experiencing a cultural difference. So don't take it seriously and just enjoy your stress!"



We wish them best of luck and hope that they further develop ties between Australia, New Zealand and Japan, and have a memorable experience in Japan.

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

For more information regarding the JET programme, visit:

<http://www.jetprogramme.org/>

## JETAA Wellington Activities ~ Article and photos from JETAA Wellington ~

### *Tanabata event*



We celebrated Tanabata recently, beginning in the Wellington Public Library, and later moved our bamboo 'tree' to the Japan Information and Cultural Centre. JETAA members and members of the public were invited to write their wishes.

We were quite amused when a small boy came to us very seriously after writing his wish for a Godzilla and put out his hand, expecting that we would grant it right then and there! So if you see Godzilla around, you'll know why.

### *JKaiWa*



Our conversation classes continue to be very popular – a combined effort between JETAA, the Wellington Sakai Association and the Japan Society.

Native speakers volunteer their time to assist participants in small groups to talk about various topics. Snacks are provided by local Japanese restaurant Tatsushi which is always well received.

### *Upcoming events*

We will shortly hold a bento class, together with the Wellington Sakai Association. Members will learn techniques for creating cute and colourful bento, in preparation for our annual picnic in mid September. This picnic is held with the Wellington Sakai Association in Katherine Mansfield Park, where there are beautiful sakura trees which have been donated by Sakai City. We hope our members will be able to use their new skills to create beautiful and delicious food to eat while looking at the cherry blossoms.