



In This Issue:

- 1-2 Festivals around Japan
- 2 Sister City New Zealand
- 3 2016 Sister Cities NZ Conference
- 3 Networking event "Shaberanaito"
- 4 Chuo - Surtherland Sister City
- 4 Sogetsu Ikebana Exhibition
- 5 JET Pre-departure Orientation
- 5 JETAA WA Activities
- 6 From the Director

CLAIR NEWS

Our **Facebook** page has been launched!

CLAIR Sydney has opened an official page on Facebook! We will be regularly posting updates on our activities.

Please visit our page if you would like to know more about our updates and what Japanese local governments are doing in Australia and New Zealand.

URL: <http://www.facebook.com/clair.syd>

Please give us a Like!

Festivals around Japan: Vol. 7 Asahikawa City, Hokkaido

- Asahikawa Summer Festival / Asahikawa Ramen Festival



Asahikawa Summer Festival is one of the biggest summer events in northern Hokkaido. Approximately 900,000 people attend this 3-day event every year.

On the first night, a massive display of 4,500 fireworks light up the summer evening sky. From the second day onwards, you can witness the *Butou E Parade* where approximately 3,000 residents in Japanese traditional clothing (*Yukata* or *Hanten*) showcase beautifully synchronized dance routines in a lively parade. Many more events are held such as the Taisetsu Association's "*Mikoshi*" portable shrine

procession, and *Rekka Tanabata Festival* where you can see colourful floats and can hear people chanting "Re-ka Rekka! Seira Seira!".

The San-Roku Festival is held around Sanroku, the second biggest commercial district in Hokkaido which is located in Asahikawa City. It is held at the same time as the Asahikawa Summer Festival meaning visitors get to enjoy two different festivals at the same time. There are a lot of food stalls set up during the festival. *Ramen Festival* (Ramen stall area) is very popular throughout the festival as ramen is such a famous dish world-wide and visitors can taste and compare the best local ramen.

The festive season in Asahikawa is definitely summer which coincidentally is the season for beer gardens. Beer gardens are set up in Asahikawa so people can enjoy delicious craft beers and the Mongolian lamb barbecue dish, *Genghis Khan*.

Please come and visit Asahikawa this summer to experience the festivities!

<http://www.city.asahikawa.hokkaido.jp/kankou/index.html>



Meeting with Sister City New Zealand

Sister Cities New Zealand (SCNZ) and CLAIR Sydney held a meeting to discuss ways to further strengthen the ties between both organisations.

In March, Mr Okamoto, CLAIR Chairperson, visited Wellington to talk with Ms Hiromi Morris, Chairperson of SCNZ. They discussed ways to get more JET Alumni Association (JETAA) members involved in sister city activities in Japan and New Zealand, the creation of sister city programmes targeted at youth that are easy to participate in and international exchanges through sports such as rugby. We also exchanged views on further economic exchange, mainly the import and export of specialty products between sister cities. New Zealand has many attractive products, such as dairy products and wine. In the future, we would like to see not only exchanges through specialty goods but also the exchange of people, culture and knowledge.

Also, we had the great opportunity to exchange views with Mr Malcolm Alexander, CEO of the New Zealand Local Government Association (LGNZ). Although Japanese local governments currently conduct exchanges with New Zealand, we suggested an extension of these exchanges to include rugby as

Japan will host the 2019 Rugby World Cup. He showed a deep interest in our suggestion.

In addition, with the conclusion of the TPP (Trans-Pacific Partnership), we discussed the possibility of further promotion of New Zealand wine in Japan as it is yet to have a stronghold in the Japanese market. On the flipside, we also brought up the possibility of New Zealand importing Japanese agricultural produce.

On 14 May, CLAIR Sydney received a Certificate of Appreciation from SCNZ.

Details will be announced in the next newsletter.



2016 Sister Cities New Zealand Conference in Nelson

From 28th to 30th April, we attended the Sister Cities New Zealand (SCNZ) conference and workshop in Nelson, New Zealand. The main theme of this conference was “Connecting People - Celebrating our Past, Creating our Future”.

Listening to and interacting with inspirational speakers from many different positions, including business groups, grass-root community organisations, schools and education-providers, local & national government & non-government organisations gave us an opportunity to share information and exchange opinions, which enabled us to build connections between our organisations.

Our director, Katsunori Kamibo, made a speech on the role of CLAIR Sydney and the current condition of exchange between Japan and New Zealand, starting with an overview of CLAIR, and then focusing on the JET Programme and JET Alumni Association (JETAA)’s activities. He placed particular emphasis on the role of the Sports Exchange Adviser, which is part of the JET Programme, and related it to Japan hosting the 2019 Rugby World Cup and 2020

Olympics. We hope the activities held by the JETAA continue to promote sister city relationships between Japan and New Zealand and garner the interest and involvement of the younger generation.

During the conference, we celebrated the 40th anniversary of the sister city relationship between the Japanese city, Miyazu and Nelson. CLAIR Sydney was proud to sponsor the 2016 Sister Cities New Zealand Conference and hopes that sister city exchanges between the two countries will continue to grow successfully in the future like Miyazu and Nelson.



25th Anniversary of Chuo - Sutherland Sister City Relations



We attended the reception event for the 25th anniversary of Chuo-Sutherland sister city relations at Sutherland Shire on 14-15 April. During the reception, Mr Oshihide Yada (Mayor of Chuo Ward in Tokyo) and Mr Carmelo Pesce (Mayor of Sutherland Shire) gave speeches on how to ensure the continuation of the good sister city relationship both cities share and they further deepened their ties through an official visit to the Royal National Park.

Their sister city relationship began by a visit to each city via a high school student exchange programme in 1989. In 1991, both Chuo and Sutherland decided to forge a sister city relationship and continued the “Chuo-Sutherland Student Programme” which is a study abroad programme with a cultural focus.

This month, a delegation from Sutherland Shire will visit Chuo Ward in Tokyo. We expect continued success of this fantastic relationship!

Sogetsu Ikebana Exhibition

From 4 -17 April, the exhibition “Ikebana into the future” was held at the Royal Botanic Garden in Sydney by the Australia Sogetsu Teachers Association N.S.W. On 15 April, we visited the exhibition and secured an interview with the exhibitors, including a former president of the Australia Sogetsu Teachers Association N.S.W. We were told that there were a lot of visitors to the event and that many took time to observe and learn about the flower arrangements on display. Through the interview, we got to know more about the history of Ikebana in Sydney (since 1959) and in Australia. Currently there are more than 60 members in the Australia Sogetsu Teachers Association N.S.W.

It was a great opportunity for CLAIR Sydney to connect with the Australia Sogetsu Teachers Association N.S.W. We suggested the possibility of collaborating with each other in the near future.



Participating in the networking event “Shaberanaito”

“Shaberanaito” (日本語でしゃべらナイト) was held on the evening of April 7th. Australia-Japan Society (AJS) and JETAA NSW organise this networking event which aims to foster relationships between Japanese people living in Australia and people who are interested in Japan.

Our Director and seven members from CLAIR Sydney joined in and conversed with attendees about Japanese and Australian culture and environment. It was fun and relaxing for new staff members of CLAIR Sydney to speak in Japanese and connect with locals. We would like to thank AJS and JETAA NSW for holding such a wonderful event. Our Director and staff members had a fun time and are grateful to have been part of a great evening of idea exchanges and networking.

JETAA WA Activities

~Article and photo from JETAA WA~

On March 18th JETAAWA closed a very active 2015/16 with its Annual General Meeting at Arigataya Restaurant. It was an opportunity to look back at the events of the past year and to welcome new members to the committee. Highlights of the year included the ever-popular Winter Matsuri wine festival, the well-attended Hanami Picnic and Careers Seminar, and the queues of patrons lining up to sample our kakigori at both the World of Food and Japan Festivals. KaiWA, the JETAAWA-run fortnightly conversation exchange, saw strong growth and was also a highlight of the year.

None of this, of course, would have been possible were it not for the dedication and elbow-grease of the volunteers that comprise the JETAAWA Committee, which has itself continued to flourish—this year expanding to 35 general and executive members.

Will Perera was returned as President for a third year, while several other named positions changed hands, including Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Social Rep, Employment Rep, Promotional Rep, Oceania Rep and International Rep. It was particularly gratifying to see 2014 and 2015 returnees coming aboard as executive and general members.

Committee members expressed their gratitude to Natalie Garmony, who after many years in the role has stepped down as Secretary. The Consulate-General of Japan also received thanks for its continuing support of JETAAWA activities.



JET Programme Pre-departure Orientation for April Arrivals



The Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme started in 1987, aiming to promote grass-roots international exchange between Japan and other nations. About 7,000 people have taken part in the programme from Australia and New Zealand so far.

On March 31, the JET programme pre-departure orientation for April arrivals was held at the consular office in Sydney.

Tomohiro Koike, our Assistant Director attended to give the participants some advice about the support system. Members of the JET Alumni Association NSW (JETAA NSW) also gave new participants helpful tips based on their experience in Japan.

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

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

From the Director

Gratitude for the support from both Australia and New Zealand in regards to the Kumamoto earthquakes

A magnitude-6.5 foreshock struck Kumamoto Prefecture in Southern Japan on 14 April 2016. This was followed by a 7.3 magnitude earthquake on 16 April. Aftershock tremors continue to be felt around Kumamoto, as many as 1,464 times as of 11 am, 16 May. 68 people have been confirmed dead, 1,671 people injured and 10,437 people have been evacuated in Kumamoto and Oita prefecture. Also, 2,848 houses have been destroyed and over 40,000 damaged by the quake.

To rescue people from the disaster, local governments dispatched about 4,300 fire defense rescue teams consisting of 16,000 members as well as the Self Defense Forces and police. At present, we are trying our best to recover from the disaster. Over 1,400 public officers from various local governments are working towards recovery by repairing water supply channels and roads, estimating and certifying the damage of houses and supporting the tasks of affected local governments.

Fortunately, the recovery is going fast and smooth. Schools, which were used as shelters, have been reopened from 11 May and students are back in class and doing their extracurricular activities. Highways and bullet trains (Shinkansen) are back in service and earthquake refugees are now being arranged placements in available public houses or temporary housing. However, some roads and railways are still out of service.

I deeply appreciate the kindness of Australians and New Zealanders in showing support for Kumamoto during these tough times. We received many heart-warming messages from both countries and we know many people are supporting and donating to Kumamoto. It may take a long time to fully recover but please continue to watch over the people of Kumamoto.

Thank you very much again.

Katsunori Kamibo

Director