



# Japan Local Government Centre (CLAIR, Sydney)

Newsletter Issue  
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In light of the current circumstances due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, publication of the Japan local destination travel guide section of our monthly newsletter has been suspended.

Publication of our newsletter will also be temporarily suspended until further notice. Please see the 'From the Executive Director' section in this newsletter for the reason behind our decision.

We sincerely hope that through the unified commitments and efforts of local communities, industries, and countries around the world, we can win the battle against the COVID-19 virus in the near future.

-CLAIR, Sydney

## Perth Japan Festival 2020

On 7 March, the Perth Japan Festival 2020 was held at Elizabeth Quay in Perth, Western Australia.

CLAIR Sydney promoted the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, the World Masters Games 2021 KANSAI, and various Japanese tourist destinations at the booth ran by the Consulate-General of Japan in Perth. Many festival attendees visited the booth to find information on the Golden Route, destinations for cherry blossom viewing, ski and snowboarding, as well as information on Hyogo Prefecture and Kagoshima City, the sister state of Western Australia and sister city of the City of Perth, respectively.





On the day, many visitors came to our booth and expressed their anguish in seeing the impacts of the recent outbreak of COVID-19 in Japan. They also expressed their hope of seeing travellers returning to Japan to enjoy the beautiful scenery, culture, and food once the virus has been contained.

CLAIR Sydney will continue to support Japanese local governments' destination promotion activities in Australia.

## Visit to Hutt City Council in New Zealand

On 11 March, staff members of CLAIR Sydney visited Hutt City Council in New Zealand and met with Ms Vesna West, International Relations Manager. Ms West is in charge of Hutt City Council's international relationships, including the City's sister city relationship with Minoh City in Osaka Prefecture. In their meeting, the CLAIR Sydney staff received first-hand information on Hutt City Council's ethnic diversity initiatives, and learned that Hutt City Council partners with the Hutt Multicultural Council to provide support to events held by the various ethnic communities in Lower Hutt.



This support contributes to the overall settlement of immigrants and refugees in the city. Ms West and the CLAIR Sydney staff also discussed various ethnic diversity strategies overall in New Zealand.

The CLAIR Sydney staff also visited a heritage-listed building that was renovated and re-opened as the Hutt Minoh Friendship House. In the building, they were given details on the history of the sister city relationship between Lower Hutt and Minoh City, and learned about the current dynamic exchange activities between the two cities.

The CLAIR Sydney staff also met with President Tribhuvan Shrestha and Immediate Past President Anita Mansell of the Hutt Multicultural Council, which is a non-profit organisation that supports foreign-born residents in settling and integrating into life in Lower Hutt. Thanks to the kind hospitality of Mr Shrestha and Ms Mansell, the CLAIR Sydney staff were able to learn about Hutt Multicultural Council's passionate activities and strong connections with the various multicultural communities in the city.





CLAIR Sydney will continue to research ethnic diversity initiatives of local governments and relevant organisations in New Zealand and Australia, and support sister city exchange activities between New Zealand/Australia and Japan.

## Visit to Christchurch City Council in New Zealand

On 12 March, a staff member of CLAIR Sydney visited Christchurch City Council in New Zealand and met with Ms Claire Phillips. Ms Phillips has overseen Christchurch City Council's multicultural initiatives for years, and has extensive knowledge in the development of the City's ethnic diversity.

Christchurch City Council is widely known as one of the few councils in New Zealand to have established a strategy specifically to promote ethnic diversity within its council area, the Christchurch Multicultural Strategy. This strategy outlines what Christchurch City Council will do "in terms of improving service delivery, upskilling the internal organisation and developing authentic relationships to achieve the outcome of a diverse inclusive and welcoming city", as mentioned in the strategy. The strategy is based on New Zealand's historical Treaty of Waitangi, which was signed by Maori and British Crown representatives in 1840, and is a significant piece of history in the foundation of New Zealand.



Thanks to the kind hospitality of Ms Phillips, who worked on the preparation, establishment, and implementation of the Strategy, the CLAIR Sydney staff was provided with very detailed information and was able to have a comprehensive understanding of Christchurch City Council's recent and future multicultural initiatives.

CLAIR Sydney will continue to research into ethnic diversity initiatives of local governments and relevant organisations in New Zealand and Australia to facilitate Japanese local governments in their development of an intercultural society.

## One-Year Anniversary of Mihara and Palmerston North City Partnership

On 21 March, Mihara City in Hiroshima Prefecture, Japan, and Palmerston North in New Zealand celebrated the one-year anniversary of their city partnership.

The relationship between the two cities began in the mid-2000s when triathletes from Palmerston North participated in the annual Sagishima Triathlon held on Sagishima Island in Mihara City – a sporting connection which continues to this day. Last year, with generous support from the Hiroshima New Zealand Friendship Foundation, Palmerston North triathlete David Martin competed in and came first place in the Sagishima Triathlon.



In recent years Mihara City and Palmerston North have fostered strong municipal and education ties through an emergency management staff exchange and school exchange through visits and Skype. These exchange activities led to the signing of the City Partnership Agreement between Mr TENMA Yoshinori, Mayor of Mihara; and Mr Grant Smith, Mayor of Palmerston North, on 21 March 2019 in Palmerston North.

At the time, Mihara City also gifted Palmerston North with a replica samurai armour and framed Japanese art. These items will be on display at the Te Manawa Museum as part of a special exhibition showcasing Palmerston North's connections to Japan.

The CLAIR Sydney office provided support for the establishment of the city partnership between the two cities. Ahead of the one-year anniversary, on 13 February, the Executive Director of CLAIR Sydney met with Mayor Grant Smith at the Sister Cities New Zealand Central New Zealand Regional Forum to express his wish to see the further development of the partnership between the two cities.

The CLAIR Sydney office will continue to support the city partnership between Mihara City and Palmerston North.

This is probably the fifth time in as many weeks that I've sat down to write this article – in an everchanging world, the one constant is me making CLAIR wait too long for paperwork. I'm writing this as I step down from the role of President of the WA chapter of the JET Alumni Association, after six years in the position. This follows a strong tradition of presidents in WA who serve for longer than they ever expected, in my case finally being replaced by someone eminently more qualified.



JETAAWA is a great, active group of people, and over the last six years we've seen a lot of fantastic developments in the Japanese community in Perth. We've been part of building the annual Perth Japan Festival which attracts crowds of over 10,000 people, and was recognised with the Japanese Foreign Minister's Commendation for services to the Australia-Japan relationship. We've also raised thousands of dollars for Japan-related charities and maintained a busy annual schedule of events, seminars, and workshops to help promote Japan, the JET Programme and the

community at large.

I took on the role of President in 2014, after moving to Australia for the first time in 2012. This was after spending 11 years in Japan, first as a JET and later in other roles with the government and in the university sector. Whenever people ask me what I miss from Japan, it's always the people. I grew up in the English countryside, and I think I caught the tail-end of traditional rural values – knowing your neighbour, the whole village banding together to put on fetes and events. As I grew older these things became harder to find, so I was overjoyed to move to Japan and find those values alive and well in a beautiful new setting.

Similarly, as I look back on my six years as President of JETAAWA it's this sense of community that leaves the strongest impression. During JET, we are bound together by a sense of enjoyable adversity – endeavouring to thrive in an entirely different culture, with a patchy-at-best grasp of the language. We come to JET from a wide range of backgrounds, but all leave having shared something unique and binding. Leaving Japan was a difficult step, and the result of an unexpected life change, so imagine my relief at finding an active community of new friends in Australia who had experienced the same thing.

When we join the JET Programme we are told that it is about English language education, but also internationalisation – sharing your own culture with Japan and bringing something of Japan back home. I imagine most of us gloss over that international part, but the beauty of the JET experience is that you end up doing it without even trying. 2020 has brought a lot of fresh challenges to Australia and the world and, while I'd be entirely unsurprised if a JET alumnus were involved in curing COVID-19, I've no doubt that we're all part of the strong community that is helping to keep people healthy and well.

Six years leading JETAAWA have gone by in a flash, and I look forward to seeing what our excellent new President, Zena Ferguson, has in store. She's already proven herself flexible and knowledgeable by adapting quickly to the socially distanced norm (I have no idea how I would have managed this), and above all by keeping everyone engaged and a part of things as they progress. It's this sense of community that will continue to carry the group forward, and something we would all do well to hang onto as we face whatever new challenges may come along.

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## From the Executive Director

### - Temporary Suspension of the CLAIR Sydney Newsletter -

In recent years, we have been routinely publishing and releasing our organisation's newsletter every month. The CLAIR Sydney newsletter is an essential communication medium for us to keep in touch with our readers and friends, as well as to connect with local governments and other relevant organisations in Australia and New Zealand. The newsletter is also an important tool for us to promote our activities, events, and Japanese local destinations and cuisines. Furthermore, it is also an excellent way for us to showcase the eight JET Alumni Association chapters in Australia and New Zealand and their devotion and passion in promoting Japan and building connections between Australia/New Zealand and Japan.

Due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, we are now in an unprecedented period of lockdowns and travel bans. Similar to many people and organisations around the world, the pandemic has also impacted CLAIR Sydney's day-to-day operation and our activities. As a result, we have decided that we will temporarily suspend the publication of our newsletter until further notice. We are still continuing our activities on a reduced scale so please do not hesitate to contact us if needed.

The travel ban and other restrictions have also affected exchange activities between local governments and schools in Australia/New Zealand and Japan. Despite this, the lockdown and restriction period we are in may be an occasion for councils and schools to review their current exchange activities and strategies, and consider their future plans in preparation for the commencement of regular international exchange that are mutually beneficial once the pandemic ends.

We hope you will take good care of yourself and your family. We are looking forward to connecting with you again in the near future.