



Japan Local Government Centre (CLAIR, Sydney)

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NEWSLETTER

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Tatsuno Town



The Centre of Japan

Tatsuno Town is located in the centre of Nagano Prefecture and is surrounded by nature. It has been featured on TV as the geographical centre of Japan, and tourists from far and wide visit the site in Tatsuno nicknamed 'Zero Point', where 36°0'00"N and 138° 0'00"E intersect.



Center of Japan
36° 00' 00" N 138° 00' 00" E

Tatsuno's Fireflies

Tatsuno's Firefly Festival is held every June and Matsuo Gorge in Tatsuno boasts the largest number of 'Genji-botaru', Japanese fireflies, in Japan.



In 1995, a sister city agreement was concluded between Tatsuno and Waitomo District in New Zealand, as Waitomo is well-known for its Tsuchi-botaru (glowworms), while Tatsuno nurtures Genji-botaru (Japanese fireflies). In 2020, Tatsuno and Waitomo held an online ceremony to celebrate the 25th anniversary of their sister city agreement.



Tatsuno's Jaishi

Jaishi, which can be translated as 'snake rock', is a rare rock that consists of diorite with consistent components of quartz in its cracks. This type of rock is called Jaishi because its long white striped pattern resembles a giant snake when found lying on riverbeds.



Tatsuno's Shidare-guri

There is an area in Tatsuno where approximately 1,000 Shidare-guri, weeping chestnut trees, grow natively and heterogeneously and provides superb views throughout the four seasons. It has been said that the branches of these trees droop downwards after being sat on by the mythical creature Tengu. The snow-covered landscape seen during the winter seasons is particularly beautiful. The park in the trees' surrounding area has camping and barbecue facilities, making it an excellent location to enjoy spending time with family and friends.



Tatsuno's Local Sake

Yoake Mae, meaning 'before dawn' in Japanese, is a sake produced by a local sake producer in Tatsuno and is characterised by its rich aroma and exhilarating sharp taste. The sake is brewed using pristine water from the nearby Mt Kiritouyama, which has an altitude of 810 metres, and renowned sake rice varieties Miyamanishiki and Kinmonnishiki from Nagano Prefecture and Yamadanishiki from Hyogo Prefecture. Yoake Mae has been highly acclaimed in international competitions.



Please come and visit Tatsuno to enjoy its rich natural scenery and delicious food.

Sydney's Biggest Anime & Manga Event SMASH!

Sydney's biggest anime and manga event, the Sydney Manga and Anime Show, SMASH!, was held for the first time in three years between 16 and 17 Jul. There were 28,000 attendees, including many cosplayers, at the event over the two days.

At the event, in addition to the sale of anime and manga goods and artworks created by various societies, there were many other activities for attendees to enjoy including a doodling art competition and cosplay photo areas. CLAIR Sydney's staff ran a booth to promote Japanese tourist destinations being featured in, or associated with, locations in anime, manga or cosplay. Many attendees who were looking forward to travelling to Japan visited our booth to collect travel information. There were many attendees at our booth who were surprised to find out about "Yuru-chara", mascot characters created by Japanese local governments to promote their regions, when our staff explained these characters to them.

We hope that Japanese pop culture will be the great medium that inspires more people to visit regional destinations across Japan.



Local Government New Zealand Conference 2022

The Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ) Conference was held from 20 to 22 Jul in Palmerston North and was attended by mayors, councillors and relevant local government officials from all around New Zealand.

The event included keynote addresses and sessions featuring various local government experts on topics such as environmental issues and support for multicultural

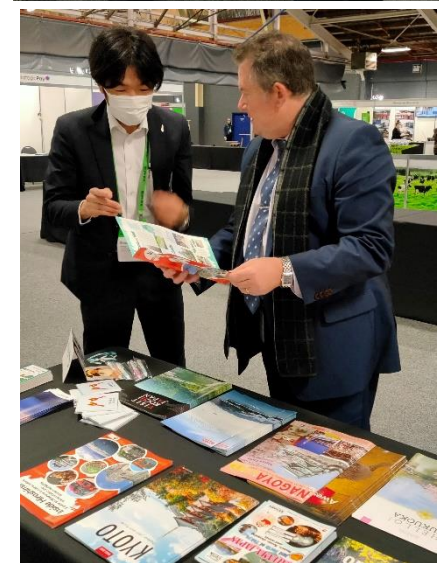
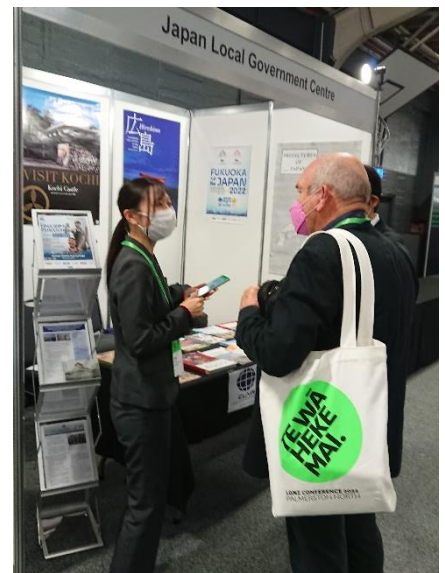


communities. The conference also had a booth area that provided promotional opportunities for participating organisations and networking opportunities for all conference attendees. Approximately 700 participants attended this invaluable event from all around New Zealand.

CLAIR Sydney ran a booth to distribute information on our recent activities and promote exchange opportunities such as our Local Government Exchange and Cooperation Seminar. We also promoted various Japanese tourist destinations and upcoming notable sports events held in Japan.

We are extremely pleased to meet many conference attendees who visited our booth to find out more about CLAIR Sydney and Japanese local governments. Through the opportunities provided by this event, CLAIR Sydney staff were able to network with many local government representatives from across New Zealand. In addition, it was a perfect opportunity to learn about the multicultural policies of New Zealand as Palmerston North is a diverse city where the residents are originally from over 150 countries and speak approximately 200 languages.

We will continue to learn and research current challenges and best practices of local governments, strengthen our relationships with local governments in New Zealand and promote Japan to the people of New Zealand.



2022 JET Programme Pre-departure Orientations in Melbourne, Adelaide, Sydney and Perth



The Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme, also known as the JET Programme, is an initiative in which Japanese local governments invite young adults from overseas to live and work in Japan. The JET Programme aims to enhance foreign language education in Japan and promote international exchange at the local level by involving these young

adults in foreign language education and international exchange activities.

In July, JET Programme Pre-departure Orientations for a total of about 30 new JETs were held in Melbourne, Adelaide, Sydney and Perth. At each of the Orientations, staff from the closest Consulate-General of Japan congratulated the new JETs and expressed their wishes for the new JETs' success in Japan. Following that, CLAIR Sydney staff gave a presentation on CLAIR's involvement in the Programme and the support that CLAIR offers to JETs. Members of the local JET Alumni Association also gave experience-based advice to the new JETs on topics such as how to prepare for classes and the unique culture of Japanese workplaces. The new JETs were excited about their new lives in Japan and actively participated in the Q&A session.

We hope that through their participation in the JET Programme, the JETs will not only gain a deeper insight into Japan, but also gain awareness and understanding of Australia, and contribute to the exchange between Australia and Japan.

From the Executive Director

— Cheering on the New JET Participants —

Throughout last month, members of CLAIR Sydney attended send-off receptions held in Australia and New Zealand for new Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme participants and wished them luck in their exciting new adventures in Japan. The JET Programme started in 1987 with the purpose of increasing mutual understanding between the people of Japan and the rest of the world. It aims to promote internationalisation in Japan's local communities by helping to improve foreign language education and developing international exchange at the community level. Australia and New Zealand are among the four countries in the Programme's inaugural year. Under the Programme, participants are employed to work in one of the following positions: Assistant Language Teacher (ALT), Coordinator for International Relations (CIR), or Sports Exchange Advisor (SEA). Supporting all former and future JET Programme participants in Australia and New Zealand is one of the important missions for us here at CLAIR Sydney.

Since 1987, over 70,000 participants from 75 countries have taken part in the JET Programme as of July 2019. Approximately 4,560 participants are from Australia and 3,300 are from New Zealand, and these numbers are the 4th and 5th largest after the U.S., the U.K., and Canada, respectively. Thanks to over three decades of excellent work and positive attitude demonstrated by participants since the Programme's establishment, the JET Programme has grown to become one of the world's largest international exchange programs and has an outstanding reputation both in Japan as well as overseas.

When I was working in Japan, I was once told by the mayor of a small village that he was grateful to the JET Programme participants as children in his village were taught directly by native English speakers and had opportunities to interact with different cultures. With views like this, even if the new participants may be anxious about their new life in Japan, I am sure they will receive a warm welcome in their local communities, just as I did in Australia and New Zealand.

Above all, I hope the new participants will have an invaluable experience in Japan and come to know and love Japan more. I was born and raised in Osaka. Since I started working, I have lived in five prefectures: Tokyo, Saga, Tokushima, Nagano, and Kagoshima. Japan is a small country, but each region has its unique aspects, including the changing

seasons, nature, history, culture, food, festivals, and prefectural characteristics. We hope the new participants will enjoy these aspects, and that they will become a bridge between Australia/New Zealand and Japan.

We sincerely wish the participants the best of luck in their new homes!