



Japan Local Government Centre (CLAIR Sydney)

Level 12, Challis House, 4 Martin Place

Sydney NSW 2000 Australia

TEL: +61 2 9241 5033

Email: mailbox@jlgc.org.au



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Correspondence *Correspondence*

JET Alumni Association (JETAA) reception

On the 22nd of January, a reception was held at the residence of Dr. Kohara, Consul-General of Japan, Sydney. The Director of CLAIR, Mr. Yasuhiko Tanabe, and one of our Research & Liaison officers, Ms. Atra Ardekani, attended the event. Formal proceedings began with Dr Kohara welcoming back JET programme participants who have recently returned to Australia from Japan. He also expressed his gratitude for the efforts of the Sydney JET Alumni Association (JETAA) members.

The evening also included a presentation from Ms. April Morley, a Sydney JETAA member. She talked about her experience as part a youth exchange project launched by the Japanese government called the Kizuna Project. Kizuna is the Japanese word for “bond”. This project is a part of Japanese reconstruction plans and aims at promoting global understanding of Japan’s revival efforts in response to the Great East Japan Earthquake.

In December 2012, over 200 Australian students and educators participating in the 2 week program to Japan. Participants visited the affected areas of the Great East Japan Earthquake to see and learn about Japan’s reconstruction from the disaster. Both Ms Morley and Dr. Kohara encouraged everyone to visit Japan and support the areas affected by the earthquake and tsunami.

Also, three former JET programme participants who had recently returned to Sydney shared some of their experiences in Japan with the audience. We were delighted to hear that they enjoyed their time in Japan, and that Japan will always have a special place in their hearts. We hope that the JET programme will continue to increase mutual understanding between Japan and Australia, and develop international exchange at a grassroots level.



NSW State Operations Centre Visit



On 18 January, 2013, Sydney reached 45.8 degrees Celsius, the highest temperature ever recorded. This summer, there have been many bushfires due to extreme temperatures. We were given the opportunity to visit the New South Wales State Operations Centre to deepen understanding of the emergency operations system in NSW, despite them being very busy with emergency operations. We would like to use this space to thank Tony Jarrett, NSW Rural Fire Service for letting us visit the Operations Centre.

We are writing a report on how the emergency management system in Australia could be of some help for Japanese local governments who are in the process of reviewing their management systems.



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Australia and Japan Partner for Tourism Exchange Year 2013

Australia and Japan's national tourism marketing organisations are partnering to encourage two-way tourism between the two nations as part of a new initiative – the Australia-Japan Tourism Exchange Year 2013.

Starting from 1st January 2013, the Australia-Japan Tourism Exchange Year aims to promote bilateral exchange between the tourism industries of both countries to ensure longer term sustainable growth in their visitor economies. The Australia-Japan Tourism Exchange Year 2013 also marks the 50th anniversary of the first sister-city relationship for Japan and Australia, established between Yamatotakada City in Nara Prefecture and Lismore City in New South Wales in 1963.

There are currently more than 100 sister-city relationships between Japan and Australia, which are a platform for active international culture exchange, and these are seen as a further opportunity for encouraging travel in the coming year.

In this month's issue of the newsletter, we would like to introduce regional Japan which is being promoted by Japanese local governments. We will begin with the Tohoku Tourism Promotion Organisation.

< From Tohoku Tourism Promotion Organisation >

Tohoku Tourism Promotion Organization is an organization designed to convey the charms of the Tohoku region to people around the world. We are operated by public and private sectors in the Tohoku region.

Tohoku region is in the northern area of Japan's main island. It consists of Aomori, Iwate, Miyagi, Akita, Yamagata, Fukushima and Niigata.

Tohoku is known for home to a host of ski resorts including Appi, Alts Bandai and Zao which receive the same generous snow storms that Hokkaido, Japan is famous for. A more traditional experience is on offer at Tohoku including an abundance of Hot springs. Traveling to each of its prefectures is convenient, thanks to the Shinkansen (bullet train) that runs from Tokyo.

We will provide you with travel information about Tohoku.

We look forward to welcoming you!

<http://en.tohokukanko.jp/>





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From the Director: Disaster management system in Japan and Australia



RFS headquarter

Staff of the RFS were working hard against the bushfires in cooperation with other disaster management organisations.

One of the differences I saw with the disaster management system between Japan and Australia (NSW) is that disaster management organisations in Australia are more specialised and divided based on the types of disasters and the purpose of the disaster management. For example, RFS is responsible for bushfires and SES (State Emergency Services) is responsible for floods. Also, there are other organisations such as Fire and Rescue and Ambulance Service. When a disaster happens, they come together to work effectively and efficiently.

In Japan, fire defense departments are responsible for all of the tasks mentioned above, everything from preventing and minimising damage due to fires, floods, earthquakes and other disasters. Their disaster management operations include fire extinguishing, fire prevention, search and rescue, ambulance and flood prevention activities. I think the difference of the system between the two countries is mainly because of the difference of cultural, historical and geographical backgrounds.

I was deeply impressed to hear that staff of RFS and SES who are fighting against disasters are mostly volunteers. In Japan we have about 160,000 conventional fire fighters and 900,000 volunteer fire fighters. In both countries, volunteer staff play a very important role in disaster management.

I would like to pay my respects to the volunteer staff who fought against the bushfires and floods, and hope that the Australian local governments will reconstruct the disaster stricken areas as quickly as possible.

In January, Australia was struck by many disasters such as bushfires and floods. First of all, I would like to offer our deepest condolences and sympathy to the victims of the disasters.

On the 18th of January when the temperature got up to 46 degrees in Sydney, I had a chance to visit the New South Wales Rural Fire Service (RFS) headquarters and see the actual disaster management operation in action against bushfires.