



# Correspondence



## Message from the director – Farewell

My term of office as the Director of the Japan Local Government Centre (CLAIR, Sydney) will sadly come to an end in mid July 2012.

It was my great pleasure and privilege to meet and work with all of you dedicated to developing your local community and region, and fostering friendships with Japan.

I am very proud to have successfully held forums and seminars for local government on issues common in our three countries - including balancing economic development and environmental protection, aging well strategy, tourism promotion through community involvement, and regional arts and cultural development.

Thank you all for kindly assisting our office by accepting Japanese delegations to research community services, multiculturalism, education, economic development, waste management, planning, parks, heritage conservation, governance of local council and so on, which gave me a lot of ideas and inspiration. I also learned a lot by studying myself amalgamation and regional cooperation of local governments, constitutional recognition and the carbon pricing scheme.

I witnessed a lot of beautiful examples of the strong international bond at a grass root level through assisting a number of delegations from Japan, often with youth participation, to celebrate

30th anniversaries with their sister cities/ friendship cities in Australia and New Zealand.

I could focus my energy on the job, because my wife and two daughters lived a very very happy life here, in beautiful environment and with warm, kind, helping friends at their local schools and church.

My only regret is that I have to leave here before this year's CLAIR Forum on "Improving local government efficiency and performance" will take place in August, which I am sure will be a success with your keen participation.

Importantly, I would like to devote my deepest gratitude to all who gave their condolences and every kind of support to the victims of the Great Eastern Japan Earthquake and tsunamis, many of whom are still in need of help.

Just visiting Japan and enjoying your holidays will be great encouragement particularly to communities in affected areas of North-Eastern Japan. If you could contact me, I would love to be Your Special Agent Takigawa, in Tokyo, if possible. I really mean it.

Shinsuke Takigawa  
Director



## Annual Conference of LGMA and ALGA

CLAIR, Sydney attends the annual conferences of the various local government associations across Australia and New Zealand in the hopes of strengthening collaboration with as many local councils as possible and further developing an understanding of the issues local governments in our three countries mutually face. In May and June 2012, CLAIR, Sydney participated in the annual conferences of LGMA and ALGA both as delegates and as a sponsor.

At the conferences, we gained a better understanding of the challenges local governments face and the innovations to tackle them. CLAIR, Sydney makes the most of such opportunities to further network with councillors and government officials, and provide them the opportunity to make them familiar and updated with what is going on in Japan.

CLAIR, Sydney, as a conference sponsor exhibits tourism brochures and posters in order to promote travel to Japan. Particularly, at the above conferences Australian and international delegates were interested in the latest news from Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima - the three prefectures most affected by the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake. The 2012 CLAIR Forum, which we promoted at these conferences and received much interest will be held on the 17<sup>th</sup> of August (see the last page for more details).



**LGMA** (20-23 May 2012 / Perth, WA)



**ALGA** (17-20 June 2012 / Canberra, ACT)

## Sister Cities New Zealand (SCNZ)

In May, the Sister Cities New Zealand Conference was hosted in Wellington with the theme “Celebrating Relationships: Focus on Youth, Education & Business Development.” Several high profile speakers from New Zealand, Australia, Japan, China and Korea gave motivating presentations about their experiences in their respective fields and emphasized the importance of sister city relationships.



The conference began with an opening address by David Huebner, the United States Ambassador to New Zealand and Samoa, who talked about the origin of the sister city movement and the current international trend of sister city activities.

The Prime Minister of New Zealand, John Key, also delivered an inspirational address at the conference, emphasizing the importance and transformative power of people-to-people exchanges.

As an international guest speaker, the Deputy Director of CLAIR Sydney, Minoru Okuyama, gave a presentation on the role of CLAIR Sydney and its current responsibilities and activities, starting with an overview of government structure in Japan, and then focusing on how CLAIR promotes sister city relationships and the JET programme.

CLAIR Sydney also had a booth providing further information on Japanese local governments and the various tourist attractions all over Japan.

To show support for sister city relationships between New Zealand and Japan, CLAIR Sydney was proud to sponsor the 2012 Sister Cities New Zealand Conference and hopes that sister city exchanges between the two countries will continue to grow successfully in the future.

### Event Information

Manly council has a sister city relationship with Taito, Tokyo and marks the 30th Anniversary of the sister city relationship this year.

In commemoration of the 30th anniversary, the exhibition, the complete series of **Utagawa (Ando) Hiroshige's Fifty-three Stations of the Tokaido** will be held in Japan Foundation Gallery from 13th July to 9th August 2012.

<http://www.jpfevents/12-ukiyoe/index.html>



## Resilient Regional Communities: *The Obuse Experience*



CLAIR, Sydney was proud to be involved with the 2012 Community Economic Development (CED) Conference held from 7-10 May in Cessnock in the Hunter Region. The CED Conference is a biennial event hosted by NSW Trade and Investment, and this year's conference theme was *Resilient Regional Communities*. By invitation of CLAIR, Sydney, Mr. Tsugio Ichimura, President of Obusedo Corporation and Masuichi-Ichimura Sake Brewery, Obuse, Nagano

Prefecture, attended the conference and gave an illustrated presentation of his experience relating to regional development in the town of Obuse. Mr. Ichimura spoke of the creation of a preserved historical district and the promotion of local specialty chestnut confectionary and local sake. Mr. Ichimura also gave an account of the use of a town marathon and town artworks to boost tourism. The efforts seem to be working - Obuse's resident population is 14,000, but the number of tourists totals 1.4 million yearly! That's 100 times! The message of creating a greater sense of town pride was well received by the audience.

CLAIR, Sydney also exhibited at the CED conference to promote Japanese tourism to Obuse and Japan in general. Also, importantly CLAIR, Sydney promoted the CLAIR Forum 2012 (to be held on the 17<sup>th</sup> of August) which gained the interest of attending NSW government and council officers (please see p5 for more information).

We would like to thank NSW Trade and Investment for their support and assistance and all participants for their eager participation. CLAIR, Sydney always endeavours to collaborate with state and local governments and hopes to have continued opportunities to discuss and address issues to promote your local community and to introduce Japan's experiences.



## Our New Staff

### Tetsu Jinzenji - Assistant Director



Hello, my name is Tetsu Jinzenji. I'm from Kochi prefecture. In Japan, Kochi is very famous for its foods (bonito fish, yuzu, sweet tomato and many others!). Kochi people

love enjoying a couple of drinks after a long day at work, just like Aussies. If you look at a map of Japan, you'll notice that Kochi prefecture is shaped like Australia. Such similarities definitely sparked my interest in Australia. If you would like to learn more about Kochi, please click on the following link:

<http://www.pref.kochi.lg.jp/english/>

This is my first time in Australia. I'm very excited to be living here in Sydney and look forward to many wonderful opportunities and experiences while working as assistant director at CLAIR Sydney. I love nature, and there are a lot of beautiful beaches, rivers, and mountains in Australia. I'm also interested in Australia's tourism policy, which I plan to learn more about. In order to do that, I'd like to go all over Australia in these two years! I hope to make the most of both my work and personal life here in this great city!!

### Tomohiko Okuno - Assistant Director



Hello, my name is Tomohiko ("Tomo") Okuno. I'm from Wakayama city which is famous for Wakayama Ramen noodle, delicious seafood, Wakaura senbei (biscuit which is decorated

with the beautiful sightseeing spots of Wakaura), and ... oops! I love food too much so that's all I've mentioned so far! Of course, aside from good food, we also have many tourist sites that I can recommend to you, so please visit our website for details!

<http://www.wakayamakanko.com/eng/>

I'm excited to live in Australia because I'm here to learn first-hand what it's like to live in a culturally diverse society with different foods, customs, and etc from Japan. I'm also eager to learn about the Australian governments' policies and take what I learn from you back to Wakayama city. Before moving to Australia, I was working for the City of Wakayama for 10 years, half of which I spent working in the welfare section as a caseworker. I hope I can use my past experience to improve practical business affairs and to enhance my work in Australia. I'm sure I'll continue to enjoy living in Australia and working at CLAIR, and I look forward to making the most of my time here!

## CLAIR Forum 2012 (ACELG-CLAIR-OSIPP Forum on Local Government)

~Improving local government efficiency and performance: recent experiences in Australia and Japan~

◇Facilitated by Professor Graham Sansom, with presentations from Corin Moffatt, Kylie Cantwell, and Steve Vlahos

**Date:** Friday, August 17<sup>th</sup> 2012

**Time:** 2.00pm – 5.45pm

**Venue:** UTS Centre for Local Government

Level 6, Building 10,

235 Jones Street, Ultimo NSW 2007

**Interested?**

**Register by Wednesday, August 1<sup>st</sup> 2012!**

Registration forms can be found on our website:

<http://www.jlge.org.au>