



# Correspondence

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## Japan Local Government Centre (CLAIR, Sydney)

Level 12 Challis House  
4 Martin Place Sydney NSW 2000

P: 02 9241 5033

F: 02 9241 5014

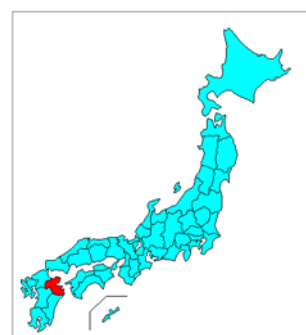
Web: [www.jlhc.org.au](http://www.jlhc.org.au)

Email: [mailbox@jlhc.org.au](mailto:mailbox@jlhc.org.au)

## Summer treats in Oita Prefecture

*~Incredible ice cream, fantastic flower fields  
and verdant views~*

**Oita Prefecture**, located in north eastern Kyushu, is undoubtedly most well-known within Japan for its *onsen* (hot springs) as it boasts the greatest number of hot spring locations and the greatest output volume of spring water in the country. However in the hot summers when hot *onsen* aren't as appealing, there are many fun activities to keep you cool and entertained. One such activity is the Taketa Soft-Serve Stamp Rally, a yearly event that takes place in the beautiful mountainous areas of Taketa and Kuju in the southwest of Oita Prefecture. Each year from early July to late September around 23 stores throughout the region participate in the Stamp Rally, offering delicious and slightly unusual flavours of soft-serve ice cream to their visitors. If you like ice cream and you're up for a challenge, anyone who eats and collects all 23 ice cream stamps can submit their stamp card to receive official Taketa Soft-Serve Rally Ambassador status in the form of a certificate and a stylish badge.



**Oita Prefecture**



**Soy sauce soft-serve**

At its heart, the Taketa region is an agricultural community, which was reflected in some of the 2013 ice cream flavours such as tomato, spinach, *kabosu* (a locally grown tangy citrus fruit resembling a lime), blueberry, soy milk and yoghurt. The flavours for the 2014 Rally are sure to be just as delicious and exciting.

Many of the ice cream locations are quite spread out and the most convenient method of hopping between them is definitely by car. During



**Rest your weary feet in  
an ashiyu (foot onsen)**

your road trip you can enjoy the breathtaking sights of Oita's mountainous scenery. Around 70% of Oita Prefecture is covered by beautiful, lush forests, and the best time to see them is in summer when they are at their greenest. A number of the participating ice cream stores are also home to *onsen*, and while it might be a little warm for full-body bathing, a refreshing alternative is the *ashiyu* (foot *onsen*) that can be enjoyed by visitors for free. There are few things as relaxing as dipping your toes in warm spring waters and chatting with friends while enjoying a refreshingly cool ice cream.



*The scenic mountains of the Taketa region*

## Kuju Flower Park and Kuju Winery



*The colourful flower fields of Kuju Flower Park*

If you find yourself a little full of ice cream and want to see some of the other features this area has to offer, the Kuju Flower Park is well worth a visit. At the Flower Park visitors can stroll through the flower fields, take part in jam making and flower drying workshops, celebrate at the seasonal flower festivals and go blueberry picking. At the Kuju Winery visitors can take a tour of the vineyards, sample and purchase locally made wine and dine at the on-site restaurant. If you're traveling with a furry friend, both locations also have dog-friendly policies, with just a few simple rules to keep in mind.

You might initially come for the ice cream, but you will want to stay for the history, gorgeous scenery and warm, welcoming people. Maps and brochures

for this year's Soft-Serve Rally event will be available online and at all participating ice cream stores from the end of June.

### For more information:

Tourism Oita homepage <http://www.visit-oita.jp/index.e.html> (Japanese, English, Korean, Chinese pages available)

Oita Prefectural Government, Tourism and Regional Promotion Division

*~Article and photos by Oita Prefecture~*

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## 2014 Local Government Managers Australia (LGMA) National Congress



From 30 April – 2 May, we attended the LGMA National Congress & Business Expo in Melbourne, Victoria. We promoted CLAIR's activities, Japan tourism and sister city relationships between Australia and Japan. We also met many people at our exhibition booth and made a lot of contacts.

We were very happy to talk to all the people who visited our booth. Thank you very much and we look forward to seeing you again and working with you in the future.

Also, we are always happy to offer information on the Japanese local government system at Australian and New Zealand Local Government events.

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## Sister City Exchange between Sannohe and Tamworth

Eleven Rotarians from Sannohe in Aomori prefecture visited Tamworth as part of their Club's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary activities. Sannohe and Tamworth signed a Sister City Agreement in July 2001, though the cities' Rotary Clubs have had more than 30 years of friendly relations. Both cities' exchange is advancing, with local high schools participating in exchange and many other grassroots friendship activities flourishing.

Upon their arrival at Tamworth Airport on the first day of their visit, the visitors from Sannohe were happy to see old friends again.



The visit was given prominent coverage in the local papers of Tamworth and local TV news - the delegation delivered the mayor of Tamworth a personal letter from the mayor of Sannohe town and planted a commemorative tree at the city's Botanic Garden, among other activities, including visiting Tamworth High School, sister school of Sannohe High School.



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## Snow Travel Expo 2014

At Snow Travel Expos in Melbourne on 18 May and in Sydney on 25 May, exhibitors from around the world, including of course Japan, promoted their region's winter playgrounds. The Sydney and Melbourne Expo aimed to promote ski tourism and brand-new ski goods to Australia. According to organisers, the event attracted over 6,000 people in each city.

With the support of CLAIR Sydney, the Hokkaido Tourism Organization, Tohoku Tourism Promotion Organization, Nagano region and Niigata region each ran booths at the Expo to further encourage and promote visits to their respective ski resorts.





The day after the Expo in both cities, the Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) organised the Snow and Adventure Seminar 2014, holding tourism presentations for travel agents in Australia.



Many Australians love to go skiing in Japan, attracted in particular by powder snow, *onsen* – hot springs, and Japanese food.

Come have a great snow experience in Japan this northern Winter!

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## Local Government Exchange and Cooperation Seminar 2014

*~Share your experience with Japanese local governments~*



*Last year's participants*

**We are offering eligible participants the opportunity to visit Japan** in order to promote a better understanding of Japanese local governments and culture. The Local Government Exchange and Cooperation Seminar aims to bring together people from Japan, Australia and New Zealand who are working at local governments and related organisations by exchanging information regarding current issues of local governments. In addition, the seminar provides the participants the opportunity to learn more about Japanese culture by visiting several facilities and staying with Japanese families. Since its establishment in 1997, about 170

executives from Australia and New Zealand have participated in this programme.

### Local Government Exchange and Cooperation Seminar 2014 includes:

- Seminars on Japanese Local Government in Tokyo and Sakaide City (this year's host local government)
- Tour of national/local government facilities and cultural sites
- Home-stay with Japanese families
- Feedback/Discussion

### Schedule:

The seminar will be held from **Sunday 16 to Wednesday 26 November 2014.**

## Eligible Participants:

- Applicants must be **local government executives or executives involved in the promotion of local area international exchange and cooperation**.
- In addition, applicants from national organisations, research institutes, or other related organisations may be eligible to participant, providing their backgrounds are related to the theme of the Seminar.
- Up to **6 participants** will be accepted from the following countries through CLAIR Sydney: **Australia** and **New Zealand**.

## Expenses:

1. Expenses incurred for the Seminar registration and materials will be borne by CLAIR.
2. Any expenses prior to arrival in Japan and after departing from Japan shall be borne by participants.
3. Expenses incurred during the Seminar period in Japan will be borne by CLAIR.

## The Seminar's Theme:

### *-Making the best use of regional characteristics-*

Manufacturing Industry and Agricultural products, Human resources development and Community development.

## Sakaide City (Host local government)

Sakaide City is located approximately in the centre of Kagawa Prefecture on the island of Shikoku in Japan.

The city prospered from the **salt** industry many years ago. After World War II, the city has been developed as an **industrial port city**. In addition, the city plays an important role of transportation thanks to opening Seto-ohashi Bridge, which connects Honshu Island, the main island of Japan, and Shikoku Island. Furthermore there are great local agricultural products to eat and many beautiful sights to see.



*Seto-Ohashi Bridge*



*Sanuki-Udon*

## Major Efforts and Problems

### • Industrial development

They are trying to attract business by issuing grants.

A lot of wheat flour is brought from Australia to Sakaide.

Some factories in the city produce **Sanuki-Udon** which is made from Australian wheat flour. Sanuki-Udon is one of the most popular noodles in Japan.

They are also trying to promote their agricultural products such as **Kintoki-Imo** (sweet potato), **Kintoki-Ninjin** (carrot) and **Kintoki-Mikan** (mandarin orange)



*From left: Kintoki-Imo, Kintoki-Ninjin, Kintoki Mikan*

- **Problems as population is decreasing**

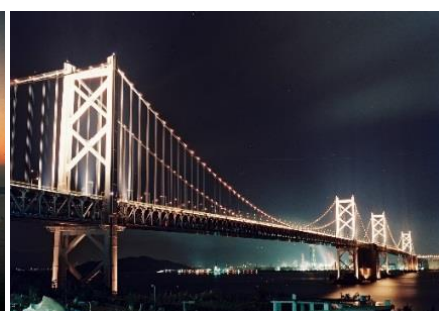
The city has been developed based on heavy industry and agriculture. But they also have problems with the decreasing population as many other rural Japanese local governments. They especially have a big problem with education in island areas. They are trying to attract young people who live and work in the city to solve the problem.

- **Efforts to become a more popular place**

They are trying to increase domestic and overseas visitors by making the best use of their most popular food such as Sanuki-udon and sights such as Seto-ohashi Bridge, the Shikoku Pilgrimage known for the 88 temple circuit and cultural heritage.

*For more information about Sakaide City, please visit:*

<http://translate.google.co.jp/translate?hl=ja&sl=ja&tl=en&u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.city.sakaide.lg.jp%2F>



## **Application:**

- To apply, please fill in the [Form](#) and send it to [mailbox@jlgc.org.au](mailto:mailbox@jlgc.org.au) by **Friday 1 August 2014**.
- For more details of the seminar, please refer to the [Outline](#).
- Please note that there is a limit to the number of participants (6), the outcome of your application will be made available to you by the end of August 2014.
- If you have any questions about the Seminar, don't hesitate to contact us at [mailbox@jlgc.org.au](mailto:mailbox@jlgc.org.au) or 02 9241 5033.

*The Executives of Sakaide city government are looking forward to meeting you, hearing your advice and discussing how they should develop the city with you.*

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## **Thousands Say *Konnichiwa* to Festival**

*~Article and photos by Coffs Harbour City Council~*

A crowd of around 4,000 took advantage of the excellent weather to enjoy the sights and sounds of the 2014 Japanese Festival of Children's Day at the North Coast Regional Botanic Garden, Coffs Harbour, NSW on Sunday 4 May.

"It was yet another successful, colourful and vibrant community celebration of our city's diversity," said Coffs Harbour



Mayor, Councillor Denise Knight. “The Taiko drummers were as breathtaking as ever, but there were also impressive karate demonstrations, beautiful bonsai, amazing carp, an array of Japanese food and lots of fun family activities.

“It was wonderful to see so many people turn out to enjoy the occasion and to celebrate our cultural links with Japan through our long-standing partnership with our sister city Sasebo.”



As expected, the *Kizuna* Gold Coast Taiko Drummers were a massive hit, mesmerising the crowds with their powerful drumming.

Other great crowd-pulling activities included watermelon-smashing and doughnut-eating competitions, kite-making, calligraphy and face-painting.

There were lots of delicious eats on offer, but the *okonomiyaki* savoury pancakes made by the Coffs Harbour branch of the Australia-Japan Society were in particularly high demand.

The Japanese section of the Botanic Garden, which was decorated with 200 *Koinobori* Carp Kites - a present from Coffs Harbour's sister city Sasebo – made it the perfect setting for the Festival.

The Japanese Festival of Children's Day is an annual event put on by the Friends of the Botanic Garden and Coffs Harbour City Council. In Japan, 'Children's Day' has been a day of celebration for centuries and celebrates the well-being of children. On 'Children's Day', Japanese families fly their own *Koinobori* kites outside their homes and around their towns and cities.



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## Bathurst Regional Council's Ohkuma Delegation – April/May 2014 –

~Article and photos by Bathurst Regional Council~

A delegation from Bathurst visited Japan from 26 April to 1 May 2014. Attendees include Mayor Gary Rush, Deputy Mayor Ian North, Councillor Graeme Hanger, General Manager David Sherley and other private delegates.

Upon arrival at Aizu Wakamatsu, Mayor Watanabe hosted a welcome function which included Councillors, members

of the International Communications Group, students and residents. It was a moving welcome and Mayor Watanabe emphasised the desire to continue the relationship into the future. There will be a group from Ohkuma visiting Bathurst in August 2014. He also expressed deep thanks for the financial assistance and heartfelt wishes received from Bathurst.



Monday (28/04/14) initially involved getting a feeling for the cultural assets in Aizu–Wakamatsu in Fukushima prefecture, which is hosting many of the residents of Ohkuma. We visited Nisshinkan, which was the old Samurai school for sons of the Samurai, mainly during the Edo period.

The Delegation then went to the relocated Ohkuma council. Representatives met with Mayor Watanabe. The building is a vacant school in the prefecture and hosts the Ohkuma council that is planning to build a new home for Ohkuma residents.

Next point of call was Tsurugajō Castle. This is a reconstructed feudal castle. The main building is five storeys high – the first castle built on this site was constructed 600 years ago, with the latest version built after the 1868 Boshin Civil War.



The cultural facilities are certainly an economic driver in the area and serve to attract tourists. This is similar to what is occurring in Bathurst, as the number of cultural facilities in Bathurst continues to grow. Feedback on the economic worth of the Council owned/run facilities in Bathurst will be available before the end of June 2014 in the Economic Value study being commissioned through Museums and Galleries of NSW.



We then visited the temporary housing; *Joohokushookita kasetsu* for the people of Ohkuma (who had no alternative accommodation), set up by Fukushima prefecture. This is on the site of an old car park which in the past serviced a saké factory. It is temporary accommodation which houses 54 families; others have either bought houses or are in rental premises. The buildings are very neat and tidy but are quite small. There is great hope they will build a new town.

In the evening, a formal dinner was held with the International Communications Group, hosted by Mr Hideaki Matsunaga, President of the group. Mayor Watanabe and council representatives, including the General Manager Yoshida Jun were also in attendance. The group and Mayor Watanabe again expressed a strong desire and resolve to continue the Sister City relationship.

Bathurst Mayor Gary Rush presented the 'Best wishes from Bathurst' Book,





containing thoughts and wishes from Bathurst residents after the tsunami and nuclear incidents, to the people of Ohkuma.

Tuesday (29/04/14) included visits to:

- Aizu – misato – machi to view cherry blossoms at Chitose & Torano-o and a tour of rural farming areas,
- Isusumi Shinto shrine,
- Oouchijuku village, and
- Nanuka – machi
- Tou no Hetsuri (the Rocks River Gorge)

Again, the sites reinforced the benefits of cultural tourism and the resilience of Ohkuma and Fukushima to bounce back from the natural disaster they experienced.



Wednesday (30/04/14)

The delegation caught the train back to Tokyo, around 3 hours, this included utilising the Shinkansen (bullet train) between Koriyama and Tokyo. You can't help but wonder why Australia has not embraced this technology. The train operates at 250-300 km/h, and serves to open up the country, with transport being provided at relatively inexpensive rates. We can talk about economic trade opportunities and other factors for the Central West of NSW, but freeway and high speed train (passenger and freight) accesses into Sydney are by far the most critical success factors Australia needs to address.



At midday the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Councillor Hanger and the General Manager met with Mr Geoffrey Walker – Commissioner Japan for Industry and Investment NSW. The purpose of the talks was to discuss trade/cultural opportunities with Japan (outlined in our separate report to the Sister City Working Party).

Thursday (01/05/14) the delegation returned to Australia.

The visit was very well received by the people of Ohkuma, who have indicated a strong desire to continue the relationship.

Ohkuma have committed to a visit in August 2014, with Council's next delegation not due until 2016. At this time it is considered appropriate to continue the relationship and keep a watching brief. Limited costs will be incurred by Bathurst Council. This will allow council to discuss with Ohkuma representatives how their plans for a new town are going, and whether they are in a position to continue the beneficial relationship that has existed for two decades between the two communities.



D Sherley

**GENERAL MANAGER**

*For the full version of the report, please go to:*

<http://www.ilgc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/ReportSisterCitydelegation2014.pdf>

# Sugito Athletes take on Sunsmart Ironman Busselton 70.3

*~Article and photos by City of Busselton~*

On Saturday 2 May a team of athletes from Sugito took part in the Sunsmart Ironman 70.3 event held in Busselton. Busselton, a sea side town in the South West of Western Australia, is Sugito's Sister City. The athlete's visit to Busselton and participation in the Ironman event was part of the cultural exchange programme which has existed between the two Cities for nearly 20 years.



The athletes were accompanied by Sugito Mayor Matsuo Furuya and his wife Fumiko as well as Takeshi Usami from the Sugito Town Office. The Busselton-Sugito 2014 exchange student group dressed in colourful Happi Coats cheered the visiting athletes on and the City of Busselton Mayor Ian Stubbs also lent his support.

The Sunsmart Ironman event consists of three sporting disciplines. Koichi Takahashi did the ocean swim; Katsumi Watanabe was team cyclist; and Tetsuya Ozawa finished the event with the run. All three athletes completed their disciplines within their anticipated times and were happy with their efforts.

Given Sugito is a land-locked area, Koichi hadn't been able to train in the ocean so the 1.9km open water swim was particularly challenging despite the perfect conditions on the day. Katsumi completed the 90kms bike ride smiling, having only ever ridden a maximum of 40km prior to the race. Tetsuya, an experienced marathon runner, finished in excellent time and crossed the line hand-in-hand with Mayor Furuya.

All athletes had an amazing event experience and thoroughly enjoyed their first visit to Busselton. Now back in Sugito, they are keen to spread the word on this fantastic event.

Hideki Sakamoto, Head of Information and Culture, Consulate-General of Japan and Taku Korogi, Sport Science Department, University of WA also joined members of the Busselton Sugito Sister City Association in supporting the visiting group. Before the event the Sugito triathletes met with the Busselton Triathlon Club who assisted with the registration process and helped the athletes familiarise themselves with the course.



While in Busselton the group visited local wineries, enjoyed a visit to the Shearing Shed, and played Golf at the Dunsborough Golf club. Takeshi even enjoyed some time surfing!

Visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q94SNDzpQ5s> for event highlights.

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## JETAA Canberra activities

~From JETAA Canberra~

Every year, JETAA Canberra holds a trivia night as an outreach event, as well as to catch up with our fellow Canberran Japanese groups, including the Australia Japan Society in Canberra and Canberra Japan Club.



This year's event was held on 26 May at our good friend Aizawa Mamoru-san's restaurant, IORI PLUS in Deakin.

It was a great turnout with around sixty people arriving to test their mettle against the Mighty Trivia Twins, Keith and Ken Parker (from JETAA Canberra and JETAA QLD respectively).

There was a nice mix of JET alumni, YETs (soon to be JETs) various Japan groups, Embassy staff and people who are just plain interested in Japan. We tried to ensure that every table had a mix of people given that the questions were equally split between in their Japan/Australia focus.

Everyone had a chance to win a lucky door prize of a choice of five Japanese DVDs and I have to say I was surprised to see *Battle Royale* stay on the table for the first two picks.

During the evening there was also the opportunity to buy mystery envelopes for \$5 and receive either a beautiful Japan/Australia book or a restaurant voucher of a higher value.

I would like to say that my table came from behind in an upset victory but it wasn't to be as we managed a tightly fought third place, with team *Kobe Dentetsu* taking the honours and the spoils of victory, being a mixture of red and white wines!

In a stroke of genius, the Parker brothers awarded a prize for second last, insightfully reasoning that it is easy to try and lose, but it is much harder to try and come second last!

Overall a great time was had and hopefully this provides a solid foundation for more big events in the future!





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## From The Director

### *Local taxes in Japan*

Local taxes are the most important source of revenue for Japanese local governments. Local taxes account for 35% of total annual revenue of all local governments, for 32% at prefectural level and 34% at municipal level.

In fiscal year 2011, the total amount of local tax revenue was ¥34.2 trillion, ¥13.8 trillion for prefectures and ¥20.4 trillion for municipalities.

The Local Tax Law provides for the basic system of local taxes. Different from the Australian and New Zealand models, there are a various types of local taxes in Japan: 12 types of prefectural taxes (10 types of ordinary and 2 types of earmarked taxes), and 13 types of municipal taxes (6 types of ordinary and 7 types of earmarked taxes). In addition to these, local governments may create local taxes by their own by-laws if they receive the consent of the Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications.

Among local taxes, residential income tax, fixed asset tax and corporate income tax are the most important. Residential income tax is considered as the fee for living as a "resident" in the region where we live. The tax is composed of a per-capita burden and 10% rate on income (4% for prefecture and 6% for municipality). Fixed asset tax is a tax for municipalities. It is somewhat similar to rate system here. The tax is imposed on the owner of fixed assets such as land, houses and some business assets. Local government also have corporate income taxes, but there is a regional gap in its revenue base between urban and rural areas. It is one of the challenges for Japanese local governments to build a less imbalanced and more stable local tax system.

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### ***Would you like to share your activities in our newsletter?***

If your organisation is interested in having your article in our monthly newsletter, please feel free to contact us at [mailbox@jlgc.org.au](mailto:mailbox@jlgc.org.au).

