

Season's Greetings And Best wishes for 2016 from CLAIR Sydney

Newsletter Issue No.94 Dec 2015

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2016 CLAIR Forum

CLAIR and ACELG cordially invite you to this year's CLAIR Forum

"Local Government Environment and Sustainability"

Date: **Wednesday 24 February**

Time: **2:00pm to 5:00pm**

Venue: **Aerial Function Centre**

Level 7, Building 10 University of Technology, Sydney

235 Jones St Ultimo NSW 2007

Light refreshments will be provided



Entry to the Forum is **free of charge**. Registration details will be available soon.

Festivals around Japan: Vol. 2 Miyazaki prefecture



mythologies and described as a significant destination of early Japan.

Saito is home to roughly 300 burial mounds that are said to have been made during the 4th century BCE up until the 6th century CE. The burial mounds bring you closer to Japan's distant past.

Saito Burial Mound Festival (Fire Festival) was held this year at Saito city on November 7-8. It is a sight you do not want to miss.

Miyazaki has a very pleasant and relatively warmer climate compared to other areas of Japan even during winter. There is always plenty of sunshine to go around right throughout the year. You can enjoy taking part in and watching various world-class sports in Miyazaki. Additionally, there are many magnificent natural destinations that tourists find attractive.

The oldest Japanese history book is *Kojiki* written in AD 712. The contents of this book are the basis for the mythologies of Japanese ancestors.

Miyazaki is an area that is featured in these historical

You will undoubtedly be impressed by the breathtaking natural beauty and authentic cuisine of Miyazaki, not to mention the hospitality of Miyazaki citizens.

There are so many sightseeing destinations all over the prefecture where you can enjoy great natural landscapes.



Promoting Japanese tourism at the reception for the Emperor's birthday



On Wednesday 25th November, Japanese Ambassador Sumio Kusaka and Mrs Kusaka held a reception to celebrate the birthday of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan at the Ambassador's Residence.

There were many booths set up that allowed the guests to experience Japanese food, culture, and cutting-edge technology.

Approximately 430 guests attended the celebrations including Dr Andrew Southcott MP, representatives from the federal government and federal agencies, embassies, universities, Japanese companies, as well as members of the Japanese community. CLAIR provided information on popular tourist destinations in Japan.

2015 National Sister Cities Australia (SCA) Conference

We attended this year's SCA Conference, which was held in Blacktown on Nov 9–10.

During the conference we gave two presentations about how Japanese local governments are working to attract overseas markets, trends of sister-city activities between Australia and Japan, and the JET program. We also never missed the chance to promote the Rugby World Cup in 2019, which Japan will host for the first time!

On 9th November, a workshop focusing on trade with Asian countries especially Japan, China and Korea was held at the conference. Many people attended the workshop not only from local governments (including Blacktown's sister cities), but also from Austrade, the local business chamber and companies in and around Blacktown.

It was a good opportunity to think deeply about economic-exchange programs.

CLAIR looks forward to providing continued support for sister-city activities – if you want to learn more about Japanese local governments, or you have information you would like to share, please feel free to contact us.



Central New Zealand Regional Focus Group Meeting in Wellington



On 20th November we attended the central New Zealand regional focus group meeting in Wellington held by Sister Cities New Zealand (SCNZ).

Mayors from councils with sister cities in and around Wellington, Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ),

the Japanese embassy, the Chinese embassy, the Ministry Foreign Affairs and Trade, etc. attended the meeting.

At the group discussion we talked about a lot of topics on how to make sister-city activities more attractive: effective promotion, proper engagement with young people and community involvement.

CLAIR promoted the local government system in Japan and the JET Program, which celebrates its 30th anniversary next year.

We also suggested that sister-city activities can benefit greatly from collaboration with JET Alumni Associations (JETAA).

Sister City Forum at Adelaide Town Hall

The Adelaide sister city forum was held on 25th November. Approximately 30 citizens who are involved with Adelaide's sister cities attended the forum. Our Assistant Director, Hiroaki Seino, and Researcher, Damian Spinks, attended. After the

speech by Lord Mayor Martin Haese, the attendees talked about sister-city relationships, the recent situation, and how to enhance these bonds. It was a very informative forum that will no doubt help shape future activities between sister cities.



Adelaide's sister cities:

Christchurch (Canterbury Region, New Zealand)

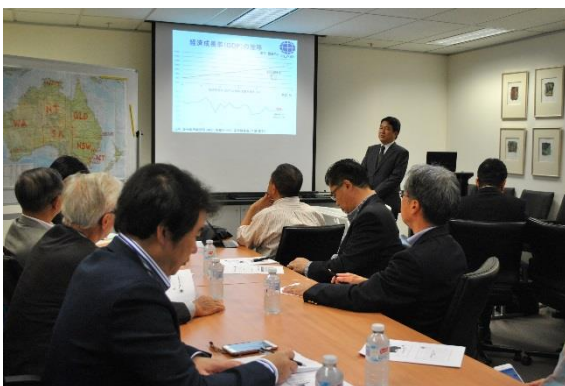
George Town (Penang State, Malaysia)

Himeji (Hyogo Prefecture, Japan)

Austin (Texas State, United States of America)

Qingdao (Shandong Province, People's Republic of China)

Toyama Association of Corporate Executives visit CLAIR Sydney



Sixteen people from the Toyama Association of Corporate Executives visited Australia on an inspection tour.

The delegation also visited our office for a briefing from our Director, Mr Kamibo, on the Australian economy and tourism. For example, they learned that Australian tourists tend to stay in Japan longer than tourists from other countries and are more likely to visit Japan in winter.

Kanagawa Prefectural Assembly visits CLAIR Sydney

While eleven members of the Kanagawa prefectural assembly were in Sydney, our Director, Mr Kamibo, invited them to our office and briefed the delegation on the structure of the Australian government and about the trends of Australian tourists.

He also talked about Japanese and Australian sister-city activities. Kanagawa prefecture and cities in Kanagawa have relationships with cities on the east coast of Queensland. It was a good opportunity for us to learn more about these relationships.



Supporting the celebrations for the Sydney-Nagoya Sister-City Anniversary!



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From 1st to 4th November Nagoya city's Mayor Takashi Kawamura and Assembly members led by Toshiyuki Ogawa, Vice Chairperson enjoyed their visit in Sydney.

On 1st Nov, Nagoya Day was held at Hyde Park (corner of Park & Elizabeth St). Many distinguished guests, including David Butcher, Chairman of Sydney-Nagoya Sister City Committee and Councillor Robert Kok, came. Mr Doug Sutherland, former Lord Mayor in 1980, when the sister city agreement was arranged 35 years ago, was also present.

At the Opening Ceremony, Mayor Kawamura made a speech in English in appreciation of City of Sydney and he sang his favourite song, one to cheer on the local baseball team the Chunichi Dragons, but he swapped the team name to the 35th anniversary of Sydney and Nagoya to celebrate the long-standing sister-city relationship.



During the day, people were attracted to the stage where they could see samurai performances by Nagoya Omotenashi Busho-Tai, cosplay shows and classical Japanese dance performances. There were also many attractive booth events: Nagoya food stalls, opportunities for people to wear kimonos and yukatas (summer kimonos), try origami, and fish for water balloons. Furthermore, the Zoomobile from Taronga Zoo also made a guest appearance!



The following day (2 Nov) Deputy Lord Mayor Robyn Kemmis, Mayor Kawamura and other distinguished guests planted the Camellia Sasanqua to mark the 35th Anniversary of the Sydney- Nagoya Sister City Relationship. We look forward to providing more nourishment for this strong relationship!



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On 3rd November, Lord Mayor Clover Moore kindly hosted the Nagoya City delegation during their courtesy visit to Sydney Town Hall and she also surprised Mayor Kawamura by celebrating his birthday as well (which also fell on this day!)

The last day (4 Nov), Mr Cameron Kerr, Taronga Zoo's Director and CEO, presented a koala to Nagoya to commemorate the anniversary.

It was a wonderful four-day celebration!



© Taronga ZOO



© Taronga ZOO

Matsuri in Sydney 2015

The *Matsuri in Sydney 2015* was held in Darling Harbour on 7th November.

This festival aims to showcase the various aspects of Japanese culture, like festivals and animation, and to promote Japan as an attractive tourism destination. We manned a booth that promoted travel to Japan with plenty of brochures and pamphlets on great places to visit.

Many people visited our booth and left with many tourism brochures provided by Japanese local

governments and the Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO).

There were many kinds of booths including ones selling Japanese food and others providing Japanese cultural experiences. The booths attracted crowds all throughout the day.

We look forward to more opportunities to promote Japanese culture and tourism in the future, and we hope many Australians will visit Japan and experience Japanese culture firsthand.



Promoting Kumamoto city during Matsuri in Sydney



Kumamoto is famous for Kumamoto castle. Kumamoto city promoted their tourist destinations at Matsuri in Sydney and CLAIR was there to assist.

Kumamoto is very easy to access from either Australia or New Zealand via Narita or Haneda Airport in Tokyo. Kumamoto Omotenashi Bushotai (Japanese samurai performers) also made an appearance to help promote tourism in Kumamoto. The visitors were all very impressed!

Returning JET Programme Participant Function in Melbourne



On 5th November, the Consulate General of Japan in Melbourne hosted a reception for returning JET Programme participants from Victoria, at the official residence of Japan's Consul General. CLAIR Sydney's Director Mr Kamibo and Assistant Director Mr Koike attended the reception.

Acting Consul-General Ms Haneda welcomed those present, talking of the importance of the JET Programme and thanking the returnees for their hard work. Mr Kamibo also gave a welcome speech where he talked about how he was once taught by a JET teacher and encouraged the returnees to get involved with JETAA activities. Following the greetings, six returnees introduced themselves and told of their postings in Japan. Surrounded by a friendly atmosphere, we networked with the reception's guests.

Ibaraki Prefecture's overseas study tour



Staff at Ibaraki prefectural government visited Sydney to better understand how to effectively utilise heritage-listed sites.

CLAIR arranged for them to meet with relevant employees at City of Sydney. We are sure this visit will benefit Ibaraki's city-planning activities.

Meeting with JET teachers in Japan

~ Article and photos from Ms. Hiromi Morris, President, Sister Cities New Zealand~

It was a memorable encounter meeting with JET participants during my recent visit to Japan especially as I had an opportunity to greet them at the farewell function in Wellington only a few months earlier.

I visited Miyazu City in Kyoto Prefecture, a sister city of Nelson, and they will celebrate the 40th anniversary of the establishment of their sister city relationship in 2016. It was great to meet with Charis Chu who seems to enjoy working at a local school and settled well in the community with support of locals who have connections with Nelson.

Minoh City in Osaka Prefecture and Lower Hutt City, New Zealand are celebrating the 20th anniversary of their sister city relationship this year and I was fortunate to visit Minoh City as a member of Lower Hutt Mayoral delegation in October.

It was at the New Zealand Fair held at a shopping mall in Minoh when I happened to meet with Erin Reale-Key from New Zealand and Sarah Swanson from USA. They are both working at local schools as

Assistant English Teachers and appreciating their experiences in Japan. I met Sarah earlier at Saito No Oka Gakuen School where she teaches and the school established a permanent Skype connection with Tui Glen School in Lower Hutt.

Currently New Zealand has 42 sister city relationships with Japan, the most out of all countries in terms of number.

This year JETs have placements in areas with sister city links in Otaru (Dunedin), Eniwa (Timaru), Tomakomai (Napier), Miyazu (Nelson) and Shinagawa in Tokyo (Auckland).

The JET programme is a wonderful and generous programme set up by the Japanese Government for young people to promote internationalization at a grass-roots level which is similar to the objective of Sister Cities New Zealand. I hope JET participants will apply what they learnt and achieved in Japan to sister city activities upon their return to New Zealand.

Hiromi Morris

President, Sister Cities New Zealand



With Miyazu Mayor Inoe, Hiromi (centre) and Charis Chu, JET Assistant English Teacher in Miyazu City



From right - Erin Reale-Key from NZ, Hiromi and Sarah Swanson from US, at New Zealand Autumn Fair in Minoh City

Mayors sign historic wetlands agreement

~ Article and photo from Mr. Nigel Dique, Chairman, Port Stephens Sister Cities Committee~



Kushiro mayor Hironaka Ebina, Port Stephens Mayor Bruce MacKenzie and Newcastle Deputy Lord Mayor Michael Osborne at the reaffirmation of the 21-year-old Sister Wetland Agreement at Newcastle Council.

Hironaka Ebina, the mayor of Kushiro in northern Japan, Bruce MacKenzie, mayor of Port Stephens and Michael Osborne, deputy lord mayor of Newcastle met on Friday (6 Nov) to sign an historic wetlands agreement.

The agreement, signed in Newcastle, renews the Sister Wetland Relationship, begun 21 years ago, in which the three Councils agree to work towards the conservation and wise use of wetlands.

Preservation of wetlands is vital to the continuation of an extraordinary natural phenomenon – annual bird migrations between wetlands of Hokkaido and the Hunter estuary, a non-stop journey of 8,500km.

Cr Osborne and Cr MacKenzie signed on behalf of the wetlands of the Hunter Estuary, while Mr Ebina signed on behalf of Kushiro Marsh, Kiritappu Marsh, Lake Akkeshi and Bekanbeushi Marsh.

The wetlands include areas designated under the Ramsar Convention as Wetlands of International Importance.

The municipalities share the shorebird species Latham's Snipe (*Gallinago hardwickii*), with about 30,000 travelling between Japan and Australia each year.

"The biggest threat to migratory birds like the Latham's Snipe is loss of habitat," Cr Osborne and Cr MacKenzie said in a joint statement.

"Thanks to the tireless efforts of volunteers and all levels of government, remarkable progress has been made in recent years in rehabilitating precious wetlands located within the Newcastle and Port Stephens municipalities.

"The Sister Wetlands Relationship will continue to provide a conduit for exchanging experiences, knowledge and skills for the conservation and

wise use of wetlands."

Peggy Svoboda, spokesperson for Hunter Local Land Services at the Kooragang Wetland Rehabilitation Project said wetlands were valued globally because of their biological diversity and high productivity.

"With wetlands under continuing pressure from human activity, it's important that governments at all levels recognise that wetlands are delicate and fragile environments, and support their maintenance for future generations.

"The Sister Wetlands Relationship helps to increase local awareness of the international significance of the Hunter estuary and encourages community involvement in the exchange of survey results and research activities, and information on the wetlands."

The Sister Wetlands Relationship was first signed in Newcastle 1994 following the fifth meeting of the Ramsar Conference in Kushiro in 1993, and renewed in Newcastle in 2004.

Mayor Ebina, President of the Kushiro International Wetlands Centre was accompanied by three delegates from Kushiro City Hall's environment department.

JETAA Auckland Activities

~ Article and photos from JETAA Auckland~



JETAA Auckland has been busy over the past few months. On the 4th of October 2015 we joined the annual New Zealand Japan Society Hanami at the Cherry Blossom Grove in Cornwall Park, Auckland.

The weather was just right which meant a good turnout. It was a lovely opportunity to meet up with friends and get some sun after the winter months hibernating indoors.

The following weekend, the 9th to the 11th of October 2015, a small group travelled down to Rotorua for another annual event, the Rotorua Ekiden.

This year we had a team of five runners, including Hayashi-san from the Consulate-General at Auckland.

Our Ouen team did a wonderful job of keeping us going through the 42km course around Lake Rotorua but alas we lost the trophy to the New Zealand Japan Society this year.

We will be training hard for a rematch next year.

The following weekend, yes it was a busy month, the 16th to the 18th of October 2015 was the annual Oceania Conference hosted by JETAA South Island and held in Christchurch this year. We had two representatives attend the Conference.

It was a productive weekend discussing 'Staying Connected'.

Personally I believe there is great value in these conferences; in making personal connections with other JETAA chapters throughout Oceania, sharing stories and experiences, getting advice and feedback. Conference delegates also had the opportunity to hear about and discuss the 30th Anniversary celebrations CLAIR is planning for next year.

In November things quietened down a little for us. We arranged an informal group attendance at the final film at the Japanese Film Festival on Friday the 20th of November 2015, the Floating Castle.

The film was enjoyed by all, with bits of humour throughout and a good story.

As we move towards the end of the year, of course it is party time. Our final event will be our Bounenkai set for Saturday the 5th of December 2015.

A tradition in recent years has been 'Stealing Santa' so we are looking forward to some laughs over this as well as good company and good food.



Introducing our new intern



Hiroshi Takada

Project Manager at CLAIR TOKYO

Japan has a proverb that says “the ways people come together are inscrutable and interesting”.

I made my mind to come to Sydney on a one-month internship from CLAIR Tokyo because I felt something between Australia and me.

Actually I had an opportunity to get involved with Australia in 2006 (the 30th anniversary for diplomatic relations between Australia and Japan) when I was in university, but I wasn't able to visit at the time. Ten years passed since that time and

I didn't even think I'd have another opportunity to visit. So, this time, I thought this chance came to me by destiny.

I would like to thank my colleagues, my bosses, and everyone who has helped me during these 41 wonderful days. I would not have been able to have such great time here without the countless support from those around me. I feel so lucky to be able to meet such kind and warm people here. Please allow me to thank everyone again. I wish all of you success and happiness in your lives.

From the Director

4 – Holidays in Japan - A Year of Local Governments in Japan

In Japan, there are 15 public holidays as provided for by national government law. Next year will see the introduction of a new public holiday, *Yama no hi* (Mountain Day) on 11 August. On the other hand, there are only nine public holidays in New South Wales, the home of our Sydney office.

In addition, Japanese usually celebrate the New Year with their families, much like Christmas for Australians and New Zealanders. As a result, many Japanese offices are closed not only on 1 January, they also take days off at the end of the year and on 2, 3 January. For example, the working days at Japanese local governments in December only fall on 21, 22, 24, 25 and 28 (23 December is the Emperor's Birthday).

One of the reasons why Japan has so many public holidays is because the work environment, which is

often strongly based on teamwork and interdependent relationships, makes it very difficult for most Japanese workers to take annual leave. I think that the system where all employees take time off together during public holidays or office holidays better suits offices in Japan. On average, Japanese workers take only nine paid holidays per year, despite the fact that most of them have 20 paid holidays a year.

The Japanese believe everything becomes fresh and new in the New Year. I sincerely wish that 2016 will be a prosperous and peaceful year for you and all in Australia, New Zealand and Japan.

YOI OTOSHI WO! (Have a great 2016!)

Katsunori Kamibo
Director