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Festivals around Japan: Vol. 5 Wakayama City

- *MATSURI* (festivals) throughout the year in Wakayama City

“Wakamatsuri” is a nearly 400 year-old traditional Matsuri held at Toshogu Shrine in the middle of May. One of the highlights of this festival is the “Mikoshi-Oroshi,” an event where a group runs down the shrine’s 108 steps while carrying a *mikoshi* (portable shrine). After that, a *GYORETSU* (parade) starts from Toshogu Shrine and goes around the Wakaura area.

Participants wear traditional costumes and perform Japanese drums, traditional dance, and more. The parade has about 65 different stages each featuring anywhere from 1 to 50 performers. For more information, please visit: <http://wakamatsuri.com/english> Why don't you join us?



“Kishu-odori Bundarabushi,” Wakayama City’s most popular dancing *Matsuri*, is held around Wakayama Castle at the beginning of August. More than 100,000 people come and see this festival every year. Be a part of the fun and dance with us!

This year is also the 300th anniversary of the inauguration of the “Shogun” (Yoshimune, the 8th Tokugawa Shogun and lord of Wakayama Castle). There will be a lot of events throughout the year, so please come and see them in Wakayama City!



At Wakayama Castle, you can try on samurai armour and meet friendly ninjas. We welcome you and look forward to your visit here!

For more information, visit the Wakayama City Tourist Information Office website. <http://www.wakayamakanko.com/eng/>

2016 CLAIR Forum “Local Government and Sustainability”

This year’s CLAIR Forum, hosted by CLAIR in conjunction with University of Technology Sydney: Centre for Local Government (UTS:CLG) successfully opened on Wednesday 24 February.

This year’s theme was “Local Government and Sustainability” and presentations were conducted over two sessions, “Waste management and recycling” and “Global environment and local government”.



We invited UTS: CLG Director, Associate Professor Roberta Ryan as a facilitator, Dr. Alice Howe Sustainability Manager at Lake Macquarie City Council and Prof. Damien Giurco, Professor of Research Futures at the Institute for Sustainable Futures, UTS as guest speakers to this year’s forum.

Also, the director of CLAIR Sydney, Katsunori Kamibo, Deputy Director, Masahisa Yoshimi, Assistant Director, Tomohiro Koike and Researcher, Jason Khoh delivered presentations at the forum for the first time.

An audience of around 40 local and state government representatives joined the forum, making for lively question and answer sessions.

The forum began with a welcome speech from the Director. He talked about how waste management and recycling are important ongoing concerns for local governments in both countries. He also briefly described how Japanese local governments’ address waste management, global warming and the response from residents. Roberta Ryan then mentioned how local governments in Australia are no longer just traditional service-providers (ie, ‘roads, rates, and rubbish’) and pointed out that communities here, both rural and urban, list the environment as a top-five issue from their *Why Local Government Matters* research.

Session 1 “Waste management and recycling”



The first session was delivered by Mr. Yoshimi, Professor Giurco and Mr. Khoh.

Mr. Yoshimi presented on how residents in Nagoya sort and dispose of domestic garbage.

He also described how citizens and private companies are working together in becoming a more recycling-based society through actively promoting waste reduction and recycling efforts at the local government level.

Professor Giurco gave an overview of waste generation and recycling in Australia. He also explained some sustainability policies and enlightened the audience with case studies from Marrickville and Waverley council and further elaborated on some future NSW initiatives.



Mr. Khoh compared waste data from Australia and Japan, highlighted some unique and innovative solutions at the local-government level in Nerima City (Tokyo) and Ryde City Council, and suggested ways in which local governments and residents could further promote sustainable and ecological waste and recycling practices.



Session 2 “Global environment and local government”



Mr. Koike explained Japan’s response to the Kyoto Protocol and what Japan should do to combat global warming in the future. He said it’s important that we all try to contribute in a positive way and how it is our responsibility to hand the earth down safely to our children and grandchildren.

Dr. Howe presented on how local governments can and are making an equitable contribution to global emissions reduction. She described how Lake Macquarie City Council has been actively working to make an equitable contribution to reducing global greenhouse gas emissions as this effort seeks to mitigate future climate risks from affecting livelihood, property and natural systems.



Lastly, Mr. Kamibo talked about Japanese local government initiatives providing examples of Sakai City’s efforts. He explained how it is difficult for local governments to influence big businesses into practicing more environmentally friendly policies. However, he argued that since big businesses are ultimately made up of people, the local government should strive to inform and educate the community as this is the “key” in influencing big business activities in reducing waste and emissions.

During the question and answer session, participants discussed the role of local governments and communities in sustainability strategies and what they should do in the future to promote environmental sustainability.

We had a valuable opportunity to hear case studies addressing challenges facing local governments in both Australia and Japan through this year’s forum.

We thank all speakers and participants for making this year’s forum a great success!



Internship in Augusta Margaret River, Western Australia



From 8 to 12 February, Assistant Director Noriyuki Shiba visited the Shire of Augusta Margaret River in Western Australia for his internship.

Whilst there he talked with the shire president, CEO, directors and staff and learned from them about how the shire attracts people to visit or live in their area, how they interact and collaborate with the local community, and what efforts are being made in solving environmental issues.

The shire area is very famous as a wine region but Noriyuki was able to experience more than just wine. There were a lot of attractions such as amazing beaches, mysterious caves, beautiful national parks, and wonderful off-road tracks suitable for mountain biking.

When he visited an organic olive farm and a waste facility, he found that Australia and Japan have similar challenges such as a decreasing number of farmers and waste reduction problems although there are differences between the two countries in the size of land and population. He also got some good ideas that could be successful in Wakayama (where he is seconded from) such as venison sausages.

He had opportunities to attend meetings such as a councillor briefing and an ordinary council meeting. He found the process of these meetings interesting as it had higher involvement from citizens compared to Japanese local government meetings. Again this was the same when he took part in an arts and culture advisory group meeting which led him to believe that Japanese local government should be taking a few notes about community collaboration from Australian local governments.



Noriyuki notes that his time in Augusta Margaret River was an unforgettable and awesome experience. He sincerely appreciates the kindness and effort of the shire president, CEO, the directors and all the staff in the shire who helped arrange and facilitate his internship.

Supporting Ehime Prefecture



Staffs from the Ehime Prefectural Government visited CLAIR Sydney's office for a briefing about exporting Japanese products and promoting them in Australia.

Ehime Prefectural Government plans to export some of its local products to expand its market. We expect them to sell a lot of attractive products that will captivate the hearts and minds of many Australians.

50th anniversary of Ikeda and Launceston Sister City Relationship

The 50-year anniversary ceremony of the sister city relationship between Ikeda city (Osaka prefecture) and Launceston city (Tasmania) took place on 11 February in Launceston. CLAIR assisted with the ceremony by manning the Japanese cultural information booth.



Apart from a Taiko drum performance, there was also a display of Japanese traditional dance which included the Bonodori, which is a traditional summer dance in Japan. The audience was invited to join in on the dance as well!

We hope Ikeda and Launceston continue to build upon their great partnership!

Latrobe City Sister Cities Festival

~ Article from Jason Membrey, Latrobe City ~

On Friday 12th October, 2015 around 4,000 people experienced Japanese and Chinese culture at the Latrobe City Sister Cities Festival enjoying a host of fun activities and vibrant stalls that reflected a true Japanese and Chinese flavour.

This year's festival was a night market theme with activities including a dress-up competition for Cosplay and Anime costumes, anime movies, Japanese drumming, Chinese dancing, calligraphy, arts, crafts and music. The night market was an exotic mix of sounds, sights and smells as we delivered an authentic taste of life in our sister city, Takasago in Japan.

The city's relationships with Takasago continue to thrive and being able to share some of the Japanese culture within our own region means that the wider community can enjoy a taste of Japan here in Latrobe City. The festival was a family friendly, interactive event and one that will see future festivals rotated annually at various locations across Latrobe City.

The media coverage from the Festival has gone beyond Latrobe City with a national audience reached. Please refer to the following link <http://www.gogomelbourne.com.au/events/report/5229.html> and Latrobe City's Facebook page for further information about the Sister Cities Festival.

JETAA Vic/Tas/Sa is running the Bento Box Lunch again this year! ~ Article and photos from JETAA Vic/Tas/Sa ~



This year, JETAA Vic/Tas/SA is proudly sponsoring the Taylor Anderson Memorial Fund. Taylor Anderson was an American ALT working in Ishinomaki at the time of the earthquake and tsunami and sadly died while helping her students to safety.

All moneys raised during the Big Bento Lunch 2016 will support projects in Ishinomaki.

For more information and to register for the event, please visit the link below.

<http://www.victassa.jetaa.org.au/big-bento-lunch/>

Please feel free to email JETAA Vic/Tas/SA with any questions on info@victassa.jetaa.org.au

JETAA Canberra Activities ~ Article and photos from JETAA Canberra ~



The first official JETAA Canberra event for 2016 was the February Oshaberikai. Held in the Castle Room at the back of King O'Malley's pub on the first Wednesday of every month, the event is a chance to keep up our Japanese and reminisce about our time in Japan.

A recent partnership with the Japanese Language and Culture Meetup group has meant that the number of people attending our events has increased, which means more Japanese fun for everyone.

Our (rather late) shinnenkai BBQ was held in Nara Gardens in late February. JETAA's promise of free sausages and drinks meant that the event was well attended by JETAA members and meetup members alike.

In addition to our monthly Oshaberikai, JETAA Canberra's biggest annual event is the Canberra Nara Candle Festival which is held in October. JETAA runs a gyoza and beer stall which seems to get more popular every year. With a constant flow of people from four o'clock onwards, the Candle Festival has become our biggest fundraiser. The JETAA committee would like to thank our small army of volunteers who worked tirelessly through the evening cooking gyoza and decanting countless bottles of beer into plastic cups.

Later in 2016 we are looking forward to meeting the new generation of JETs in this 30th anniversary year. The committee usually runs a few information dinners for the participants so they can feel free to ask questions in an informal environment. For more information on



JETAA Canberra please visit our website at <http://jetaacanberra.org/>

Farewell Messages

Two of our Assistant Directors Hiroaki Seino and Noriyuki Shiba are leaving Sydney at the end of March to take up their new roles back in Japan....



Hiroaki Seino

Assistant Director

from Aomori Prefecture

Hello, I would like to say this stale and worn phrase, time flies. I have stayed in Australia for two and half years from October 2013 to March 2016 and this journey is finally coming to an end.

I got the opportunity to visit all the states of Australia and both the northern and southern islands of New Zealand, experiencing the different climates and cultures of these regions.

I was also fortunate enough in being able to intern in the mining town of East Pilbara surrounded by red deserts, enjoy the atmosphere of Tamworth which is a country music town and skiing down the Snowy Mountains. Apart from these unforgettable

experiences, I have also made some precious friends along the way.

Unfortunately, my English skills haven't improved as much as I was hoping but I believe that throughout this journey I managed to communicate with all my heart.

I'm sure I will be back here soon on business or a private trip. Thank you very much and Hebana!! ("See you" in the Aomori dialect)

Hiroaki Seino (Aomori Prefectural Government)



Noriyuki Shiba

Assistant Director

from Wakayama Prefecture

It is time to say good bye. I will return to Japan and work for the Wakayama prefectural government again from April.

I hope I have done good work in spreading the name of Wakayama all over Australia and New Zealand but if you have never heard of Wakayama, please check this link out.

<http://www.wakayama-kanko.or.jp/world/english/index.html>

This was the first time for me and my wife to live overseas.

Although I cannot talk about the details at length, every day was a winding road. We experienced not only the enjoyable things but also the bad. However, I can safely say everything we experienced is unforgettable and priceless.

I was dispatched here two years ago. Since then I have experienced more things than I expected. I had a lot of opportunities to talk to many people in local governments, the wider sector, JETAA members and more in Australia and New Zealand. Everyone I met was kind enough to speak to me in a way that I could understand. If it had not been for their kindness, I could not have done my tasks and enjoyed my time here. They also mentally stimulated and inspired me and I got some ideas from them that may suit Wakayama.

I am sure that I can make the most of this unforgettable experience not only in the Wakayama government but also everyday life in Japan as well.

It is difficult to express the immense gratitude I feel but I really want to say thank you to everyone for everything you have done for me.

I look forward to meeting/working with you in the near future if you ever come to Japan.

Noriyuki Shiba (Wakayama Prefectural Government)

From the Director

7 – Season of Personnel Change - A Year of Local Governments in Japan

March is the last month of the financial year in Japan. Every officer in Japanese local government is now struggling to complete his or her tasks within the month because March is not only the end of this year's budget but also the last time to work with the same members of their respective department. This is because most staff will take up different roles come April.

As I mentioned in a former article, almost all staff of a local government start their careers in their 20s, working for the same local government until their retirement at the age of 60 – a typical “lifetime employment” structure. This means they seldom move to other governments or companies but instead move to other positions within the same local government every two to four years. This move is done on the 1st of April, just like our own two members, Mr. Seino & Mr. Shiba who will be returning to their local governments and taking up new roles.

Although local government salaries are not purely based on merit, the structure rewards hard work by repositioning deserving staff into popular/highly sought after roles. As such, local government staff make their desired role known to management between November and December and results are released one week before April 1st. This means local government officers across Japan are now eagerly anticipating the results of their application which also doubles as a form of evaluation from management.

Katsunori Kamibo
Director