



Japan Local Government Centre (CLAIR, Sydney)

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NEWSLETTER

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Welcome to Wakayama



WORLD MASTERS GAMES 2021 KANSAI / JAPAN



Sufula

The World Masters Games 2021 Kansai that was scheduled to be held in May this year has been postponed for a year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The new dates for the Games are Friday, 13 May-Sunday, 29 May 2022.

The World Masters Games is an international competition where any sports lovers over the age of 30 can compete. The Games will host a total of 59 disciplines in 35 sports, of which seven disciplines in five sports will take place in Wakayama Prefecture: sailing, windsurfing, dance sports, indoor volleyball, rifle shooting, half marathon and 'Ekiden' (long-distance relay running).



Temple lodging on Mount Koya

Wakayama Prefecture has recently been selected by Lonely Planet readers as the winner of the Sustainability category for its Best in Travel 2021 Readers' Choice Awards. Spiritual experiences such as temple lodging on Mount Koya and hiking on the Kumano Kodo pilgrimage trail are the most acclaimed attractions amongst the famous sites and activities



Kumano Kodo Pilgrimage Trail

on offer for tourists in the prefecture.

Please visit Wakayama when you come to Japan for the World Masters Games 2021 Kansai next year!

[Wakayama Tourism Federation](#)

The World Masters Games 2021 Kansai Official Homepage

<https://wmg2021.jp/en/>



The Wakayama Prefecture Executive Committee of the World Masters Games 2021 Kansai Official Homepage

<https://wmg2021wakayama.jp/>



Introducing Our New Assistant Directors



Akiko OKAZAKI

Assistant Director from
Kochi Prefectural Government

Hello, I am Akiko Okazaki from Kochi Prefecture in Shikoku Island, which shape is quite similar to the one of Australia.

Kochi faces the Pacific Ocean and 84% of the land is covered with mountains that form the crystal clear rivers that run in the prefecture. Thanks to the rich nature in the prefecture, the people of Kochi enjoy delicious local cuisines such as seared bonito.

I would be grateful if you would visit our website for more details.

<https://visitkochijapan.com/en>

I have visited Sydney and Brisbane on a school program when I was 13 years old and that was the very first time that I left Japan to experience a different culture. Since then, I have always been interested in international diversity and now I am really happy to return to the place that sparked my curiosity, as a Japanese local government representative.

I am writing this self-introduction in a quarantine hotel but I am enjoying my stay. I received a warm welcome and a message card with a cute dill character that says “Dill with it” from the hotel staff. I cannot wait to meet and talk to the friendly Australians.

I am also looking forward to exploring New Zealand where I have never been but heard only good things about such as the amazing nature and kind people.

I am proud that Japan has such invaluable friendships with both Australia and New Zealand and am honoured to contribute to the furthering of the friendships.

Hope to see you soon!



Hiroki ISHIDA

Assistant Director from

The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications

Hello everyone! My name is Hiroki Ishida. I was dispatched to CLAIR from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC) of the Japanese national government.

I am thrilled about starting my life in Sydney, as this is my first time living overseas.

I am interested in mountain climbing, marathon races, trail running and going for a drive. I think there are a lot of people who love nature in Australia and New Zealand. During my time working at CLAIR Sydney, I would like to learn about the nature conservation efforts of Australia and New Zealand, and use them as reference for nature conservation in Japan.

My biggest mission in the Sydney CLAIR office is to make 100 best friends in Australia and New Zealand. If possible, I would like to introduce them to the many wonderful aspects of Japan. And with their help, I would like to create opportunities for Japanese children to develop interests in the world!

I look forward to meeting you soon!

Hello, Kia Ora! My name is Taiki Ito and I was seconded here from the Saitama Prefectural Government. Saitama Prefecture is located just north of Tokyo.

Saitama Prefecture has earned the nickname of “彩の国”. The “彩” in “彩の国” means “beautiful” and refers to the beauty of the “国”, together the phrase means “beautiful prefecture”. Within Saitama Prefecture, the Chichibu and North areas have plenty of nature, the West area is where you can enjoy traditional Japanese experiences, while the Central and East areas are a fusion of urban and nature. If you’re interested in finding out more about “彩の国”, please see the website below.

Let me share a bit more about myself. I'm into bouldering. I'm really looking forward to visiting indoor climbing gyms in Australia and New Zealand and making friends with climbers. I've heard that there are good boulders in Australia and New Zealand, and I'm looking forward to observing and seeing how I can climb them.

I'm also a history buff and am very familiar with Japanese history. If you are interested in Japanese history, please don't hesitate to ask me anything about it. I'm willing to share exciting stories about Japanese history with you.

This is my first time visiting Australia and New Zealand, so I'm really excited to explore new places and interact with Australians and New Zealanders. I hope we will become good friends.



Taiki ITO

Assistant Director from
Saitama Prefectural Government

Reception Celebrating the Birthday of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan in Cairns



On 5 Mar, a reception celebrating the birthday of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan was held in Cairns. More than 100 guests were invited to the reception, such as representatives from Cairns Regional Council, people engaged in sister city exchange with Japanese cities and Japanese language educators.

CLAIR Sydney ran a booth at the reception to provide general information and tourist destination information on Saitama and Osaka Prefectures, which respectively have sister state relationships with Queensland, and information on upcoming large-scale international sports events in Japan such

as the Tokyo 2020 Olympics and Paralympics Games and the World Masters Games 2021 KANSAI. Cairns Regional Council has sister city relationships with two local governments in Japan, Minami Town in Tokushima Prefecture and Oyama City in Tochigi Prefecture. While providing general information and tourist destination information on Minami and Oyama, our staff were able to learn about the recent interactions between Cairns and its two Japanese sister cities

from attendees at the reception who are passionately engaging in sister city exchange.

CLAIR Sydney will continue to actively support the sister city exchanges between Australia/New Zealand and Japan.



2020/2021 CLAIR Forum



On 9 Mar, CLAIR Sydney held the CLAIR Forum 2020/2021 at the Japan Foundation, Sydney, in collaboration with the Institute for Public Policy and Governance at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS: IPPG).

CLAIR Forum is the event for CLAIR Sydney and UTS: IPPG staff and local government representatives to present on and discuss their organisations' strategies and research concerning common challenges faced by local governments in Japan, Australia and New Zealand.

This year's theme was 'Local Government Policies on Industrial Promotion'. At the event, four CLAIR Sydney staff and two guest presenters made a comprehensive presentation each on local government policies and strategies that promote their respective local economies in Japan and Australia. Many meaningful discussions took place during the Q+A sessions.

Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, although we had to place a limit on the number of participants and requested all participants to wear a mask throughout the event, we received positive feedback from many participants on the day. Some participants expressed that they truly enjoyed taking part in their first in-person event in a really long time.

Thank you to all the attendees for coming to the event and thank you very much to UTS: IPPG and our wonderful guest speakers for your kind contributions to this year's CLAIR Forum.

We will continue to share knowledge and information with local governments and universities in Australia and New Zealand, and be involved in events and activities that are beneficial for both Japan and Australia/New Zealand local governments.



Ohkuma Tree Planting Ceremony in Bathurst



On 11 Mar, a tree planting ceremony was held in Bathurst to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the sister city relationship between Bathurst and Ohkuma and to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Great East Japan Earthquake.

The City of Bathurst and Ohkuma Town established a sister city relationship in 1991. Since then, they have been nurturing their strong relationship through people-to-people interactions such as high school student exchange visits. The Ohkuma Town Government originally intended

to send a delegation for an official visit to Bathurst in March but unfortunately had to cancel due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite this, the City of Bathurst held a tree planting ceremony in the Ohkuma Japanese Garden on 11 March, 10 years after the Great East Japan Earthquake. In attendance were representatives who have been engaging in the exchange between Bathurst and Ohkuma, the Deputy Consul-General of the Consulate-General of Japan in Sydney and a staff member of CLAIR Sydney. After observing a minute of silence for the victims of the earthquake, Cr Bobby Bourke, Mayor of Bathurst delivered an address to celebrate the ongoing friendship between Bathurst and Ohkuma.

CLAIR Sydney will continue to actively support the sister city exchanges between Australia/New Zealand and Japan.



Memorial Service for the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake

On 13 Mar, the Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme Alumni Association (JETAA) Canberra, the Canberra Japan Club, and the Australia-Japan Society ACT (Australian Capital Territory) jointly held a memorial service at Canberra Nara Peace Park in commemoration of the 10th anniversary of the Great East Japan Earthquake. A staff from CLAIR Sydney was in attendance at the event. The three organisations have been holding memorial services annually to commemorate the Great East Japan Earthquake around this time of the year, and this year's event was held on a larger scale to mark ten years since the disaster.



The Ambassador of Japan to Australia, Mr YAMAGAMI Shingo, and other representatives made speeches at the event, during which the dynamic interactions between the people of Canberra and the disaster-stricken areas were highlighted. During the event, there were also recitals and performances of Japanese poems and songs by children who are learning Japanese. Following this, the Canberra Rotary Peace Bell in the park was rung and a minute of silence was



observed to honour the victims of the disaster.

Since 2012, the Australia-Japan Society ACT has been playing a central role in the Tohoku Youth Program, which invites students who lost their parents in the Great East Japan Earthquake to Canberra to experience life in Australia for approximately two weeks. For Australia and Japan, Canberra is the significant location for the two countries to share grievous experiences and further the ties between its people.



JETAA VicTasSA Update

Written By Trevor Talbot



2020 was a strange year here in Victoria, what with the whole Coronavirus pandemic locking down the city for months on end. Our chapter's activities had to be moved online, which was not the same as meeting in person, but a welcome reprieve from the Groundhog Day-like tedium of being stuck at home. Thankfully though, the lockdown did eventually end and we tentatively started doing in-person get-togethers.

Our first physical meet-up was an end of year party which took the form of a bento picnic in the Treasury Gardens in Melbourne. This was a great opportunity to enjoy the warm and slightly blustery early December weather and welcome back JET Programme returnees who came back during the first and second lockdowns in Melbourne. JETAA Vic/Tas/SA bought everyone a bento from a small Japanese owned business called My Little Bento in Moonee Ponds. The bentos were delicious and a perfect accompaniment to chatting the afternoon away in the park, and sharing our experiences in Japan and returning to Australia.

We later held a New Year Party at the end of January at Stomping Ground in Collingwood. We had former JETs from

the past few decades come to chat and catch up over a shared meal.

Our last in-person event for the year was our Annual General Meeting where we elected our new executive committee, discussed and outlined our plans for the next year, followed by a delicious lunch. Despite being held just a few days after a five-day circuit breaker lockdown, we had a really good turnout of JETAA members both old, new and from interstate.



Unfortunately, our representatives from Tasmania and South Australia were unable to attend due to the uncertainty of the last lockdown and when it would end.

Our hope for 2021 is to be able to hold more events in person, try and reconnect with our current JETAA members here in Victoria, and welcome back and support new JET alumni when they return. And as always, we hope to engage with people interested in Japan and the JET Programme, and support and send off new JET Programme participants on their way to Japan.

From the Executive Director

- Trans-Tasman Travel Bubble -

The trans-Tasman travel bubble that reopens two-way travel between Australia and New Zealand without the previously mandatory 14-days of quarantine has begun in mid-April. This travel bubble is projected to drive positive impacts upon the COVID-19 pandemic recovery in the two countries, such as the resumption of direct people-to-people interactions. Apart from this, I am sure the positive economic contributions generated by this travel bubble are welcomed by many in the two countries.

As described in the CLAIR Sydney Newsletter published in January 2021, compared with most of the world, Australia and New Zealand are in such enviable positions with their achievements in managing the pandemic and combating the COVID-19 virus. I believe that it must be very encouraging for the rest of the world to see the establishment of the trans-Tasman travel bubble between Australia and New Zealand, two of the few countries that have triumphed in their COVID-19 responses.

As you may know, the activities of CLAIR Sydney take place in both Australia and New Zealand. Since late March 2021, our activities in New Zealand have been limited to online-based activities. The establishment of this travel bubble now allows CLAIR Sydney staff to resume our on the ground activities in New Zealand. I hope that our staff, including the three new Assistant Directors whose introductions you can find in this newsletter, can meet with the people of New Zealand at upcoming events and meetings very soon.

We sincerely hope that the COVID-19 pandemic will be contained promptly worldwide, and look forward to seeing more travel bubbles being established worldwide in the short term following the footsteps of the Trans-Tasman travel bubble.