



A Farewell Message from the Executive Director, AKAIWA Hirotomoto

Our Executive Director, AKAIWA Hirotomoto is leaving Australia in mid-June to take up his new role in Japan.

To all our wonderful partners, newsletter leaders and everyone whom I have met in both Australia and New Zealand in the past four years, thank you very much for everything that you have done for me and CLAIR Sydney. I deeply appreciate your friendship, hospitality and generosity over the years. It was a great pleasure to have met and worked with you and your organisation, and I will cherish these memories for the rest of my life. Thanks to you and your organisation, my term of office as the Executive Director of CLAIR Sydney was very fruitful. Both my professional and private life in the past four years had been extremely rewarding as I had opportunities to visit and learn about vast areas of Australia and New Zealand before the COVID-19 pandemic. I was lucky enough to be able to visit all states and territories in Australia, and both the North and South Island of New Zealand.

In the past four years, what impressed me the most is witnessing the resilience of the Australian and New Zealand society and communities in the early stage of the COVID-19 pandemic. During my time at CLAIR Sydney, there were also many unfortunate incidents and disasters, such as the 2019-2020 bushfire season, various cyclones and severe floods in Australia; and major earthquakes, the 2019 White Island eruption, the Christchurch mosque shooting and the Auckland supermarket stabbing in New Zealand. It was distressing to witness these events, but at the same time, it was moving to see the resilience and mateship of the Australian and New Zealand communities in the aftermath of these incidents and disasters.

I must leave Australia to assume my new role back in Japan. My successor, Mr HIRAKI Manyu, has already arrived in Sydney and will assume the role of Executive Director of CLAIR Sydney. I would like to request our partners to kindly offer the same degree of ongoing support to him and his team at CLAIR Sydney. CLAIR Sydney is gradually resuming its in-person activities and I hope CLAIR Sydney staff, including Mr Hiraki, can meet you in person soon to deepen the ties between your organisation and CLAIR Sydney.

I sincerely hope we can cross paths again in future in Japan, Australia, New Zealand or somewhere in the world. Until then, please take good care of yourselves.

Looking forward to seeing you again,

AKAIWA Hirotomoto

