



# NEWSLETTER

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## Obu City

Obu City is a medium sized city located in central Japan, Aichi prefecture with a population of around 90,000. In close proximity to the Nagoya metropolitan area, the city is serviced by several train lines and is a short drive to Chubu Centrair International Airport. This convenience has made it an attractive hub for manufacturing, while abundant nature and arable land makes it a desirable place for people seeking a slower pace of life. Obu has a sister city relationship with the City of Port Philip in Victoria, and next year will celebrate their 30th anniversary.

Farmland is abundant in Obu, and the region's famous kyohō grapes are grown in the area along with cabbage and onions. These fresh fruits and vegetables are sold at the local farmers market in "Genki No Sato", a popular tourist destination where visitors can also bathe in a natural hot spring. Being able to experience the calmness of rural life while having close access to major metropolitan conveniences is one of the things that makes Obu unique and attractive.

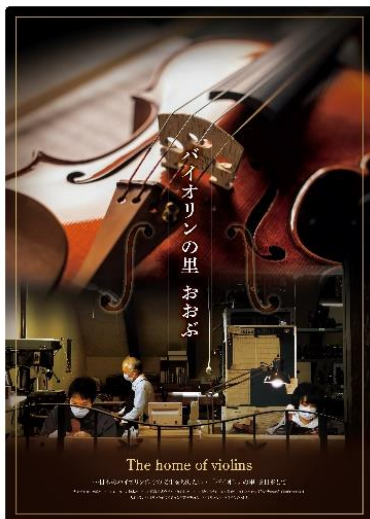


Obu is a multicultural city. People from all over the world are living in Obu, and evidence of this can be seen with the variety of ethnic restaurants and supermarkets that can be found in the city, such as Vietnamese, Indian and Indonesian. Originally attracted by employment opportunities in the manufacturing industry, many are deciding to settle down and

raise families here. The population of foreign born residents has been growing in recent years and Obu strives to be a city that is livable for people of all backgrounds.

Obu also has a variety of festivals with rich history. The Omanto Matsuri is a unique and exciting event held at a local shrine, where participants race alongside horses in this tradition that prays for bountiful harvests and a safe household. Designated an important cultural property by the city, the sight of brave faces running alongside horses is a must see for anyone visiting Obu.

Another festival with over 500 years of history is the Doburoku Matsuri. Also designated an important cultural property, this festival is held every February to celebrate the finished brew of Doburoku, a type of Japanese sake. The Doburoku is offered to the gods and worshippers attending the event, while “Shōjō,” a 3 meter tall red-faced enjoyer of alcohol walks around and entertains guests.



Finally, Obu is also focused on becoming the “Home of the Violin,” an effort inspired by Suzuki Masakichi who is known as Japan’s “King of the Violin.” This unique undertaking by Obu aims to bring music into the lives of all age groups, and has led to initiatives such as school concerts by the world class violinist and Obu alumni Takezawa Kyoko, violin lessons in elementary schools, and classical music concerts in the city.

Abundant nature, festivals with rich tradition and the sound of violins in the air! Visitors are encouraged to come and enjoy the many attractions that Obu has to offer.

## 2022 JET Programme Pre-departure Orientations in Wellington and Auckland

The Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme, also known as the JET Programme, is an initiative in which Japanese local governments invite young adults from overseas to live and work in Japan. The JET Programme aims to enhance

foreign language education in Japan and promote international exchange at the local level by involving these young adults in foreign language education and international exchange activities.

In August, JET Programme Pre-departure Orientations for a total of about 30 new JETs were held in Wellington and Auckland. At each of the Orientations, staff from the Embassy and Consulate-General, respectively, congratulated the new JETs and expressed their wishes for the new JETs' success in Japan. Following that, CLAIR Sydney staff gave a presentation on CLAIR's involvement in the Programme and the support that CLAIR offers to JETs. Members of the local JET Alumni Association also gave experience-based advice to the new JETs on topics such as how to prepare for classes and the unique culture of Japanese workplaces. The new JETs were excited about their new lives in Japan and actively participated in the Q&A session.



We hope that through their participation in the JET Programme, the JETs will not only gain a deeper insight into Japan, but also gain awareness and understanding of New Zealand, and contribute to the exchange between New Zealand and Japan.

## Support Activities for Fukuoka's Globally-minded Leader Fostering Project



From 22 to 26 Aug, 10 university students from Fukuoka Prefecture visited Sydney to take part in a globally-minded leader fostering project implemented by the Fukuoka Prefectural Government. While in Sydney, the students were divided into three industry-focused groups; tourism, real estate & trade, and food services, and visited the Sydney branch of 12 Japanese businesses to gain insight into business operations overseas.

CLAIR Sydney assisted with scheduling meetings with Japanese businesses and government organisations in Sydney

and accompanied the students to the meetings. On the first day of the project, the students visited CLAIR Sydney to learn about the distinctive population trends and multicultural policies in Australia and the friendship between Australia and Japan, focusing on the sister cities between the two countries.

There were students in the group who were forced to experience abnormal student life and had to change their study abroad plans due to the COVID-19 pandemic that started in the beginning of 2020. However, we believe that many of the students acquired a better vision of their future and career development through participating in this project. CLAIR Sydney will continue to support Japanese local government organisations' projects in fostering globally-minded leaders.

## From the Executive Director

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### — Applications are now open! The Local Government Exchange and Cooperation Seminar —

Japanese local governments, which include both prefectural and municipal governments, engage in a variety of projects to improve the wellbeing of their residents and revitalise their communities. Over the years, the challenges they face are changing with the times and the demands of society. When responding to new challenges, Japanese local governments analyse forward-thinking case studies from other local governments and at times, they research cases of governments overseas. With this background, CLAIR Sydney gathers information and researches case studies of local governments in Australia and New Zealand at the request of Japanese local governments. I think this is the same for local governments in Australia and New Zealand.

One of the major events CLAIR hosts is the Local Government Exchange and Cooperation Seminar. This seminar is an annual program to promote mutual understanding and forge an effective network between local governments in Japan and overseas. Under this seminar, CLAIR's overseas offices invite local government officials from their respective jurisdiction areas to visit Japan to learn about the current situation and challenges that are relevant to Japan's cities and regions.

Our next Seminar will take place in Kitakyushu City, Fukuoka Prefecture in February 2023. The themes of this seminar are Environmental Policies and Tourism Resource Management. Please see below for a brief explanation of the two themes.

- Environmental policies that transformed a city that was negatively impacted by industrial pollution - learn about the city's approaches to aspiring for zero industrial waste, promoting sustainable energy, and eliminating wildfires
- Inbound tourism promotion policies - country-specific strategies and detailed initiatives

If you are interested in the Seminar, please see the link below.

<http://www.jlgc.org.au/our-activities/the-local-government-exchange-cooperation-seminar/>