



# NEWSLETTER

Issue 166 – March 2023



**Japan Local Government Centre**

Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR, Sydney)

## Welcome to Sannohe Town

Sannohe Town in Aomori Prefecture is located in the southeastern part of Aomori Prefecture, bordering Iwate Prefecture and Akita Prefecture and has a population of approximately 9,000. It is a town with history, culture, and rich in nature, celebrating 133 years since its establishment. The main industry in



Sannohe Town is agriculture, and the area is thriving in the cultivation of rice and fruit trees such as apples.

## C O N T E N T S

Discover JAPAN - Sannohe Town

News from CLAIR

- School Exchange Opportunities

Farewell Messages

CLAIR Sydney February Activity

Reports

From the Executive Director



The ruins of Sannohe Castle is a symbol of Sannohe Town, the castle was the residence of the Sannohe Nanbu family. It was designated as a national historic site in March 2022, and is also a famous place for cherry blossoms. The Sannohe Spring Festival is held in the spring, and the Sannohe Autumn Festival is held in autumn, with floats made by each neighborhood association parading around.

**Aerial view of the ruins of Sannohe Castle**



In addition, it is the hometown of the late Mr. Noboru Baba, a cartoonist from this town. A town development initiative utilising Mr. Baba's work "Eleven Hungry Cats", stone statues and information guides with the characters as motifs are installed throughout the town to welcome visitors. If you have the opportunity, please come and visit.

Regarding the relationship between Australia and Sannohe Town, in July 2001, a sister city agreement was signed with Tamworth, New South Wales. Their relations started in 1970 with the exchange between the Tamworth and Sannohe Rotary clubs. In January 2023, a delegation of five people, including the mayor of Sannohe Town, visited Tamworth and had the opportunity to interact.



We will continue to cherish the exchange between Australia and Tamworth, and hope to further deepen relations.

## News from CLAIR Sydney

### **NOTICE** School Exchange Opportunities

To support cultural exchange between schools in Japan and Australia/New Zealand, CLAIR Sydney has a dedicated page on our website that lists schools in Japan that are interested in initiating cultural exchange with schools in Australia/New Zealand.

Please click on the link or scan the QR code below for more information on the respective schools.

Should you be interested in a particular school, please get in touch with them!



<http://www.jlgc.org.au/international-exchange-2/sister-school-exchange/australia-%E3%83%BBnew-zealand/>

# Farewell Messages

Our Deputy Director Makio Yamada and Assistant Directors, Yuya Negi, Hiroki Ishida, Akiko Okazaki and Taiki Ito are leaving Sydney in March to take up new roles back in Japan.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you whom I have met in Australia and New Zealand. I had asked the Mayor of the City of Nagoya to extend my term of the secondment, however, my attempts were not successful. I will be leaving my position at CLAIR Sydney and moving back to Nagoya.

When I moved to Sydney in January 2021, it was in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. I had a 2-week tranquil hotel quarantine and then a quiet city life during over 100 days of lockdown. These were unique experiences and I could see how Australian people and the government dealt with COVID. I could see differences between Australia and Japan, and I believe this experience will be useful in my future career.

My successor will also come from the Nagoya City Government. I appreciate your continued support and wish you all the best in the future.



**Makio Yamada**

Deputy Director from Nagoya-city,  
Aichi Prefecture





### **Yuya Negi**

Assistant Director from Fukuoka Prefecture

First of all, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the people whom I met in Australia. Everyone was always kind and welcoming. Thanks to all your support, I had a wonderful time in Australia and was able to succeed in my projects.

At CLAIR Sydney, I was in charge of inbound tourism promotion for Japanese local governments, and supported sister city activities for both Australia and Japan. I was very lucky to be able to visit many places across Australia to run booths at Japan-related events, and talk with local people who had interests in visiting Japan. Also, I was very

pleased to know that some local governments in Australia were hoping to establish a sister city relationship with Japanese local governments and it was a great honour for me to assist them.

In addition, it was a great experience to work with a local marketing company and hold a reception inviting guests from the government and tourism businesses. I was also able to take part in holding a campaign event, in collaboration with local restaurants in Sydney, to promote my original organisation the Fukuoka Prefectural Government.

In my private time, I had enjoyed hanging out with my friends and travelling to other states alone in my first year before my family came from Japan. In my second year, I had a great time with my family to visit beaches, camp sites and amusement parks, which left great memories of Australia for my two children. Besides that, it was a precious experience for my daughter to go to a local primary school and talk with her friends in English.



There are over 20 countries which I have been to, however, I believe that Australia is the most liveable country where people have a positive mindset and enjoy life to the fullest. I wish to come back to Australia in the future and I am really hoping that my children will study in Australia when they become university students. I must return to Japan and work at the Fukuoka Prefectural Government, however, if I have the opportunity I hope to get involved in projects related to Australia and play a part in further developing the relationship between Australia and Japan.

Again, I thank you for all your support and wish you all the best.



**Hiroki Ishida**

Assistant Director from The Ministry of internal Affairs and Communications

Hello everyone! I am very grateful for everyone's warm support for the past two years since I came to the CLAIR Sydney office in April 2021.

It was my first time to stay abroad for a long period, so I was worried at first, but I managed to spend two years without any big issues. In the first year, there was a lockdown due to COVID-19, so I could not work as much as I wanted to, but after that, various jobs resumed again and I was able to gain a lot of experience.

In particular, I would like to thank the members of JETAA for their support. I learned a lot from talking with the members of each chapter at the JETAA Oceania Conference. I would also like to thank Carol, who was a Researcher and Liaison Officer at CLAIR Sydney and is also a JETAA

member. I am very grateful to her for teaching me about a lot about English and information about Australia.

Even after returning to Japan, I would like to continue to cherish the connections I have made in Australia and New Zealand.

I wish you all the best for your future.

Farewell! but not good bye!





**Akiko Okazaki**

Assistant Director from Kochi Prefecture

Fortunately, I had been assigned to be involved in local governmental conferences as well as to study multicultural policies in Australia and New Zealand, which provided me with lots of precious opportunities to talk with representatives from both countries.

Even before arriving in Australia, I had a good impression of Australia and New Zealand, as we acknowledge that both countries are our best partners both in economic development and cultural exchange. However, I have discovered the real charms on a deeper level through my duties at CLAIR Sydney.

Australia and New Zealand are countries where everyone is allowed to be themselves. There is the right attitude to understanding each other and accepting differences. Whilst in Japan being away from the mainstream makes it complicated to perform our roles.

After the past 2 years, I am proud of the friendship between Australia, New Zealand, and Japan since now I know how much Australia and New Zealand have worked hard for a brighter future. At the same time, I hope to contribute in improving Japan to make it a partner which Aussies and Kiwis can be proud of.

With regard to my private life, mangoes have been my main dish these days. This is because they are not affordable in Japan so I wanted to eat them as much as I could. I also enjoyed a variety of cheese and nice coffee here. I am going to miss them for sure.

I appreciate all your kindness and I hope to see you again. Best wishes for your future.



I cannot believe it is already the last days of my amazing two years in Sydney.

First of all, I would like to express my appreciation for everyone I met here in Australia and New Zealand during my secondment at CLAIR Sydney. Thanks to everyone, I had a great time here even though I experienced Sydney's lockdown.



**Taiki Ito**

Assistant Director from Saitama Prefecture

It has been an honour to work with and meet so many brilliant people. I have always been so fascinated with how people are warm-hearted, considerate and friendly everywhere I go in Australia and New Zealand, and that really made it easier to get used to life in Australia and New Zealand.

Saitama Prefecture has not seconded any staff to CLAIR Sydney, so I was the first staff from Saitama Prefecture to be sent to Sydney. My mission was to foster a sister state relationship with Queensland. I would like to continue my mission after I have returned to Japan.

It was my first time living overseas for a long period of time, so I was worried about life in Sydney before I arrived. However, after moving here I find that many people are very open and easy to talk to.

Again, I am deeply appreciative and grateful for all the people whom I met. I hope we will meet again in the future.



# CLAIR Sydney February Activity Report

- [His Majesty the Emperor of Japan's Birthday Reception in Brisbane\(22Feb2023\)](#)
- [His Majesty the Emperor of Japan's Birthday Reception in Sydney\(22Feb2023\)](#)



Reception in Sydney



## From the Executive Director

### **2023 CLAIR Forum and Farewell to our staff**

CLAIR Sydney hosted the 2023 CLAIR Forum on 3 March 2023 with UTS: IPPG (University of Technology Sydney: Institute of Public Policy and Governance). This forum is a one-day seminar held to provide an opportunity for Australian and New Zealand government officials and academics to exchange knowledge and ideas with peers on topics of mutual interest. This year's forum was held in hybrid mode between online and in person for the first time.

This year, we chose the theme of 'Multisectoral Collaboration' by local authorities. In recent years, multisectoral collaboration between local authorities has become more important than ever in response to climate change, pandemics and natural disasters. In both Australia and Japan, local governments are working together across sectors, including the private and education sectors, to create sustainable cities and address population decline. This forum highlighted some of these cross-sectoral collaboration initiatives by local governments in Australia and Japan.

On behalf of all the staff of CLAIR Sydney, I would like to take this opportunity and thank all those who participated. I would also like to especially thank UTS: IPPG for their support and co-hosting the event.

CLAIR Sydney will continue to work closely with organisations and institutions, such as UTS, to provide relevant and informative content relating to local governments in Australia, New Zealand, and Japan.

On another note, our 5 staff members return to Japan at the end of March as it is the end of their term. I believe they had made all efforts to accomplish our mission, even though their activities had been restricted due to Covid-19. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to you all who showed your kindness to them.