



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

Welcome to Iwaki City

Iwaki City is located at the southeastern end of Fukushima Prefecture, and it borders Ibaraki Prefecture to the south and the Pacific Ocean to the east. Iwaki City is a core city with a population of approximately 320,000 and has an area of approximately 1,232 square kilometers, about twice the size of Tokyo's 23 wards. It is easily accessible from Tokyo and takes around 2 hours by car.



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Since warm and cold currents meet off the coast of Iwaki, the climate is comfortable and stable, and there is not much of a difference in temperature between winter and summer. It is known as an

excellent fishing ground for delicious and nutritious fish, and the marine products caught in Iwaki are called "Jobanmono" and highly valued.

The vast city area has an international trading port, Onahama Port, and Iwaki City is rich in tourism resources such as Japan's leading aquarium "Aquamarine Fukushima", hot spring resort "Spa Resort Hawaiians", and national treasure "Shiramizu Amida-do Hall". Among them, Shiramizu Amida-do Hall is designated as the only National Treasure Building in Fukushima Prefecture. Its beautiful roof and garden have a solemn atmosphere and showcases the beauty of each season.



Iwaki City formed a sister city affiliation with Townsville in Queensland, Australia in 1991. Since then, the two cities have continued exchanges in not only sending and receiving official delegations on the anniversary, but also in a wide range of fields, including municipality, culture, and sports.



Firstly, in terms of youth exchanges, mutual exchanges between high school students from both cities have been carried out with the aim of fostering friendly relations and developing young people with an international perspective. However, after 2020 the project has been postponed due to the pandemic.

Secondly, in terms of exchange through sports, since 2012, both cities have sent and hosted top athletes for marathons. Most recently, Iwaki City has just accepted two athletes from Townsville for the Iwaki Sunshine Marathon in February 2023 and also plans to send two athletes to participate in the Townsville Marathon in August 2023.

In 2026, the two cities will celebrate the 35th anniversary of the international sister city relationship. In order to share the joy of welcoming this milestone year, Iwaki City will strive to realise fruitful exchange projects based on the exchanges that have accumulated so far, and further develop their friendship.



News from CLAIR Sydney

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.jlge.org.au/international-exchange-2/sister-school-exchange/australia-%E3%83%BBnew-zealand/>



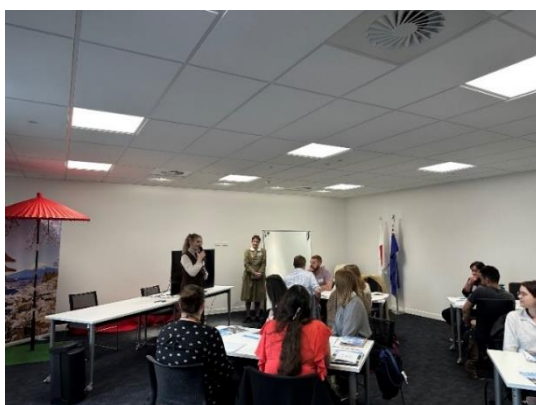
CLAIR Sydney June Activity Report

JET Programme Pre-Departure Orientation (June 2023 Enrollment) in Christchurch, Wellington, Melbourne and Brisbane

We attended the JET Programme Pre-Departure Orientation held by various overseas diplomatic establishments such as Embassies and Consulates in Australia and New Zealand. The Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme is aimed to increase mutual understanding between the people of Japan and other nations and to promote internationalisation in Japan's local communities by improving foreign language education and developing international exchange at the community level. CLAIR works with three ministries, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan and the



Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology.



At each orientation, the representatives from the establishment offered words of congratulations to about 80 new JET participants and wished for their success in Japan. Subsequently, JET program coordinators provided explanations regarding travel to Japan and important precautions. We, the CLAIR office in Sydney explained the role of CLAIR in the JET Programme and the training and support we offer to them.

Furthermore, members of each JETAA chapters provided information and advice on various aspects of life in Japan, including some tips for teaching, effective ways of building relationships with students, workplace culture/environment in Japan, commuting conditions, and financial matters. Many of the new JET participants had prior experience visiting Japan and eagerly anticipated for their travel to Japan after the pandemic, as observed through their active participation in the question-and-answer session.



We hope that all participants not only deepen their understanding of Japan but also contribute to the mutual exchange and act as a bridge between Japan and Australia/New Zealand through their experiences in Japan.

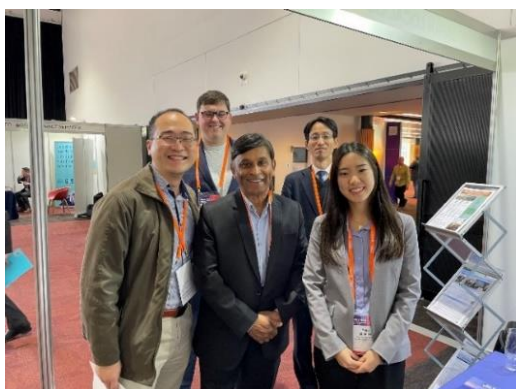
ALGA in Canberra(13-16June2023)



From June 13th to 16th, the Australian Local Government Association's 2023 annual National General Assembly was held in Canberra, with approximately 1,100 attendees, including mayors and councilors from throughout Australia.

At this meeting, local government heads and experts gave presentations and exchanged opinions on urgent issues in local governments in Australia, such as housing issues and workforce shortages.

The CLAIR Sydney set up a booth to promote the Local Government Exchange and Cooperation Seminars and the CLAIR Forums, as well as a large-scale international sports event to be held in Japan. We were able to further strengthen our network in Australia by exchanging opinions with visitors about recent activities and sister city exchanges with local governments in Japan.



Sister City exchange between Lismore City and Yamatotakada City (22-24 June 2023)

From Thursday 22 to Saturday 24 June, delegation from Yamatotakada City, Nara Prefecture, visited Lismore City, New South Wales. These cities were the very first established sister city relationship between Australia and Japan, and the purpose of the visit was to resume face-to-face exchanges that had been suspended due to COVID-19.

During the visit, the delegation visited various places in Lismore City, including Southern Cross University, and shared their visions about exchange matters with the Mayor and executives of the local government of Lismore. On Saturday the 24th, they took part in the

Lismore Lantern Parade, a major event in Lismore, together with Miku-chan, a mascot character of Yamatotakada, and received warm cheers and applause from the many spectators who filled the streets along the route of parade.



The Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Lismore also explained the seriousness of the damage caused by last year's flooding in Lismore and the state of reconstruction, while taking the delegation to the site.

More than a year has passed since the flooding, and although many restaurants, café, and other shops in the city have reopened for business, many houses have not yet been fully restored, and it appears that recovery will take more time.

Considering these events, the resumption of initiatives such as sending off students to each city on a face-to-face basis is a positive development for exchanges between the two cities. CLAIR Sydney will continue to support many sister city exchanges like Yamatotakada City and Lismore City to become active again after the pandemic.



From the Executive Director

Return to Japan for the First Time In One Year - Changes In the Atmosphere of the City

In late June, I temporarily went back to Japan for work for about 10 days for the first time in a year. A year ago in Japan everyone wore masks, however wearing a mask has been based on individual judgement since 13 March 2023. The attitude towards COVID-19 in Japan has changed since 8 May 2023, and the National government no longer requests the uniform basic measures for preventing the spread of COVID-19 and individuals and businesses independently make a decision.

Although the government's policy has changed, I personally thought Japanese people would be cautious, and continue to wear masks in the city. Therefore, I was a little surprised to see that more people than I expected didn't wear masks. I visited several prefectural governments and municipality governments, and many of the staffs I met were not wearing masks.

I was working for the Kagoshima prefectural government during the outbreak of COVID-19, and was involved in the measures of preventions against infections. We requested residents to wear masks, to disinfect their hands thoroughly and to avoid the three C's (closed spaces, crowded places, and close-contact settings) , and asked restaurants to close or shorten their business hours according to the inflection status. Since then we faced challenges about balancing socioeconomic activities and preventive measures against COVID-19.

What I saw in the cities of Japan the other day felt like a different world to me. I believe that the Japanese society finally entered the after COVID-19 phase.

We hope face-to-face interactions between Japan and Australia/New Zealand will become more active in the future.

For further information:

- Official website: <https://www.jlgc.org.au>
- Facebook:  CLAIR Sydney
<https://www.facebook.com/clair.sydney/>

Website



Facebook

