



**Japan Local Government Centre**

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

## Welcome to Yamatotakada City

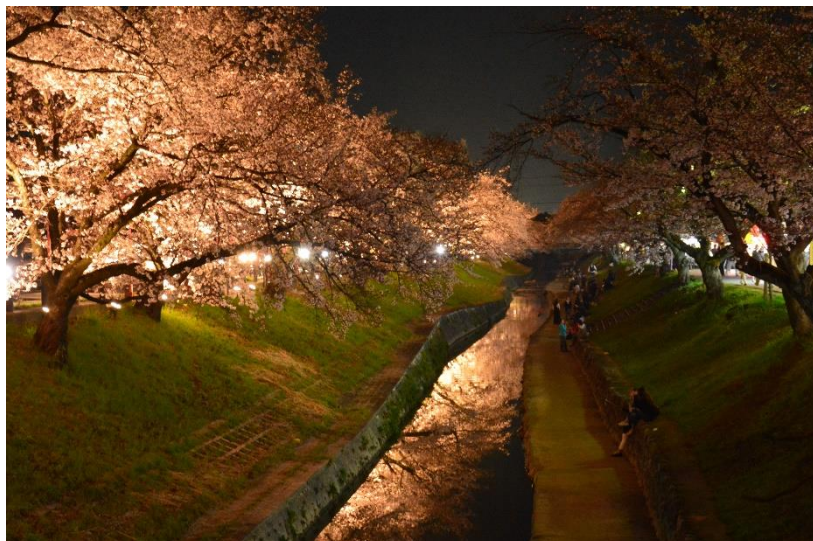
Yamatotakada City is located in the northwestern part of Nara Prefecture. Cotton cultivation flourished in the city in olden times, followed by the emergence of textile industries such as knitwear, sock manufacturing and spinning. It has developed as the economic, cultural, and administrative centre of the Chuwa region of the prefecture. The city is also conveniently located about 30 minutes from the Osaka metropolitan area.



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At the Takada River which runs north-south through the city, magnificent cherry blossoms can be seen from late March to early April. A magnificent tunnel of cherry blossoms stretches 2.5 km along both banks of the river and is affectionately known by the citizens as "Takada Senbonzakura". Many visitors come to see the illuminated cherry blossoms at night, making it one of the most popular cherry blossoms viewing spots in Nara Prefecture.



Yamatotakada City formed a sister city affiliation with Lismore City, New South Wales, Australia, in 1963. This was the first sister city affiliation between Japan and Australia. Since then, the two cities have deepened exchanges and established a friendly relationship through mutual exchange programs such as sending delegations and exchange students.

However, these projects had to be called off for three years due to COVID-19 that began to spread in 2020 and the devastating floods that hit Lismore City in 2022.

In June 2023, Yamatotakada City dispatched two of its officials to Lismore City in order to resume exchanges and establish a framework for the 60th anniversary of the sister city affiliation, which will be celebrated on 7 August 2023. They were enthusiastically welcomed by Lismore City Council members there and each confirmed the continuation of a long-lasting friendly relationship between the two cities. The Yamatotakada City officials were heartbroken by the devastating damage caused by the flooding. At the same time, seeing the reconstruction of the city centre, they felt deep respect for the spirit of Lismore people and felt proud to be friends of the friendly city.



The officials also participated in the Lantern Parade, one of Lismore City's most popular events. They carried a lantern of Yamatotakada City's mascot character "Miku-chan" with Lismore City Council members and the Consul-General of Japan in Sydney, Mr. Tokuda. Yamatotakada City officials were overwhelmed by the glittering lanterns and the large crowd that gathered along the parade route, and were especially moved by the warm cheering and applause from the crowd.

During this visit, Yamatotakada City officials were warmly welcomed and able to deepen exchanges with many people such as Lismore City Council members, volunteer members and their respective families, and people from the Father Tony Glynn, Japan-Australia Centre at Southern Cross University. In addition, being able to participate in the parade, which has been cherished by the local people for many years, allowed them to experience firsthand the friendly relationship with the people of Lismore.

In 2024, a delegation from Lismore is scheduled to visit Yamatotakada City to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the sister city affiliation.

Both cities are very pleased to celebrate this milestone.

Yamatotakada City hopes to continue its exchange with Lismore City and further develop the friendly relationship.



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

# CLAIR Sydney July Activity Report

## Australia's Biggest Manga & Anime Event SMASH! (1-2 Jul 2023)

On July 1st and 2nd, the two-day event "SMASH!" took place in Sydney. It is the largest manga and anime event in Australia and was bustling with a large number of visitors each day with many cosplayers who attended.

The venue featured booths where companies sold manga and anime-related merchandise, as well as artists offering their works for sale. There was also a dedicated area for cosplay photography, and popular anime voice actors from Japan made appearances on stage. This year's event was a great success.

CLAIR Sydney participated in the event with its own booth, promoting tourism destinations in Japan that are associated with manga and anime, as well as cosplay events. Among the visitors to our booth, there were individuals considering their travel itineraries to Japan based on locations that have served as settings for anime (anime pilgrimage). It indicated the increasing presence of Japanese pop culture in Australia.

We will continue our efforts to promote various regions of Japan, featuring pop culture, so that many people can visit and explore different parts of the country. We would like to express our gratitude to everyone who visited our booth.



## JET Programme Pre-Departure Orientation in Sydney and Perth (July 2023 Enrollment)

We attended the Pre-Departure Orientations for 36 new JET participants, held by the Consulate General of Japan in Sydney and Perth.

At each orientation, the representatives from the establishment extended congratulations to the new JET participants and conveyed their best wishes for their success in Japan. JET Programme coordinators also provided explanations regarding travel to Japan and important precautions. The CLAIR Sydney staff members explained the role of CLAIR in the JET Programme and the training and support we offer to them.

Members of each JETAA chapters offered valuable information and advice on various aspects of life in Japan, including some tips for maintaining good health and well-being, managing financial matters, learning Japanese, and preparing for potential emergencies. Moreover, they introduced the array of activities that JETAA engages in and fostered connections with them to establish strong relationships.

We were genuinely impressed by the enthusiasm and excitement showed by the participants as they prepared for their upcoming journeys, demonstrated through their active participation and numerous inquiries.

For more information about the JET Programme, please click [here](#).



## JET Programme Farewell Reception in Canberra, Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane (July 2023 Enrollment)

CLAIR Sydney attended the Farewell Reception for about 70 new JET participants, held by various overseas diplomatic establishments such as the Embassy in Canberra, and Consulates in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane.

At the reception, each representative of the overseas diplomatic establishments, other related organisations, and our staff members offered words of encouragements to the participants. We expressed our wishes for their success in Japan, highlighting the pivotal role that JET Programme participants play in nurturing positive relations between Japan and Australia. Additionally, the members of each JETAA chapter encouraged them to act as bridges between the two countries not only during the programme but also after its completion by actively participating in JETAA.

The JET participants shared their reasons for joining the programme, citing motivations such as "I wanted to experience new things in my life" and "I was interested in working in Japan for a long time." They have already departed from Australia and started their new lives in Japan. While they may initially find the new environment and hot weather uncomfortable, we sincerely hope that they will encounter incredible experiences and make the most of their time in Japan through this programme.

For more information about the JET Programme, please click [here](#).



## Understanding local government trends and strengthening networks at the New Zealand Local Government (LGNZ) 2023 Conference (26-28 Jul 2023)

LGNZ 2023 Conference was held in Christchurch from 26 to 28 July. The number of participants was the largest ever, with more than 750 people from all over New Zealand, including heads of local governments, councillors, and speakers. The conference featured a wide range of works undertaken by local governments in New Zealand and functioned as a place for sharing current issues such as responses to disasters associated with climate change and soaring housing prices.

The CLAIR Sydney staff attended sessions at the conference and grasped the trend of local government in NZ. In addition, CLAIR Sydney set up a booth to promote the Local Government Exchange & Cooperation Seminar and the forum that CLAIR Sydney will host around at the end of this Japanese fiscal year. At the booth, we were able to further strengthen our network with local government officials by exchanging opinions with visitors about recent activities and sister city exchanges with local governments in Japan.



## Supporting Activity for high school students from Nagoya City (24 Jul - 2 Aug 2023)

From July 24 to August 2, a student exchange delegation consisting of 19 students from eight Nagoya municipal senior high schools and two teaching staff visited Australia. The delegation spent the majority of their time in Sydney, which is Nagoya's sister city.

The delegation visited Australia for the purpose of strengthening the sister city ties between Nagoya and Sydney, and participating in school exchange with schools in Australia. The students from Nagoya visited high schools in Sydney to participate in exchange activities and classes, and also experienced home stay. They also attended a courtesy call at Sydney Town Hall and visited Taronga Zoo, which is Nagoya's Higashiyama Zoo's sister zoo.



CLAIR Sydney staff set up appointment and provided support at the courtesy call at Sydney Town Hall, the students' visits to local high schools, and the tour of Taronga Zoo.

CLAIR Sydney will continue to support Japanese local governments in sister city exchange activities in Australia.



### **Koshigaya Inbound Delegation Welcome Reception (31 Jul 2023)**

On 31 July, The Koshigaya Inbound Delegation Welcome Reception was held by the Mayor of Campbelltown City to commemorate the visit of 15 high school students from Koshigaya City.

Campbelltown City and Koshigaya City signed a Sister City agreement in April 1984, and have continued the exchange program over the years. They have been developing their relationship during the pandemic through online exchanges, and finally the students could visit Campbelltown. It has been four years since the students visited Campbelltown.

At the welcome reception, the students were warmly welcomed by the participants from Campbelltown City, and they performed Sōran Bushi and sang a song in English.

In September, the students from Campbelltown will be also visiting Koshigaya. CLAIR Sydney looks forward to seeing the continued sister city exchange activities between Campbelltown City and Koshigaya City.





# From the Executive Director

## Face to Face School Cultural Exchange

As I reported before, since April this year, many prefectures and municipalities have planned activities in Australia/New Zealand because the attitude toward COVID-19 in Japan has changed and the travel restriction to Japan has lifted. One of the activities is the school cultural exchange, in which Japanese students visit Australia/New Zealand.


I attended the civic reception to welcome a student delegation from Campbelltown's sister city, Koshigaya, Japan last month. This year, both local governments carry out mutual student visits for the first time in four years. I fully felt the warm welcome of the delegation by the Mayor of Campbelltown and the people of Campbelltown. I would like to take the opportunity and thank them all.

In the school cultural exchange, students will visit local schools, experience homestay and so on. I think they feel differences in various aspects such as culture, customs, way of thinking and values between Australia/New Zealand and Japan. There are things we realise for the first time when we visit a new place. I believe that these experiences will be very valuable for their future.

School cultural exchange is conducted between sister cities, sister schools, and other schools that have an international cultural exchange program. We have a dedicated website with a list of schools in Australia/New Zealand and Japan that have expressed interest in establishing cultural exchange programs. Even this year, we have added new schools in the list. If your school is interested in school cultural exchange with Japan, please take a look at [this website](#). If you would like to know more about a school on the list, please get in touch with the school directly. Also, if you would like to have your school listed here, please get in touch with us by filling out the [application form](#).

We will continue to assist any municipalities or schools interested in establishing a School Cultural Exchange.

For further information:

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

Website



Facebook

