

NEWSLETTER

Special Issue August 2023



Japan Local Government Centre

Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR Sydney)

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Carol Cheng

**Former Senior Research and Liaison Officer
at CLAIR Sydney**

A JET PROGRAMME *Experience and Beyond* By Carol Cheng

As readers of this newsletter may know, up until earlier in the year, I was the Senior Research and Liaison Officer at CLAIR Sydney. Over the past few months I have been reflecting on my connections with Japan—from when I first started learning the language in high school, to my experiences on the JET Programme and subsequently at CLAIR Sydney, and how all these experiences led me to where I am now. Whenever I think about my experiences, I have nothing but a strong feeling of *kansha*, deep

appreciation and gratitude, towards the JET Programme as it has had a significant role in moulding my personal and professional life into what it is now.

I always take pride in the fact that the beginning of my JET experience was a typical. Whereas the standard JET calendar starts in July/August, I started my time on the Programme in January. This was because I was an alternate participant on a waiting list and was told that I may be upgraded, but this is not guaranteed. Half a year after receiving the notification about my alternate participant status and A DAY AFTER I quit the part-time job I had in anticipation of an

upcoming overseas trip, I finally received a call from the Consulate-General of Japan in Sydney to inform me of my upgrade. It was almost like I was destined to go to Japan on the JET Programme; though much delayed, everything seemed to have fallen into place perfectly.

I have to admit, the first few months of my time in Japan were tough. Due to the timing of my arrival, I did not get an Orientation and had to dive straight into work. While trying to familiarise myself with my new environment, two months after my arrival, the Great East Japan Earthquake occurred. It was an extremely difficult and stressful period of my life as my friends and family back in Sydney continuously urged me to return home. Despite that, I persevered.



In the three-and-a-half years I was working at my contracting organisation, the City of Hamamatsu, as a Coordinator for International Affairs (CIR), I was very fortunate to have many incredible experiences. It is not often that one gets

to accompany the Mayor of their city on overseas business trips, rub shoulders with leaders from the Asia Pacific region, have a regular segment on the local radio and see signs and billboards with information that they assist with putting together.



I also had so many personal gains from the Programme. The memories of travelling around different regions of Japan. The large number of international friendships that I made. The personal growth from living and working abroad. The cultural knowledge and language skills I picked up over the years. The list is endless.

As with everything in life, all good things must come to an end. After three-and-a-half-years, although it was a difficult decision to make, I felt that I was ready for a new challenge and it was time for me to return home. For the first three years after returning home, I worked at a travel tech company and was hired because of the language skills and cross-cultural experiences I have. After this, an opportunity opened up and I returned to working in a role that I was passionate about - being a bridge between Australia and Japan.

A JET PROGRAMME *Experience and Beyond* **By Carol Cheng**

Between 2018 and early this year, as mentioned in the beginning, I worked as a Research and Liaison Officer at CLAIR Sydney. In this role, I put my experience as a CIR to full use and was involved with organising visits of Japanese government delegates, planning and implementing programs for visiting Japanese public servants and researching Australian policies and strategies to enhance Japanese local governments' policymaking.

There was even a moment when my life came full circle. The Mayor of Hamamatsu visited Australia to promote the city and specifically requested my assistance during his time in Australia. It was Deja Vu that I was working alongside former colleagues in Hamamatsu, except I was the local and they were the visiting guests.



The months after the end of my contract with CLAIR Sydney in February were somewhat of a whirlwind. At the beginning of April, I accepted an international-facing role at the University of Melbourne and relocated interstate. Just when I thought I would never be involved with Japan in a work capacity after my time at CLAIR Sydney, on the first day of my new job, I was asked to plan for and accompany a small delegation from the University on an outbound visit to Japan.



With the delegation, I visited eight distinguished Japanese universities and also attended events at the Australian Embassy in Tokyo. A highlight from this visit was the lunch held at the Embassy for the senior leaders of the University of Melbourne, the Australian Embassy and various research institutes in Japan. During a discussion about the JET Programme at this lunch, I was given as an example of the cross-cultural experts that the Programme has cultivated and it was a very pleasing moment for me.

Although it has been almost a decade since I returned to Australia from the JET Programme, to this day, I am still benefitting directly from the Programme. It is certain that my experiences on the JET Programme and at CLAIR Sydney contributed significantly to my professional development and led me to my current role. On a personal level, in my new social circle, there are friendships that I have formed with former JET participants whom I instantly connected with due to our shared experiences on the Programme.

It is now August, which means a cohort of new JET Programme participants has arrived recently in Japan to begin their adventures. I am in no doubt that they will have a fantastic time in Japan and I hope at the end of their time in Japan—however long it may be—they will also share my same sense of gratitude towards the Programme.

A JET PROGRAMME
Experience and Beyond By Carol Cheng

News from CLAIR Sydney

Submission
Deadline
31AUG2023

12th Annual Manga Kingdom Tottori International Comic Art Contest

The 12th Annual Manga Kingdom Tottori International Comic Art Contest is organised by the Tottori Prefectural Government. The competition accepts submissions from everyone around the world, in any language.

The grand prize for this year's winning submission is 500,000 yen. The theme for this year's competition is 'Family' and submissions are accepted under the following three categories:

- 1 frame manga
- 4 frame manga
- 4 to 24 page manga story

Eligibility

There are no specific eligibility requirements, and submissions from artists of all ages and nationalities will be accepted.

Timeline

- Submission Deadline: 11:59pm Thursday, 31 August 2023(JST)
- Announcement of Winning Works: Around December 2023
- Award Ceremony: Around February 2024 (All winners will be invited to the ceremony in Tottori Prefecture)

For more information, please click on the link below.

https://www.pref.tottori.lg.jp/mangacontest_12/eng/

12th Annual Manga Kingdom Tottori International Comic Art contest

Theme
Family

Submission Period Submissions must be received before
April 20th 2023 and August 31st 2023
(no later than this date.)

Entry Category

- 1 frame manga (1 page)
- 4 frame manga (1-8 pages)
- 4 to 24 page manga story

Grand Prize
500,000 yen 1 work

Merit Award
100,000 yen 2 works

Selection Committee Award
50,000 yen 3 works

9-15 Youth Manga Artist Prize
10,000 yen 3 works

[Sponsor / Contact]
Tottori Prefectural Government TEL: 0857-26-7801 FAX: 0857-26-8307
Manga Kingdom Secretariat E-mail: mangakoku@pref.tottori.lg.jp

Visit our website for more information.
Manga Kingdom Tottori Search
<https://www.pref.tottori.lg.jp/mangacontest/>

26
AUG
2023

2023 Yamagata Study Abroad Online Fair

If you are considering going to a Japanese university or vocational school, why not study abroad in Yamagata, located in the northern part of Japan?

Listen to the experience of studying in Yamagata from current study abroad students!

Ask questions directly to prefecture university and vocational school representatives!

Learn about unique Yamagata prefecture scholarships!

If you are interested in studying abroad in rural Japan, sign up today! (First 500 applicants free)

Date/Time: Saturday, August 26 12:30-17:00 (Japan Time)

Language: Japanese

Format: Zoom webinar

Program

12:30-13:00 The Highlights of Yamagata (With current study abroad students)

13:00-13:50 Yamagata University (Public university)

14:00-14:50 Tohoku Bunkyo College (Private university)

15:00-15:50 Tohoku University of Community Services and Science (Private university)

16:00-16:50 Professional Training College YAMAGATA V. COLLEGE (Vocational school)

How to join

Fill out the information in the registration form through the link below. The Zoom details will be sent to the registered email address.

<https://tinyurl.com/yc3sy99b>

(Link to Yamagata Study Abroad Portal Site)

Study Abroad in Yamagata
~日本の地方「山形」で留学しませんか?~
やまがた留学
オンラインフェア2023
日時 8月26日(土)
12:30-17:00 日本時間
言語 日本語 形式 Zoomウェビナー(参加費無料)
山形県
Yamagata Prefectural Government

News from CLAIR Sydney