

NEWSLETTER

Issue 171 – September 2023



Japan Local Government Centre

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

Welcome to Kagoshima City

Kagoshima City which has long prospered as a centre of exchange with Asia and other countries is located in the south of Japan with a population of about approximately 600,000.

Kagoshima City has the infrastructure to support domestic and international exchange, including Kagoshima Chuo Station where is the southern terminus of the Shinkansen bullet train line that connects the



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Japanese archipelago, a port where large cruise ships can dock, and Kagoshima Airport with international flights.

As the capital of Kagoshima Prefecture, Kagoshima City has a concentration of higher urban functions such as administration, education, and culture. In addition, the city is rich in nature as symbolised by the majestic active volcano Sakurajima spreading out in front of the city area and the calm Kinko Bay.

Kagoshima City formed a sister city affiliation with Perth City, Western Australia in April 1974, and has deepened exchanges through activities such as mutual dispatches of student delegations.

There is a train car designed with the image of Perth City in Kagoshima City Tram which is one of the important transportation modes for its citizens.

Kagoshima City has sent more than 200 students to Perth City under the 'Youth Wings Program'. During COVID-19, online exchange has been conducted, and from 24 July to 3 August this year, 10 high school students were sent to Perth City for the first time in four years for a school exchange and homestay program.

Though there was some apprehension about the first face-to-face exchange after a long time, thanks to the support of Perth City and many others involved, the students were warmly welcomed by the local people and were able to make invaluable memories through their various experiences.

In 2024, the two cities will celebrate the 50th anniversary of their sister city relationship. We hope that the friendship between the two cities will deepen further on this occasion.



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



CLAIR Sydney August Activity Report

Support Activities for Fukuoka Prefecture (4-10 Aug 2023)

From 4 to 10 August, Fukuoka Prefectural Government including the Governor of the Fukuoka Prefecture and the Chairman of Fukuoka Prefectural Assembly visited New South Wales.

The delegation paid a courtesy visit to the NSW Governor, Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC and the President of NSW Legislative Council, The Hon. Benjamin Cameron Franklin MLC, and exchanged opinions on cooperation in hydrogen energy.

They also held discussions with the state government on promoting cooperation in the hydrogen field, met to exchange opinions with Sydney Fukuoka Kenjinkai members, visited the Newcastle Port, met with the NSW Rugby Union, held the tourism seminar, and met with Qantas and Jetstar.

CLAIR Sydney provided support such as pre-arrangements and accompanied the visit. We will continue to support the cooperation between Fukuoka and NSW so that it will progress further in the future.



JET Pre-Departure Orientation and Farewell Reception in Auckland (5 Aug 2023)

On 5 August 2023 we attended a Pre-Departure Orientation and Farewell Reception to farewell 28 participants of the JET Programme (The Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme) organised by the Consulate General of Japan in Auckland.

At the orientation, the staff from the Consulate General of Japan in Auckland told them that they should be responsible for participating in this programme as if they are ambassadors of New Zealand and encouraged their engagement during their time in Japan. The JET program coordinators provided explanations regarding travel to Japan and important precautions. The CLAIR Sydney office explained the role of CLAIR in the JET Programme and the training and support we offer to them. Furthermore, members of JETAA Auckland provided valuable information and advice on maintaining mental well-being, effective English teaching methods, and successfully working as ALTs, as well as building relationships within the diverse communities they might engage within Japan.

At the reception, Consul-General Matsui, a representative of JETAA Auckland, and ourselves offered some words of encouragements to the participants. We expressed our hopes for their future endeavours, underscoring the crucial role JET programme participants play in fostering positive relations between Japan and New Zealand. Although they seemed to be nervous about their imminent departure for Japan the following day, they also shared their excitement about the upcoming experiences of living in Japan.

We eagerly anticipate the participants experiencing a multitude of enriching moments in each location and fully embracing their time in Japan. Additionally, we look forward to them acting as bridges between Japan and New Zealand, utilizing their experiences to strengthen the bond between the two countries.

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



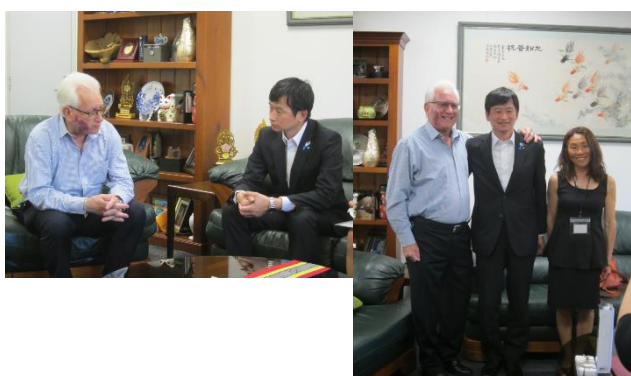
Support Activities for Joetsu City in Niigata Prefecture (8 Aug 2023)

On Tuesday 8 August CLAIR Sydney provided assistance for the visit of the Mayor of Joetsu City, Niigata Prefecture, and three accompanying members to meet with the Lord Mayor of Darwin.

Discussions were held to establish a friendly relationship between the two cities, which already have strong connections, particularly in light of the "Ichthys LNG Project" by INPEX Corporation in Darwin, where liquefied natural gas extracted in Darwin is transported to the Port of Naoetsu in Joetsu City.

In addition to accompanying them for support, CLAIR Sydney conducted an online briefing on Australia and an overview of Darwin for the visiting delegation before their trip to Australia.

CLAIR Sydney will continue to support the activities of Japanese local government engaged in exchanges with Australia.



Australia-Japan Local Government Collaboration: Enriching communities through international engagement (18 Aug 2023)

On Friday, 18 August, the Australia-Japan Local Government Collaboration: enriching communities through international engagement was held in Melbourne. At the event, the results of a study on Australia-Japan sister city exchanges were reported and opinions were exchanged.

The study was supported by the Australia-Japan Foundation and conducted between 2021 and 2023 by a team at RMIT and Japanese university professors. It involved questionnaires and interviews with a number of Japanese and Australian local authorities and analysed the results. The main findings of the study revealed that:

- (1) Mutual understanding is a strong basis for maintaining a lasting relationship of trust in the Australia-Japan sister city relationship.
- (2) There are various forms of exchange, from traditional educational and cultural exchanges to new ones such as those related to environmental protection and the sharing of professional knowledge and skills.
- (3) While many local authorities select sister cities based on their similarities, dissimilar attributes that provide unique experiences and learning opportunities are also valuable.



(4) Japanese interest in Australia lies in Western culture, English-speaking environment, multiculturalism, safety and beautiful scenery. While Australian interest in Japan lies in Eastern culture, history, traditions and food. These are just a selection of the findings of the study, and many more interesting topics have been compiled in the report, which can be accessed and read at the link below.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/373041344_Australia-Japan_Local_Government_Collaboration_Enriching_Communities_through_International_Engagement

Following the report launch, the round table discussion was held. Some of topics discussed were:

- (1) The issue of funding is very important for activities related to sister cities.
- (2) Securing the necessary personnel is one of the key factors for the continuation of exchange.
- (3) The economic benefits.

Attendees from the voluntary organisation, the business community, state or local government and various other sectors expressed their views and shared their opinions.

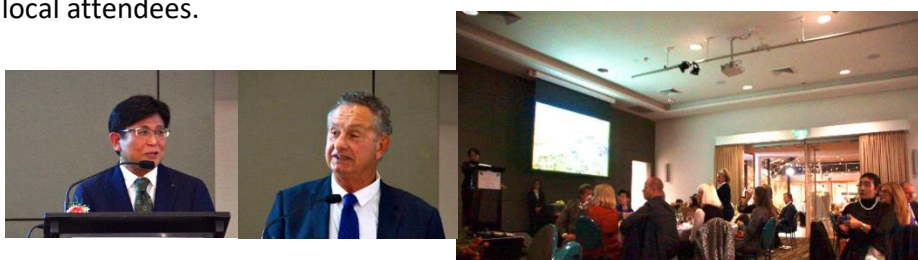
Sister city exchanges are not an initiative that could be promoted by local government alone, but could be enhanced by the involvement of various sectors, including individuals, schools and businesses. It was a good opportunity for us to re-acknowledge the importance of maintaining connections so that these diverse sectors could work together closely.

CLAIR Sydney will continue to strive for meaningful and active sister city exchanges between Australian and Japanese local authorities.

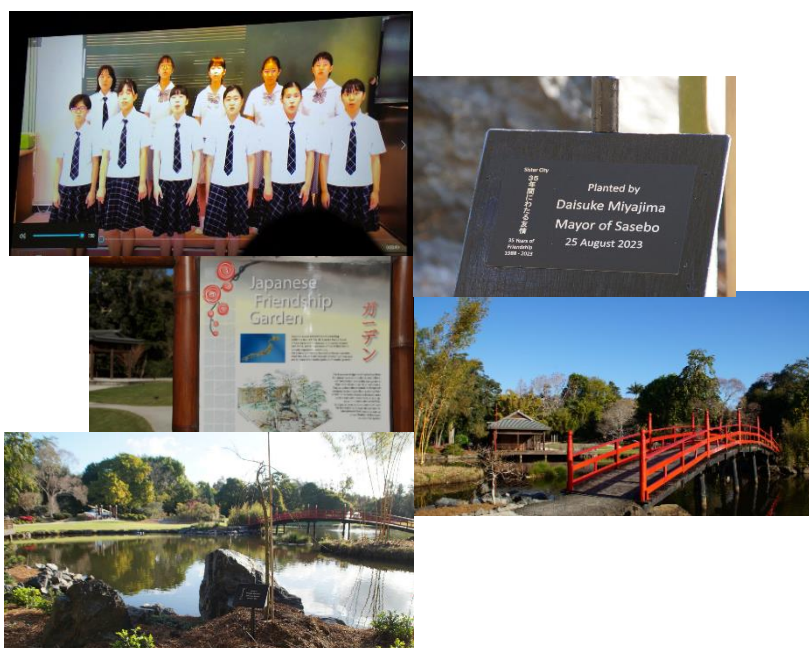
35th Anniversary Events of the Sister City Affiliation between Sasebo City and City of Coffs Harbour (25 Aug 2023)

To commemorate the 35th anniversary of the sister city relationship established in August 1988 between Sasebo City in Nagasaki Prefecture and Coffs Harbour in New South Wales, Official Welcome and Tree Planting Ceremony, and the Civic Dinner were held in Coffs Harbour on 25 August. A delegation of 31 individuals from Sasebo City, including Mayor Daisuke Miyajima, city officials, city council members, and members of The Japan-Australia Society of Sasebo, visited Coffs Harbour for this occasion.

The sister city partnership between these two cities had its origins in the involvement of Sisters from Australia in the establishment of Seiwa Joshi Gakuin, the private school in Sasebo City. This led to the beginning of exchanges between the school and Australia. While the members of the chorus club from the school, who participated in the previous 30th anniversary commemorative event, could not be part of this anniversary events, a recorded video of their choir performance was presented during the dinner, which was highly appreciated by the local attendees.



CLAIR Sydney participated in these commemorative events in Coffs Harbour, providing an opportunity to reaffirm the strong friendship between the two cities. It is expected that this friendship will continue to thrive through future student and citizen exchanges.



Support Activities for Fukuoka Prefecture (28 Aug 2023)

On 28 August, 6 university students from Fukuoka Prefecture visited CLAIR. They are participants in the globally-minded leader **すす** Fukuoka Prefecture with the cooperation of the Sydney Fukuoka Kenjinkai, which is active in various business fields. They spent a week visiting business sites in Sydney. It was a very meaningful training session where they learned many valuable things from seniors who are active overseas and learned many things to think about their future career.

CLAIR Sydney provided support such as pre-arrangement and accompanied the visit. We will continue to support the activities of Japanese local governments that are working to develop international human resources.



From the Executive Director

The initiative of city development based on sister city exchanges

As I reported before, exchanges between local governments in Japan and Australia/New Zealand have been more active. Some local governments might be wondering about how to proceed their new exchanges, so I will introduce an exchange case for reference.


Since 2006, CLAIR has been implementing a project alongside the Japanese Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC). It aims to award Japanese local governments that are engaged in exemplary international exchange efforts that lead to further exchange of ideas between local governments and improved international exchange.

In 2023, three Japanese local governments won the Ministers Award. One of them was Osaka City which has a sister city relationship with City of Melbourne. Focusing on the main street as a hub for regional exchange, Osaka City has sister street agreements with City of Melbourne and City of Chicago, which are sister cities for the purpose of personal and technology exchange. Osaka City has developed initiatives in collaboration with citizens and private sectors. For example, private sectors redeveloped the town garden based on the knowledge of sister street agreement partner cities, and Osaka City promoted the international streets at the event on Midosuji, which was attended by many people.

Osaka City's efforts focused on 'main streets' which are found in any city or town, and while interacting with both cities, conducted a thematic exchange project that focus on the street as a place and space where people interact. This includes the fact that meaningful cooperation is being achieved in urban planning, and that international exchange is linked to urban development philosophy and measures, such as a "people-centred story," complete sidewalk construction, and spatial reorganisation. These aspects were highly praised.

I hope that this project by Osaka City will be of help for local governments in Australia and New Zealand.

For further information:

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

Website



Facebook

