



Kamiyubetsu Tulip Park in Yubetsu Town

**DISCOVER
JAPAN**

Welcome to **Yubetsu Town**

Yubetsu Town is located in the northeastern part of Hokkaido, approximately in the centre of the Okhotsk Coast, and faces Lake Saroma, one of the three largest lakes in Japan and the largest lake in Hokkaido.

The town is blessed with a rich natural environment, and its core industries are agriculture, mainly dairy farming and field crop, fisheries, centered on coastal fisheries and aquaculture fisheries, and forestry utilising its abundant forest resources.

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Welcome to Yubetsu Town

The Kamiyubetsu Tulip Park is a popular tourist attraction in Yubetsu Town. It is coloured with approximately 700,000 tulips of around 200 varieties each year from early May to early June. Many visitors from both Japan and overseas come to enjoy the vibrant display during this one-month period.

Yubetsu Town has established sister city relationships with two towns, Whitecourt in Canada and Selwyn in New Zealand. They have actively promoted friendly relations by organising exchange programs for junior and senior high school students, as well as for adults.



A sister city affiliation with Selwyn was officially formed in 2000, and celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2020. Due to the pandemic, they were unable to visit each other, but in 2023, an official delegation including the Mayor of Yubetsu Town visited Selwyn to commemorate the longstanding exchange and friendship.

For the first time in four years, a delegation of junior and senior high school students and the general public was also able to visit Darfield High School in Selwyn, and student exchange resumed after a long pause.

Welcome to Yubetsu Town



The students underwent two months of pre-departure training starting in September, practicing English conversation and learning about New Zealand life and culture in preparation for the exchange. The students initially looked anxious at first, however by the end they had become more proactive, challenging themselves in all activities and filled with excitement as they visited New Zealand and experienced life with host families.

At Darfield High School, the students participated in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes, joined classes with homestay children and school-assigned buddies, and learned about Maori culture. In Japanese language classes, they interacted with the students by playing origami and karuta. On the day tour, they enjoyed exploring Castle Hill, experiencing sheep shearing on a farm, and riding a jet boat on the Waimakariri River. They were able to enjoy New Zealand's nature to the fullest.

On weekends, the students enjoyed spending time with their host families by going shopping, visiting beaches, and assisting with cooking.

Although the students were confused at first due to a lack of understanding of English, within 2-3 days, they found themselves able to comprehend the language. They unanimously expressed that they had a fun and fulfilling learning experience.

Yubetsu Town hopes that the exchange with Selwyn will continue to deepen, and that their friendship will continue for many years to come.

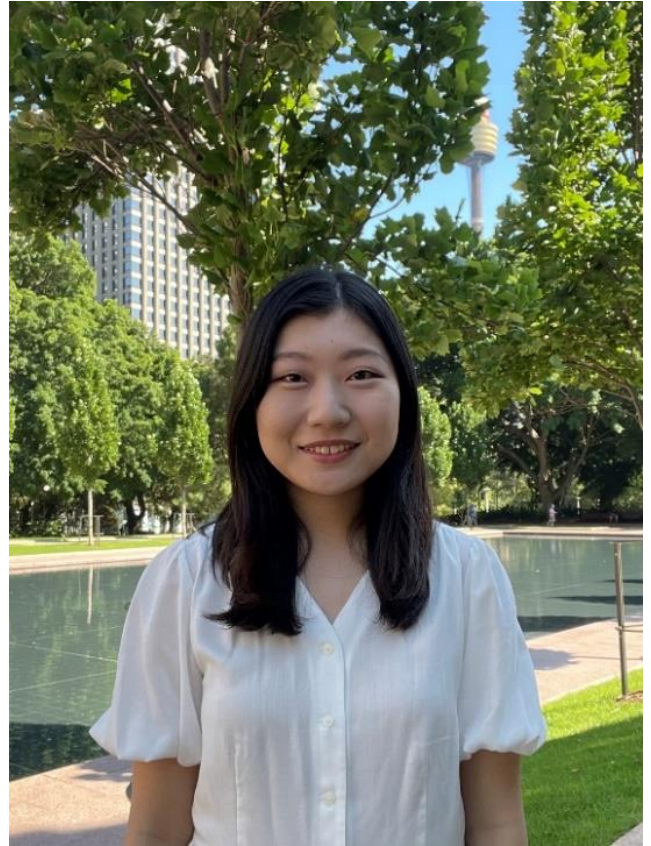
Farewell Message from Yuna

It has been one year since I started working at CLAIR, and throughout my journey I was able to gain many skills and deep knowledge about Australia and Japan. Unfortunately I will be saying good bye and starting my new journey from next year.

As the Research and Liaison Officer I was able to research and learn about Australian and Japanese government systems, policies, and deepen my knowledge about the two cultures. One of my career goals was to use my language skills and cultural background to help bridge the two cultures together, and I think I was able to achieve just that through working at CLAIR. I was also able to participate and help organise many events. The most memorable was the Multicultural Study Tour that was held in Sydney late November.

It was a very valuable experience to visit various organisations and hear about their multicultural policies and services. It made me aware of the various policies in place to support the diverse population of Australia and how Australia is proud to be an inclusive society.

I would like to thank all the people I have met through working at CLAIR and the support you have provided us. It is sad to say good bye but I am looking forward to my next challenge and journey. Again, thank you for all your warm support and assistance.



Yuna Saito

Research and Liaison Officer

Welcome Message from Emily



Emily Yamanishi
New Research and Liaison Officer

My name is Emily, and I am thrilled to introduce myself as the new Research and Liaison Officer at CLAIR Sydney. Born in Sydney, Australia, and raised in Tokyo, Japan, I have had the privilege of experiencing the best of both worlds. I spent nine years at an international school in Tokyo, surrounded by an incredible mix of friends and teachers from all corners of the globe.

In my high school yearbook, I expressed an ambition: to pursue a career contributing to Japan's relationships with other countries. Joining CLAIR feels like the perfect way to achieve that goal.

In my spare time, I enjoy going for walks, trying new restaurants, reading books, visiting art galleries, and hitting the gym. I believe in creating a collaborative and positive work environment, and I feel honoured to be a part of CLAIR Sydney.



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!



[Schools interested in exchange opportunities - CLAIR Sydney \(jlga.org.au\)](https://www.jlga.org.au)



CLAIR Sydney November Activity Report

Canberra Nara Candle Festival (4 Nov 2023)

On Saturday, 4 November, the Canberra Nara Candle Festival was held at Canberra Nara Peace Park to celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the sister city relationship between Canberra and Nara City.

At the venue, many event attendees enjoyed the Japanese music performances on the stage, the various Japanese foods sold at the different stalls and the origami and kendama experiences at the booth of the Embassy of Japan in Australia. After sunset, thousands of candles were lit up and in addition to the colorful illuminations, the venue was surrounded by a magical atmosphere.

CLAIR Sydney was lent a portion of the booth of the Embassy of Japan in Australia and promoted Nara City and other Japan's regional destinations. Many event attendees visited our booth and enjoyed collecting Japan travel information. We also participated in the ceremony which was held by the Embassy of Japan in Australia and celebrated 30 years of Canberra and Nara sister-city relations.



We will continue to promote cultural exchange between Australia and Japan and increase Australians' interest in Japan by supporting sister city relationships.

* We provided support activities for Nara City such as helping to find an interpreter and the promotion of Nara at the festival.



Support Activities for Oshu City in Iwate Prefecture (6 Nov 2023)

On 6 November, Mayor Jun Kuranari and City Council Chairman Yoshikazu Sugawara of Oshu City in Iwate Prefecture visited the CLAIR Sydney office.



They visited Australia this time not only for an official visit to their sister city, Greater Shepparton City in the state of Victoria, but also to conduct market research on agricultural products in Australia and visit import and wholesale companies to explore sales opportunities for Oshu City's specialty products. CLAIR Sydney provided them with a briefing and Q&A session on the administration, political and economic overview of Australia.

They were particularly enthusiastic about the explanation of differences between Japan and Australia, such as the voices coming from Australian local governments seeking economic benefits from their sister cities. On this occasion of the sister city visit by Oshu City members, we discussed together how to resume exchanges with a school located in Greater Shepparton City.

CLAIR Sydney will continue to support the overseas activities of Japanese local governments engaged in sister city exchanges and market expansion.

New South Wales Local Government Association (LGNSW) 2023 Annual Meeting (12-14 Nov 2023)

The LGNSW 2023 Annual Meeting was held in Parramatta from the 12 to 14 November. Around 800 people participated, including local government leaders and councillors in NSW. A panel discussion was held by the NSW Minister for Housing and experts on the pressing issues of rising housing prices and road maintenance.



The CLAIR Sydney office held a booth to introduce the activities of local governments in Japan as well as our initiatives and exchanged opinions on the most recent activities of local governments. Some of the mayors and councillors were already involved with CLAIR Sydney as a result of our support for sister-city exchanges with local governments, and it was an opportunity for us to mutually confirm our continued collaboration.



Regional Goods Exportation Online Seminar (16 Nov 2023)



On 16 November, CLAIR Sydney hosted a webinar with the goal of encouraging local government representatives in Japan to export regional goods to Australia. Mr. Kojima, from JETRO Sydney, talked about the latest trends in the Australian market, the great relationship between Japan and Australia, differences in exporting food and household items, success stories, and JETRO's support services.



Participants expressed opinions such as, "It was very helpful to easily understand Australia's economic trends and market scale." In response to the requests from participants, CLAIR Sydney will host a second session in the export of agricultural products and food in January next year.

JAPAN EXPO2023 (18 Nov 2023)

On Saturday, 18 November, JAPAN EXPO 2023 was held at Sydney Town Hall. The JAPAN EXPO is an event showcasing Japan's diverse attractions such as tourism, local products, arts, and culture. This year marked its third iteration. There were a total of 40 booths featuring the sale of Japanese sake, bento boxes, and promotional products for travel to Japan.

On stage, there were 11 performances, including karate and dance. The event saw an overwhelming response with over 8,000 visitors, prompting attendance restrictions due to the massive turnout.

CLAIR Sydney promoted various regions of Japan at the booth. Numerous visitors planning trips to Japan approached us, seeking specific information about attractions in different regions and transportation options at travel



destinations. We observed heightened interest and curiosity about visiting Japan, particularly following the challenges posed by the pandemic.

We will continue to promote various regions of Japan, in the hopes of increasing interest in Japan as a travel destination and encouraging more people to choose Japan for their travels.



Taituarā Annual Conference 2023 (22-24 Nov 2023)



The Taituarā Annual Conference 2023 was held from 22 to 24 November in Hawke’s Bay and was attended by local government officials from all around New Zealand.

The theme of the conference was “Thrive”, and it featured presentations and workshops on a variety of topics, such as leading in uncertain times, the opportunities and risks of generative AI, climate adaptation planning, and social inclusion and equity.

The CLAIR Sydney office ran a booth at the venue, where we provided updates on recent activities, explanation of sister city relationships between Japan and New Zealand, and offered tourism information from various regions in Japan. CLAIR Sydney was able to network with many local governments in New Zealand thanks to the conference opportunities, which included meeting Taituarā board members and alumni of the CLAIR Local Government Exchange and Cooperation Seminar.



We will continue to learn and research the current challenges and best practices of New Zealand local governments, as well as strengthen our relationship with them and support the international activities of Japanese local governments.

Support Activities for Ube City in Yamaguchi Prefecture (23 Nov 2023)

On 23 November, the administrative delegation from Ube City in Yamaguchi Prefecture, led by Mayor Shinozaki Keiji, visited the CLAIR Sydney office.

The delegation visited Newcastle City, a sister city in New South Wales, for the first time in 13 years. During their visit, they discussed international exchanges in the post-pandemic era, focusing on topics such as carbon neutrality, economic revitalisation, culture and the arts.



CLAIR Sydney provided them with a briefing and Q&A session on Australia's administration, political and economic overview, and multiculturalism policies.

The delegation was especially enthusiastic about the explanation of exchange programs between Japan and Australia which Ube City plans to increase its effort in. We also received a multitude of questions about their discoveries during their visit to Australia, including the city of Newcastle. Moreover, we discussed together about ways to attract foreign visitors to Ube City.

CLAIR Sydney will continue to support Japanese local governments engaged in sister city exchanges overseas.



Support Activities for Nagoya City (24 Nov 2023)

The sister city relationship between Nagoya City and City of Sydney will celebrate its 45th anniversary in 2025. The Nagoya City official who came to Australia to participate in the Australian Multiculturalism Study Tour hosted by CLAIR Sydney, paid a visit to Sydney City Town Hall on Friday 24 November, and we assisted his visit.

In addition to sharing information on the status of exchanges between the two cities' sister zoos (Taronga Zoo and Higashiyama Zoo) and international exchanges in Nagoya City, a preliminary meeting was held for Deputy Mayor Matsuo's visit to Sydney for December 2023.

With the landmark year only two years away, CLAIR Sydney will continue to support the exchanges between the two cities.



November 2023 JET Programme Returnee Welcome Reception in Brisbane (24 Nov 2023)

On 24 November 2023, we attended a Returnee Welcome Reception for 4 returnees of the JET Programme (The Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme) organised by the Consulate General of Japan in Brisbane.

Consul-General Gomakubo, a representative of JETAA Queensland chapter, and ourselves offered some words of appreciation for the returnees' efforts in Japan. The reception was attended not only by the JETAA members but also by JET alumni and representatives from Japanese businesses, providing a great opportunity for the returnees to establish connections.

We hope that the returnees will continue to use the knowledge and networks they developed through their experience on the JET Programme to further enhance the relationship between Australia and Japan.

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



From the Executive Director

Learning about Australian Multicultural Initiatives

Last month, we held our annual Australian Multicultural Study Tour in Sydney. Following last year's tour in Melbourne, it was held in person and we were delighted to welcome 13 delegates for the study tour. The purpose of the program is for staff of Japanese local governments and other relevant organisations to deepen their understanding of multicultural initiatives in Australia through site visits and discussions with individuals who support multiculturalism in Australia. Also through networking with the other participants they gain a holistic view of Japan's current issues to help develop multicultural policies in their own region. In the tour we visited nine organisations that have strategies, initiatives and services that contribute to Australia's multicultural society. At each site we received a briefing on their multicultural policies and services, and had opportunities to discuss with staff who work on the ground. Both participants and CLAIR Sydney staff had an invaluable learning experience through this program.

We would like to take this opportunity and thank all the organisations and individuals who kindly assisted with our study tour.

The number of foreign residents in Japan has been on the decline in recent years due to COVID-19, but it reached a high record of approximately 3.22 million as of end of June, 2023, according to the statistics from the Ministry of Justice. The percentage of the total population is approximately 2.59%, which means that approximately 1 in 40 residents are a foreign resident. CLAIR supports the multicultural efforts of local governments in Japan through information provision, policy support, and dispatching of staff.

We believe that the history, policy, and social consciousness towards multiculturalism in Japan is still different to Australia, but the important factors and approaches for working on multiculturalism policies can be very helpful in Japan. We anticipate that the participants will apply their learnings from the study tour in their practices in respective regions.



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