

Newsletter

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DISCOVER

JAPAN

Welcome to
Moka City

Moka City is located in the southeastern part of Tochigi Prefecture and is abundant with nature. In the old days, the city was known throughout Japan for its specialty, "Moka Cotton".

Today, the city boasts the highest production of specialty strawberries in Japan and continues to develop as a high-tech city with a large industrial park.



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Welcome to Moka City

In June 2022, Moka City formed a friendship city affiliation with the Shire of Harvey in Western Australia. Before this, the two cities had established an excellent relationship through a sister school affiliation of secondary schools, which was formed in 2003. Over the years, more than 300 students from both cities have interacted to understand each other's culture and traditions. Even during the pandemic affected years, they deepened their relationship by proactively exchanging information through online meetings.



The youth exchange program resumed last year and 47 secondary school students visited Harvey Shire. They were able to directly experience the local atmosphere in a way that is not possible online, and developed new friendships through the exchange program.



Additionally, when the delegate from Moka City visited Harvey Shire to commemorate the first anniversary of their friendship city affiliation, they were warmly welcomed by Harvey Council members and the locals. By attending the ceremony and exchange events, they achieved deeper mutual understanding and built a more solid relationship.

Since the conclusion of the affiliation agreement, the exchange of letters between primary school students and agriculture-related interactions between high schools have started and the range of exchanges has been broadened.



Moka City will continue to support friendly exchange between citizens of the two cities in order to facilitate a more active relationship and common prosperity, which brings social, cultural and economic growth of both cities, as well as to foster global citizens for the future.

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 \(ilgc.org.au\)](https://ilgc.org.au)



Farewell Messages

In Japan, the end of March is a time to set out on a new journey for some. This year we say goodbye to two of our Assistant Directors who are going back to Japan. Below are heartfelt messages from them.

We wish them best of luck!



Shiro INOUE

Assistant Director from Mihara City Government

Kia ora everyone. First of all, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the people whom I met in New Zealand and Australia. I moved to Sydney in early April 2022 with an excessive amount of anxiety that my small body could not contain. Everyone I have met from then until today was always kind and welcoming.

There are many people I appreciate, however, first I would like to thank the Mayor of Palmerston North, Grant Smith, who took me from Wellington to Palmerston North by car in June 2022. The two hours I spent sitting next to him were enough to make me realise that working overseas in a country where I am not fluent in the language, is much harder than I imagined. Thank you for providing me with such valuable experience. Unfortunately, I was so nervous during those two hours and at the lunch after the drive, that I don't remember the content of our conversation or the taste of the lunch at all. I look forward to our next meal.

And Gabrielle and Hiro, they both greeted me so kindly in Palmerston North after the two-hour drive, when I had completely lost my confidence. If they hadn't been there at that moment, I wouldn't have been able to spend the next two years with a positive mindset. I am so grateful for both of them for the reassurance they gave me. They swept away the anxiety from my mind. And Kate and KC, thanks for all the fun meetings. KC, don't put too much pressure on me though.

Finally, Carol, Yuna, Hisako and Sachiko, have saved my life. They helped not only me but also my family. Thank you for all the advice. The information they provided me has supported my whole family and improved the quality of our daily life. No information on any social media could compare to what they all have provided us.



There are many others I would like to thank. However, if I were to write all the messages here, it would be more than a dissertation, so let me spare you.

"I hope to enjoy my work and private life to the fullest while I am in Australia, so that in two years when I return to Japan, I will have fallen in love with Australia and New Zealand." Two years ago, I wrote this in an article introducing myself. I now love Australia and New Zealand more than I could have imagined two years ago. Australia and New Zealand have so much to offer and my two years there have been so fulfilling. I have the utmost respect for a country where people from diverse backgrounds live in harmony and for the people who live there. I would like to thank once again to everyone who has been a part of my life.

Ka kite ano.

Ngā mihi nui ki a koe.

Nā Shiro Inoue

Erika SHIMIZU

Assistant Director from Tokyo Metropolitan Government

I would like to take this opportunity to share with you my personal growth over the past two years and to express my feelings of gratitude.

Over the past two years at the Sydney Office of the Japan Local Government Centre (JLGC), I have discovered my strength in networking and building relationships in international business scenes. In my role, I have had a lot of opportunities to interact with government officials of Australia, New Zealand, and Japan, JET alumni, and countless locals wherever I travelled. Being able to build continuous relationships with those I met through my work has given me a certain confidence. I am grateful to everyone I have met and interacted with in Australia and New Zealand. Upon my return to the Tokyo Metropolitan Government (TMG), I would like to further improve my ability to network with others in order to contribute more to my organisation.





I have also been involved in various types of work in the Sydney Office, including internal management, external coordination, and project planning, etc. One of the unique features of the JLGC's offices, and what I appreciate the most, is the environment that allowed me to lead teams and projects, regardless of the tenure of the staff members. This experience broadened my perspective and enabled me to learn how to support and lead a team. I don't think I would have gained this much experience if I had stayed at the TMG for the past two years, so I am truly grateful to the TMG for sending me to Sydney, as well as to my supervisors and colleagues at the JLGC Sydney Office who have always supported me.

I am going to miss Sydney's beautiful coastline, coastal walks, and coffee culture, but I am now thrilled to be looking ahead to my new chapter in Tokyo. I would like to further develop both my private and business life, applying the great things that I learned during my time in Sydney. I wish you all the best and hope to see you again.



CLAIR Sydney February Activity Report

Support Activities for Tokyo Metropolitan Government

In honour of the 40th anniversary of the friendship state relationship between New South Wales (NSW) and Tokyo, established in 1984, the Governor of Tokyo paid a visit to NSW from 4 to 6 February.

The Governor of Tokyo met with the Premier of NSW to discuss future collaboration and signed the Memorandum of Understanding on Exchange and Cooperation between the two states. To further solidify their cooperative partnership, they also signed the Memorandum of Understanding on the Social Implementation of Hydrogen Energy. Additionally, the Governor of Tokyo visited several sites to learn about NSW's initiatives for e-government, support for startups, and the hydrogen energy.

CLAIR Sydney provided support by allowing them to utilise the CLAIR office space and accompanying them on site visits. We will continue to support NSW and Tokyo in their future progress.

Support Activities for Fukuoka, Saga, Nagasaki and Oita in Kyushu



On 1 and 2 February, officials from Fukuoka, Saga, Nagasaki, and Oita Prefecture visited the CLAIR Sydney office. The delegation came to Australia to conduct a Kyushu Tourism Seminar targeting travel agencies. We exchanged information about the state of Japan-related events in Australia and New Zealand, along with the results of visitor surveys. CLAIR Sydney will continue to support Japanese local governments working to attract tourists from Australia and New Zealand.

For Kyushu travel, check out the information here!

VISIT FUKUOKA : <https://www.crossroadfukuoka.jp/en>

SAGA Trip Genius : <https://www.saga-tripgenius.com/>

DISCOVER NAGASAKI : <https://www.discover-nagasaki.com/en>

Discover Oita : <https://www.discover-oita.com/>



Auckland Japan Day 2024

On Sunday, 25th February, "Auckland Japan Day 2024" was held in Auckland, New Zealand's largest city. This event offered a vibrant showcase of Japanese culture and charm, featuring traditional Japanese art, music, dance, and cuisine, as well as anime and pop culture. This was the second event held after the pandemic.

In addition to offering Japanese food and drinks such as sake, sushi, okonomiyaki, takoyaki, and Japanese sweets for sale, the event provided various experiences such as the tea ceremony and the opportunity to wear kimono and yukata. These activities attracted many visitors, creating a bustling atmosphere.





CLAIR Sydney ran a booth at a section of the Auckland Consulate General of Japan to promote tourism in various areas of Japan, focusing on Japanese municipalities that have sister cities in New Zealand. People planning to travel to Japan visited our booth one after another, and some of them seemed happy to talk about their travel plans.

We also promoted the JET program, answering questions about job types, work locations, and terms of appointment. Some visitors had previously participated as Assistant Language Teacher (ALT) and were considering applying as Coordinator for International Relationship (CIR) next time.

CLAIR Sydney remains committed to expanding opportunities for New Zealanders to visit Japan, not only through tourism, but also through sister city exchanges and the JET Program.



The Emperor of Japan's Birthday Reception in Australia

A reception celebrating the birthday of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan was held at the Official Residences of the Ambassador and Consulate-General of Japan. The ceremony was attended by various guests, including officials from federal, state, and local governments, as well as representatives from Japanese companies.

At the Official Residence of the Consulate-General of Japan in Perth, Ms. Pauline Vukelic was awarded the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Rays in recognition of her outstanding contributions to promoting interregional exchanges through the advancement of sister-city relationships.

Meanwhile, at the Official Residence of the Consulate-General of Japan in Sydney, CLAIR Sydney ran a booth at the reception to provide general and tourism destination information on Japanese local governments as well as our role.

CLAIR Sydney will continue to support the promotion of Japanese local authorities in Australia and New Zealand.

From the Executive Director

Reconnecting Between Sister Cities After the Pandemic and Farewell to Our Staff

We attended the Global Cities New Zealand Conference held in Marlborough on 14 and 15 March, where I had the precious opportunity to present on Japan-partner sister city exchange initiatives. We sincerely appreciate everyone who worked hard to organise this event.

The theme of this conference was “Reconnecting with the World”, I introduced three case studies on sister city exchanges between Japanese and overseas local governments under the theme of “Reconnect” after the pandemic. I will outline these cases as follows:

(Case Study 1 : Kawagoe City in Saitama)

For over 30 years, Kawagoe City has been running a project involving more than 500 high school students participating in homestays in sister cities. However, due to the pandemic, this exchange had to be suspended. Nevertheless, Kawagoe saw this as an opportunity. They surveyed 440 people who had participated in this project in the past to understand how their participation had affected their career development and lives.

According to this survey, more than 80% of respondents answered “Yes” to the question, “Did the dispatch programme have an impact on your subsequent life, employment/career choice, etc.?”. Approximately 50 % of them answered that it had a great impact on them. It was also found that approximately 20% of respondents are working in jobs that make use of their overseas dispatch experience. At the symposium held by Kawagoe, past participants spoke about the importance of career development and multicultural awareness. This initiative has demonstrated that the benefits of exchanging with sister cities provide members with more options in life and enable them to live more fulfilling lives.

(Case Study 2 : Sakaimachi in Ibaraki)

This example shows how fireworks have helped maintain connected relationships. Sakaimachi signed a friendship city agreement with Honolulu, Hawaii, USA, in 2018. Later, they became sister cities by signing an agreement online in November 2021. They place emphasis on English education to prepare children for global society. Since becoming friendship cities, high school students from both cities have been visiting each other. In Honolulu, June 4th is recognised as Sakaimachi day, stemming from Sakaimachi’s fireworks displays on Waikiki Beach in 2017 and 2018. In June 2023, Mayor of Sakaimachi traveled to Honolulu, where 10,000 fireworks were launched on the day. Additionally, Sakaimachi’s specialty items were sold, and tourism was promoted, all funded by corporate donations.

(Case Study 3 : Nagoya City in Aichi)

Taronga Zoo in Sydney and Higashiyama Zoo in Nagoya have a sister zoo partnership. A total of 17 koalas and western gorillas have been donated from Australia, and Indian rhinoceros from Japan. In addition, the two zoos send and receive staff as part of training programs to improve breeding techniques. In 2024, another koala is scheduled to be sent from Taronga to Higashiyama, and there are plans to invite officials from Taronga to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the first koala’s arrival in Japan.

Fujimae Tidal Flat in Nagoya serves as a stopover location for numerous migratory birds traveling between the northern and southern hemispheres. Geelong, linked to the Fujimae Tidal Flat has had a wetland partnership since 2007, as both

cities have wetlands listed under the Ramsar Convention. Nagoya has been sending high school students to Geelong once every two years since 2007. The aim is not only to learn about environmental conservation efforts in Geelong but also to develop human resources capable of engaging in environmental conservation activities themselves. They have been communicating online since 2020, but this year they are scheduled to visit Geelong for the first time in four years in March.

I believe that this form of exchange is a future-oriented approach to solving local problems faced by cities.

We hope you find these case studies informative.

On another note, our two staff members will return to Japan at the end of March as it is the end of their term. I believe that they have made every effort to accomplish our mission. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all of you who showed kindness to them.



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