

Newsletter

Apr 2025

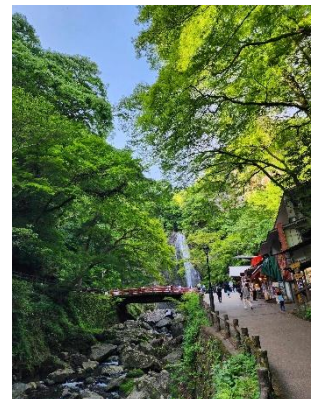
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DISCOVER
JAPAN

Welcome to
Minoh City

Located in the north-west of Osaka Prefecture, Minoh City is a scenic residential area with approximately 130,000 residents. There are many places to enjoy its natural beauty, such as the Minoh Waterfall and Katsuo-ji temple, that attract visitors from both Japan and abroad. In Autumn, the city's symbolic Japanese maple trees turn a vibrant red, so many people visit the waterfall and other areas especially to enjoy the unique scenery at this time. Additionally, the city is easily accessible by public transport as it is less than a 20-minute train ride from central Osaka. With easy access and lush natural scenery, Minoh City is well-known as a comfortable place to live.



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Welcome to Minoh City

through various programmes such as youth and cultural exchanges. As this year marks the 30th anniversary of the relationship, there are many commemorative events planned to celebrate.

In early January, seven members of a traditional Māori craft group visited



Minoh City under the theme 'Whiria he tangata: Weaving people, weaving culture', an exchange focused on sharing traditional Māori weaving crafts and Japanese culture. During their four-day stay in Minoh City, they were able to experience many forms of traditional Japanese culture, such as decorating a *Daruma* doll, practicing tea ceremony and calligraphy, and wearing *kimono*. The group also hosted a workshop where they taught local residents how to make traditional Māori *Kākau* (cloaks). These activities allowed the visiting group and the people of Minoh to interact with each other's cultures and grow friendships, making it a rewarding experience for everyone involved.



In early February, a delegation from Minoh City visited Hutt City, led by the Minoh City Mayor, City Council Chairperson, and the Superintendent of Education. The delegation met with the Hutt City Mayor and visited places across the city, where they met directly with people who have contributed to the international cooperating cities relationship over the past 30 years. These interactions proved the importance of the sister city relationship and continuing these exchanges for future generations. The delegation also visited Tui Glen School, where they could witness the students interacting with students at a Minoh City



Elementary School in real time through online exchanges run between the schools. The Minoh City students asked the Tui Glen School students questions in English, and they talked about their favourite foods and hobbies, fostering a friendly atmosphere. The delegation expressed that they wish to continue to develop these educational exchanges further.

In May this year, Minoh City is planning a commemorative ceremony to welcome the Hutt City Mayor and other guests, in addition to a New Zealand Fair event. Minoh City hopes that this significant occasion will provide opportunities for more exchange events to come, and for more people from Hutt City to learn more about Minoh City. When you have a chance, please visit Minoh City.



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 \(jlhc.org.au\)](https://www.jlhc.org.au)



CLAIR Sydney March Activity Report

The Emperor of Japan's Birthday Reception in New Zealand (4 Mar)

On Tuesday, 4 March 2025, the Embassy of Japan in New Zealand hosted a reception to celebrate the birthday of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan. The event welcomed a distinguished gathering of guests, including government officials and representatives from Japanese companies.

As part of the celebration, a traditional *kagami-biraki* ceremony was held to celebrate the occasion, providing a valuable opportunity to reaffirm the strong ties between Japan and New Zealand. *Kagami-biraki* is a ceremony symbolising good fortune, in which a *kagami* (sake barrel lid) is broken open to mark a celebration or milestone.



Meanwhile, CLAIR set up a booth to showcase our organisation's initiatives, including Japan-New Zealand sister city activities, the JET Programme, and Japan's local governments.

CLAIR Sydney remains committed to further strengthening local government exchanges between Japan and New Zealand.

Support Activities for Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications

On Monday, 3 March 2025, officials from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications visited the CLAIR Sydney office. During their visit, we provided a briefing on the differences between the local government systems of Australia and Japan, as well as on multiculturalism policies in New South Wales. Additionally, we assisted in arranging their meetings with Multicultural NSW and Cumberland City Council.

We remain committed to actively supporting Japanese local governments and affiliated organisations in their overseas activities, including research into Australian policies and best practices.



CLAIR Forum 2025 (10 Mar)

On 10 March, CLAIR Sydney held the CLAIR Forum 2025 in collaboration with the University of Technology Sydney's Institute for Public Policy and Governance (UTS IPPG).

The CLAIR Forum is an event where CLAIR Sydney, UTS IPPG, and other local government representatives present and discuss their organisations' strategies as well as their research findings on common challenges faced by local governments in Japan, Australia, and New Zealand.

This year's theme was "Waste Reduction and Circular Economy," with two



CLAIR Sydney staff members and Ms Gemma Dawson from City of Sydney, and Ms Carla Nelmes from Penrith City Council, presenting their respective councils' initiatives and efforts. Participants gained valuable insights into local government efforts in Japan and Australia, exchanging diverse viewpoints and perspectives. This exchange will serve as a useful reference for more informed policy-making in the future.



If you are interested in finding out more information, please click on the link below.

<https://www.jlgc.org.au/our-activities/clair-forum/>

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to all the participants from Australia, New Zealand, and Japan, as well as to those who have contributed to the organisation of this forum.

Perth Japan Festival and Support Activities for Hyogo Prefecture (15 Mar)

On Saturday, 15 March, the Perth Japan Festival—one of Western Australia's largest Japanese cultural events—was held, featuring over 40 stalls and booths. Despite the summer heat, the event attracted a large number of visitors.

CLAIR Sydney participated in the festival by utilising a section of the Consulate-General of Japan's booth, working together with volunteers from JETAA WA to promote tourism across various regions of Japan. In particular, we highlighted Hyogo



Prefecture, Western Australia's sister state, and Kagoshima City, Perth's sister city, showcasing their unique attractions to

many attendees. Some visitors were planning their trips to Japan and carefully browsing brochures to decide on their destinations, while others, who had already visited Japan multiple times, enthusiastically shared their travel experiences with us.

Additionally, upon request from Hyogo Prefecture, CLAIR Sydney assisted with booth operations, distributing brochures and sharing information about Hyogo's tourist attractions to introduce the prefecture to a wider audience.



Moving forward, CLAIR Sydney will continue working with local governments across Japan to promote tourism and provide valuable information to those interested in visiting Japan.

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who stopped by our booth!



Support Activities for Chiba Prefectural Government

On Friday, 21 March 2025, five officials from the International Affairs Division and the Tourism Policy Division of the Chiba Prefectural Government visited the CLAIR Sydney office. During their visit, we provided a briefing on Australia's administrative and economic systems, as well as tourism policies at the local government level.

The delegation showed particular interest in public-private collaboration in managing beach areas and in tourism strategies that incorporate Australia's surfing culture. There was also a lively exchange of views on how such initiatives could be applied in coastal municipalities in Japan.

CLAIR Sydney remains committed to supporting the overseas activities of Japanese local governments and affiliated organisations, including research into Australian policies and best practices.



From the Executive Director

The Local Government Financial Plan in Japan

In Japan, since the financial year begins in April, each local government finalises its annual budget in March. While this budgeting period is important, what is even more critical for local governments is the Local Government Financial Plan (LGFP), which provides the foundation for their financial outlook. Let me explain why.

Each year, the Cabinet prepares the LGFP, which forecasts total revenues and expenditures. This plan accounts for all sources of local government revenue—including local taxes, the total local allocation tax, as well as local bonds—in accordance with Article 7 of the Local Allocation Tax Law. The Cabinet is required to submit this plan to Parliament and make this information public.

Ideally, local governments should be able to cover their own expenditures through their own local tax revenues. However, many local governments have weak financial resources. The role of this plan is to guarantee local financial resources so that local governments can fulfil their responsibilities to their residents, regardless of annual disparities in tax revenues caused by the changes in population density and economic or industrial trends.

As such, local governments pay close attention to the LGFP every year, as it ensures that a sufficient amount of general financial resources is secured.



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