



CLAIR Sydney Newsletter



Oct 2026 -Vol.205-



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Cover Photo

Zao Onsen Ski Resort, Yamagata City

Photo courtesy of Yamagata City Government.



Located in Japan's Tohoku region, Yamagata City is known for its rich cultural heritage, beautiful natural scenery, and distinctive seasonal attractions, including Zao Onsen and its famous "Snow Monsters", a rare natural phenomenon in which trees are transformed by layers of snow and ice into large, distinctive formations.

In recent years, the city has been actively working to attract international visitors, including from Australia. The following contribution from Yamagata City highlights its recent participation in the Snow Travel Expos in Sydney and Melbourne, while also showcasing the destination's year-round appeal, including that of Zao Onsen.



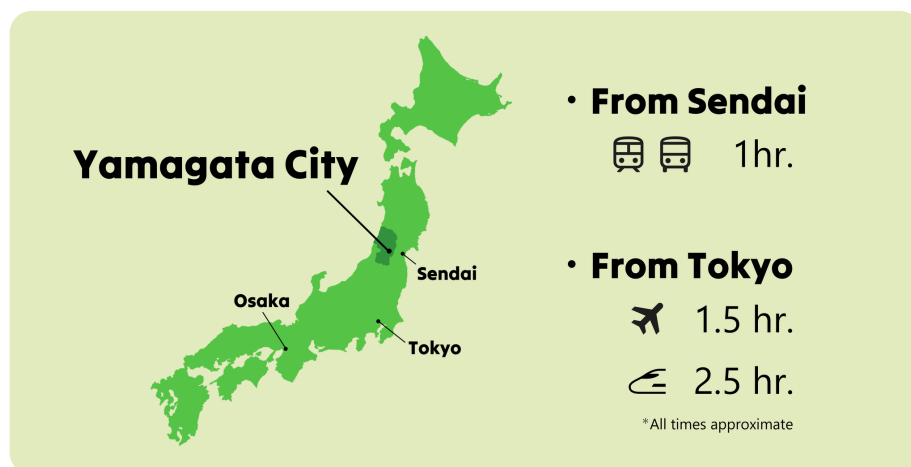
Yamagata City and its surrounding region, easily accessible via a two-and-a-half-hour Shinkansen journey from Tokyo, offer a rich tapestry of culture and natural beauty, inviting tourists to an authentically Japanese experience. Nestled in northern Japan's Tohoku region, Yamagata City has steadily attracted a growing number of visitors in recent years. Its unique appeal has also garnered significant attention from international media outlets. Notably, the prefecture was selected for National Geographic's "Best of the World 2026" list, hailed as "Japan's best-kept secret" for its captivating blend of "Age-old tradition and otherworldly outdoor experiences, without the crowds." This prestigious recognition further solidifies Yamagata City's growing international reputation.

Yamagata City is actively enhancing its efforts to attract global tourists. We employ a diverse range of promotional strategies, including participation in international travel expos, dedicated business meetings with tourism agencies, strategic advertising campaigns, and an engaging social media presence.

For example, our official Instagram account (@explore_yamagata) consistently showcases the distinctive charm of Yamagata City throughout all four seasons to raise awareness of its appeal.

We are particularly focusing on key markets, such as Australia, given the strong interest travellers from these regions typically show in Yamagata City's unique tourism resources. This strategic alignment was the precise reason for our participation in the recent Snow Travel Expos held in Sydney and Melbourne.

The Snow Travel Expo provided us with a valuable opportunity to directly interact with potential tourists deeply interested in winter travel to Japan. Throughout the event, we collaborated with the Zao Onsen Tourism Committee, and other tourism-related companies to set up our booth. We observed a trend among visitors seeking unseen, less-crowded ski resorts beyond famous destinations. This perfectly aligns with Yamagata City's unique appeal, which includes a vast ski resort boasting 14 slopes and 12 courses, the exceptionally rare Snow Monsters, and an Onsen Street that evokes a nostalgic Japanese atmosphere.



At the expo, we effectively showcased our city at a booth, distributing brochures filled with the charm of Yamagata, which resulted in a rise in our Instagram followers. Furthermore, a stage presentation highlighted the winter appeal of Zao Onsen and featured the Hanagasa dance, successfully engaging numerous visitors. In a strategic move to attract global skiers and snowboarders, Zao Onsen Ski Resort has, as of last winter, integrated with the Ikon Pass, providing travelers with access to a multitude of international ski destinations.

The expo reinforced that recognition of Yamagata City and Zao Onsen is growing steadily. Furthermore, our strengthened connections with tourism agencies and airlines are leading to the development of tour packages that feature Zao Onsen as a key destination.



Zao Onsen Ski Resort



Mount Zao

As previously described, Zao Onsen Ski Resort is renowned for its exceptional powder snow, an expansive area with 14 slopes and 12 courses, including a 10km long course, and extraordinary Snow Monsters.

Yet Yamagata's appeal extends far beyond winter. Spring brings immense blooms of cherry blossoms along rivers and around old castle ruins, which are sure to captivate visitors with their delicate beauty. Summer offers a cool refuge, thanks to its high altitude, temperatures run approximately 5°C lower than the city centre. Autumn transforms the landscape into a spectacular tapestry of vibrant yellows and reds.

Indeed, it is this combination of natural splendor and meticulously preserved heritage that offers tourists various experiences throughout the year. We extend a warm invitation for your future visit to experience firsthand this unique land where magnificent nature and long-standing, community-rooted traditions are beautifully intertwined.



Yamagata Castle Ruins



Rishakuji Temple (Yamadera)

Learn more about Yamagata City

- Yamagata Tour Guide Book “YAMAGATARI”

https://www.city.yamagata-yamagata.lg.jp/_res/projects/default_project/_page/_001/014/633/english.pdf



Supporting the Hyogo Prefectural Government (25-27 Aug)

From 25 to 27 August 2026, a delegation from Hyogo Prefecture, led by Vice Governor Yutaka Morimoto, visited Perth, Western Australia to celebrate the 45th anniversary of the sister-state relationship between Hyogo Prefecture and Western Australia.

During the visit, the delegation exchanged views with senior representatives of the Western Australian Government, including Premier Roger Cook, and signed a new joint statement aimed at further promoting exchanges between the two regions. As part of Hyogo Prefecture's efforts to promote the use of hydrogen and support the transition to clean energy, the delegation also visited relevant facilities and engaged in discussions with local companies involved in the hydrogen sector.

It is hoped that this visit will further strengthen the longstanding relationship between Hyogo Prefecture and Western Australia and contribute to the continued development of exchanges across a wide range of fields.

A report on the visit is available on the Hyogo Prefecture International Affairs Division website (Japanese):

<https://web.pref.hyogo.lg.jp/sr13/20260916.html>



Nagoya Runners Take Part in the Sydney Marathon (29-30 Aug)



The Sydney Marathon, a sister marathon of the Nagoya City Marathon, was held on 29-30 August. Two runners from Nagoya took on different challenges, with one running the 5km mini marathon and the other completing the full 42km marathon.

CLAIR Sydney supported the runners on the day and also coordinated their courtesy visit to the City of Sydney after the event.

Last year marked the 45th anniversary of the sister-city relationship between Nagoya and Sydney. During the visit, the runners presented a letter from the Mayor of Nagoya expressing hopes for an even stronger friendship between the two cities. They also met with City of Sydney councillors Cr Robert Kok and Cr Lyndon Gannon, both of whom had previously visited Nagoya.

We hope exchanges such as these will continue to deepen the long-standing ties between Nagoya and Sydney in the years ahead. Congratulations to both runners on their amazing achievements!

Supporting the Niigata Delegation's Visit to Australia (1 Sep)

On Tuesday, 1 September, CLAIR Sydney welcomed members of the Niigata Prefectural Assembly Delegation, who were visiting Australia to conduct on-site visits aimed at expanding market opportunities for Niigata products and attracting more tourists to the prefecture.

CLAIR Sydney provided a briefing on its activities, as well as an overview of Australia's demographics, economy and history of multiculturalism. During the Q&A session, a range of topics were discussed, including the distribution of Japanese agricultural products in Australia, the characteristics of promotional activities undertaken by Japanese local governments and ways to engage with former JET Programme participants.

In addition to the briefing, we also supported the delegation by arranging appointments with organisations they wished to visit. We hope that our support contributed to making their visit a meaningful and productive one.



Supporting the Obu City Government, Aichi Prefecture (3 Sep)

On Thursday, 3 September, 3 representatives from Obu City, Aichi Prefecture, including Deputy Mayor Yamaguchi, visited the CLAIR Sydney office during their visit trip to Australia to attend the 11th Global Conference of the Alliance for Healthy Cities (AFHC 2026).

CLAIR Sydney provided a briefing on recent developments in Australia and outlined key differences between the administrative systems of Japan and Australia.

The delegation also shared information about Obu City's initiatives, including its sister-city exchanges with the City of Port Phillip in Victoria. The sister-city relationship was originally established with the former City of St Kilda in November 1993, before St Kilda was amalgamated into the City of Port Phillip in June 1994.

We hope the delegation found the visit both informative and enjoyable.



Supporting the Fukuoka Prefectural Government (3-4 Sep)

On 3 and 4 September, CLAIR Sydney supported the Fukuoka Prefectural Government in operating its booth at the Asia-Pacific Hydrogen Summit, held in Adelaide, South Australia.

The booth showcased Fukuoka Prefecture's hydrogen initiatives, including work led by the Hydrogen Energy Test and Research Center, as well as technologies and products presented by 2 Fukuoka-based companies.

The booth welcomed many visitors, including representatives from the NSW Government, which signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Fukuoka Prefecture on hydrogen cooperation in 2023, as well as government officials, hydrogen-related businesses and researchers. The strong interest and lively discussions highlighted the growing opportunities for international collaboration in the hydrogen sector.



Global Cities New Zealand Conference 2026 (3-5 Sep)

From 3 to 5 September, the Global Cities New Zealand (GCNZ) Conference 2026 was held in Christchurch, New Zealand, bringing together sister city representatives from across the country and beyond. Christchurch is one of New Zealand's leading international exchange cities, maintaining sister city relationships with 7 cities and regions worldwide, including Kurashiki City in Okayama Prefecture, Japan, as well as Adelaide (Australia), Christchurch (UK) and Seattle (United States)

Held under the theme "New Frontiers", this year's conference explored new possibilities for international cooperation among local governments. Discussions focused on how emerging digital technologies, including artificial intelligence, can be utilised to share knowledge, experiences, and public service data among municipalities.

Participants examined how such collaboration can help local governments address common challenges and improve services for their communities, moving beyond the traditional one-to-one exchanges primarily focused on people-to-people interaction and friendship.

CLAIR Sydney participated in the conference, hosting an exhibition booth to introduce our activities and initiatives. We also strengthened our connections with sister city representatives from across New Zealand, including Hiromi Morris, Emeritus President of GCNZ.

Following the conference, Andrew McGeorge of the Christchurch-Kurashiki Sister City Committee kindly showed us around Christchurch. At the University of Canterbury, we visited the Bridges of Friendship Garden, established to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the sister city relationship. Within the garden stands a stone lantern donated by Kurashiki City, symbolising the longstanding friendship between the two cities and their history of exchanges since they became sister cities in 1973.



Participation in the conference gave us a valuable opportunity to reaffirm the significance of sister city exchanges and explore new opportunities for international cooperation between local governments.

MATSURI Brisbane 2026 (5 Sep)

On Saturday, 5 September, MATSURI Brisbane 2026 was held in Brisbane, Queensland. Blessed with beautiful sunny weather, the event brought together more than 100 stalls offering Japanese food and products. Music and dance performances also took place throughout the day, with large crowds enjoying Japanese food, entertainment and culture.

CLAIR Sydney hosted a booth at the event to promote the many attractions of regions across Japan. We spoke with visitors who had previously travelled to Japan and received numerous enquiries about destinations in Kyushu, Shikoku and other parts of the country. There was also strong interest in outdoor activities such as trekking and cycling, as well as traditional cultural experiences such as kintsugi (the Japanese art of repairing broken ceramics with lacquer and gold).



JET Programme Pre-Departure Orientation (7 Sep)

On Monday, 7 September 2026, a JET Programme Pre-Departure Orientation was held at the Consulate-General of Japan in Sydney for the 5 new JET Programme participants scheduled to depart for Japan in mid-to-late September.

During the orientation, a staff member from the Consulate-General, who is also a former JET participant, shared practical advice to help participants prepare for their upcoming assignments, including things to keep in mind when working and living in Japan. She also shared insights from her own experience as a JET participant and answered questions from the group.

CLAIR Sydney provided an overview of CLAIR's role in the JET Programme, including the training and support available to JET participants. We also introduced the JETAA (JET Alumni Association), highlighting how participants can continue to draw on their JET experience and contribute to strengthening the relationship between Japan and Australia after completing their assignments.

We sincerely hope that the new JETs can make the most of their time in Japan by gaining a wide range of experiences and broadening their perspectives. Through grassroots exchange and connections with local communities, we hope they will play an active role as bridges between Japan and Australia.

We wish all 5 participants the very best and hope they have a rewarding and unforgettable experience in Japan!

For more information about the JET Programme, please visit the official website below:

<https://jetprogramme.org/en/about-jet/>



Farewell Reception in Campbelltown for Koshigaya-Bound Student Delegation (9 Sep)

On Wednesday, 9 September, a farewell reception was held in Campbelltown, New South Wales, for a student delegation visiting Koshigaya City in Saitama Prefecture, Campbelltown's sister city, later this month.

At the reception, the students performed “I Am Australian”, a widely loved song inspired by Australia's history and culture, as well as the Japanese song “Kaeru no Uta” (“The Frog Song”). The students had reportedly been practicing enthusiastically in preparation for their exchange with the people of Koshigaya, and their hard work was clearly reflected in their lively performances.

Since establishing their sister-city relationship in 1984, Campbelltown and Koshigaya have maintained exchanges for more than 40 years through initiatives such as the opening of parks named after each city and organising reciprocal student exchange programmes. We would like to extend our deepest respect and appreciation to everyone who has contributed to strengthening the friendship between the two cities, and hope that the ties nurtured over many years will be passed on to future generations and continue to grow for years to come.



Attending the 2026 Taituarā Annual Conference (9-11 Sep)

From 9 to 11 September, CLAIR Sydney participated in the 2026 Taituarā Annual Conference in New Plymouth, New Zealand, which brought together local government professionals from across the country, including senior council executives and managers.

As local governments face a rapidly changing environment shaped by fiscal constraints and ongoing reforms, the conference featured a forum for discussions on a wide range of topics. Through presentations, case studies, panel discussions and group workshops, participants examined effective leadership and organisational management, disaster and climate change response, and the use of artificial intelligence.

A session titled “Strengthening communities through arts and culture” explored the role of cultural policies and events in strengthening community connections, fostering local identity and enhancing residents' wellbeing.



Photos : Taituarā

JCS Japan Festival in Chatswood 2026 (13 Sep)

On Sunday, 13 September, the JCS Japan Festival in Chatswood 2026 was held in Chatswood, in northern Sydney. The event was organised by the Japan Club of Sydney (JCS).

Attendees enjoyed Japanese culture through Japanese food stalls and hands-on experiences such as sumi-e ink painting and origami, as well as taiko and karate performances. According to the organiser, approximately 5,000 people attended the event, creating a lively atmosphere throughout the day.

CLAIR Sydney hosted a booth showcasing tourist destinations and unique attractions of regions across Japan, including destinations beyond the well-known "Golden Route". We also held a ring toss game for visitors who followed our Instagram account or completed a survey about their travel experiences in Japan. The activity was enjoyed by visitors of all ages, from young children to adults. Our booth welcomed a steady stream of visitors throughout the day, giving them an opportunity to discover the diverse attractions of Japan.



Japan and Friends Day 2026 on the Gold Coast (20 Sep)



On Sunday, 20 September, CLAIR Sydney hosted a booth at Japan and Friends Day 2026, held on the Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia. Organised by the Japanese Society of Gold Coast, the event gave us an opportunity to showcase the many attractions of destinations across Japan.

Many visitors stopped by our booth to ask for recommendations for their next trip to Japan. Some also shared what they love about Japan's beaches and how they differ from those on the Gold Coast.

It was wonderful to meet so many people whose travels had deepened their appreciation for Japan's nature, food and traditional culture.



South West Japan Festival – Bunbury Matsuri Day (20 Sep)

The South West Japan Festival was held in Bunbury, Western Australia, over a two week period from 7 to 20 September.

The festival has been held annually since 2018 to celebrate the sister city relationship between Setagaya City, Tokyo, and Bunbury. This year, a variety of events were held in Bunbury and the surrounding region, including sushi making workshops, screenings of films about Japanese culture, and exchange activities with visiting Japanese high school students.

CLAIR Sydney participated in Bunbury Matsuri Day, the festival's flagship event and grand finale, where we hosted a booth alongside members of the JET Alumni Association (JETAA) Western Australia Chapter, showcasing tourist destinations and local government initiatives from across Japan.



The strong interest in Japan was evident throughout the event, with several visitors travelling approximately 3 hours by car from Perth to attend. Following the event, the Floating Lantern Ceremony provided a memorable conclusion, with lanterns decorated with Japanese flags and cherry blossom motifs illuminating the river, reflecting the deep affection for Japan within the local community.



Sakura Matsuri in Cowra (26 Sep)

On Saturday, 26 September, the Sakura Matsuri (Cherry Blossom Festival) was held in Cowra, New South Wales.

The festival attracted many visitors throughout the day, with a wide range of activities showcasing Japanese culture. These included Japanese food stalls, opportunities to try on kimono, tea ceremonies and kyudo (Japanese archery). Visitors also enjoyed a variety of performances, including taiko drumming and kabuki.



CLAIR Sydney hosted a booth at the festival, where we promoted the diverse attractions of destinations across Japan. In keeping with the theme of the festival, we received many enquiries about popular cherry blossom viewing spots and the best times to see the blossoms. Many visitors also eagerly checked a map of Japan to locate cities and towns they were interested in, reflecting a keen interest in planning future trips to Japan.

Cowra is also the site of the Cowra Breakout, a mass escape attempt by Japanese prisoners of war during World War II in 1944, in which 231 Japanese prisoners of war and 4 Australian guards lost their lives. The Cowra Japanese Garden, where the Sakura Matsuri was held, symbolises the reconciliation and friendship that have developed between Japan and Australia against this historical backdrop.

Participating in this event provided a valuable opportunity to reflect on the history of Japan–Australia relations and the dedicated efforts of many people in both countries to build these ties since the end of the World War II.



EVENTS **Where to Find CLAIR Sydney Next**

CLAIR Sydney will be participating in the following upcoming events. We are looking forward to seeing you there!

**14-15
OCT**

SuperLocal Conference 2026

Energy Events Centre
(Queens Drive, Rotorua 3010, New Zealand)
LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONFERENCE

**18
OCT**

Bunkasai – Japanese Cultural Festival

Dominion Museum
(15 Buckle Street, Mount Cook, Wellington 6011)
Cultural Festival

**24
OCT**

Canberra Nara Candle Festival

Canberra Nara Peace Park & Lennox Gardens
(Flynn Drive, Yarralumla ACT 2600)
Cultural Festival

The 50th anniversary of the sister city relationship between Nelson and Miyazu

On Saturday, 26 September, the Executive Director of CLAIR Sydney attended a commemorative event held in Nelson, New Zealand, celebrating the 50th anniversary of the sister city relationship between Nelson City and Miyazu City in Kyoto Prefecture. The Director attended at the invitation of the Nelson-Miyazu Sister City Association and Nelson City Council.

The relationship between the two cities began in 1974, when a Japanese parliamentary goodwill delegation led by Mr Shigesaburo Maeo, then Speaker of the House of Representatives and a native of Miyazu, made an official visit to New Zealand. During the visit, the delegation travelled to Nelson, the hometown of Sir Stanley Whitehead, then Speaker of the New Zealand Parliament. The two cities share geographical similarities, with Nelson's sandspit resembling Miyazu's Amanohashidate, one of Japan's three most scenic views. In addition to this geographical similarity, they also share similar climates, natural environments and industries. With the support and mediation of the parliamentary speakers of both countries, a sister city agreement was formally concluded in 1976.

On the day of the event, a Cherry Blossom Festival was held at the Miyazu Japanese Garden in Nelson, attended by sister city representatives from both cities, including the Miyazu delegation led by Mayor Masafumi Kizaki and City Council Chair Tomiyoshi Matsuura. At the opening ceremony, His Excellency Makoto Osawa, Ambassador of Japan to New Zealand, presented a certificate of commendation to the Nelson-Miyazu Sister City Association in recognition of its longstanding contributions to exchanges between the two cities.

The festival featured taiko drumming and choral performances of Japanese songs by Nelson residents, creating a warm and festive atmosphere throughout the day. As New Zealand enters spring while Japan moves into autumn, the cherry blossoms had just begun to bloom at the time of the event, adding a beautiful touch of colour to this significant 50-year milestone. The festival was made possible through the dedicated efforts of many people, including Ms Linley Smith, Chair of the Nelson-Miyazu Sister City Association. It was a heartwarming and memorable event that reflected the passion and commitment of those who have supported the relationship between the two cities over many years.



In the evening, Nelson City Council hosted a commemorative dinner. Attendees from both cities reflected on the achievements and enduring friendship built through exchanges over the past half century, and reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthening their relationship in the years ahead. Among the Miyazu delegation was an English teacher who had previously stayed with Nelson's current Mayor, Nick Smith, as part of a sister city exchange program. This example highlighted how people-to-people exchanges, particularly those involving younger generations, can both equip participants to carry international exchange forward and have a profound impact on their lives.

These connections form an important foundation for the ongoing relationship between the two cities. At a time of growing global uncertainty, this event was a valuable reminder of the importance of



people-to-people connections, which lie at the heart of sister city relationships and other exchanges between local governments. We would like to express our sincere respect and gratitude to all those who have contributed to the friendship between Nelson and Miyazu over the years. We hope that this relationship will continue to flourish, be passed on to future generations and grow even stronger in the future.

ANNOUNCEMENT The CLAIR Forum is back this December!

Join CLAIR Sydney and the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) at the Institute for Public Policy and Governance (IPPG) for the CLAIR Forum 2026, bringing together local government professionals and community leaders to explore innovative solutions to some of the most pressing challenges facing communities in Japan, Australia and New Zealand.



Event Details

Date: Wednesday, 2 December 2026

Time: 2:00pm to 5:00pm (AEST)

4:00pm to 7:00pm (NZST)

Venue: University of Technology Sydney, Building 1, Level 22, Room 10

Address: 15 Broadway, Ultimo, NSW 2007

Hybrid participation: In person or online via Zoom

Background

Local governments in Japan, Australia and New Zealand face a range of complex challenges, including depopulation, low birth rates, climate pressures, rising costs of living and housing shortages. As community expectations continue to evolve, traditional approaches are often no longer sufficient, creating a growing need for innovative and forward-looking solutions. This forum will showcase practical initiatives from local governments in Japan and Australia, highlighting creative approaches to addressing local challenges. Participants will have the opportunity to exchange ideas, share experiences and discuss strategies for building resilient and sustainable communities.

Registration

Register via the link below: (Select 'Get Tickets' for both the in-person and online options)

<https://events.humanitix.com/clair-forum-2026-innovative-and-creative-approaches-to-local-government-challenges>

Notes

- Participation is free of charge, and light refreshments will be provided.
- This event will be conducted entirely in English.

We look forward to seeing you there!



Join us for this 7-day seminar offering a unique opportunity to learn about the Japanese government system and visit a local government area in Japan to explore best practices and innovative initiatives!

The Local Government Exchange and Cooperation Seminar aims to promote a deeper understanding of Japanese local governments and culture. The programme brings together participants from Australia, New Zealand and Japan working in local governments and related organisations to exchange knowledge on current local government challenges and practices.

Below are the details of the upcoming seminar and information about **Goka Town in Ibaraki Prefecture**, the host local government of the 2026/2027 Seminar.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE & COOPERATION SEMINAR 2026/2027

Learn from Japanese Local Governments

Building an Attractive and Sustainable City for the Next Generation



DATE

14 Feb (Sun) – 20 Feb (Sat) 2027



LOCATION

Tokyo & Goka Town, Ibaraki Prefecture, Japan



DURATION

7 Day Programme



CLAIR
Japan Local Government Centre
(CLAIR, Sydney)



Information and Application



PROGRAMME AT A GLANCE

DAY 1

- Arrival in Tokyo, Japan
- Programme Orientation

DAY 2

- Briefing on the Japanese local government system
- Welcome Reception and Dinner (Tokyo)

DAY 3-5

- Thematic discussions & site visits (Goka Town, Ibaraki)

DAY 6

- Return to Tokyo
- Free time

DAY 7

- Departure

*Participants may enter and depart from Japan at their own convenience before and after the official Seminar period. However, CLAIR will only cover expenses incurred during the Seminar period.



THEME

Building an Attractive and Sustainable City for the Next Generation
— Challenges of Small Local Governments and the Potential of Industry–Government–Academia Collaboration



ELIGIBILITY

- Local government executives
- Executives of organisations involved in regional promotion or international exchange
- Applicants from national organisations, research institutes, or other relevant organisations may be considered provided their background is relevant to the themes of the Seminar

Up to 4 participants from AU & NZ



COST

✓ COVERED BY CLAIR

- Domestic transportation in Japan
- Accommodation (during the official Seminar period)
- Group attended meals
- Travel insurance in Japan

✗ NOT COVERED

- Roundtrip airfare to Japan
- Personal expenses (e.g. telephone & internet expenses, meals)

FOCUS

- Japanese local government system
- Community-based initiatives for waste management
- Site visits and discussions to learn best practices

CONTACT

 **Japan Local Government Centre**
Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR Sydney)

 Level 13, 115 Pitt Street, Sydney NSW 2000

 TEL: +61 2 9241 5033

 E-mail: mailbox@jlgc.org.au

For more information and application
Please scan the QR code or visit our website



Learn more about Goka Town:

- Goka Town Official Website: <https://www.town.goka.lg.jp/>



Velo-city 2027 Ehime

First Velo-city
in Japan

The world cycling summit comes to Japan.

Bringing together policymakers, local authorities, businesses, researchers and cycling professionals from around the world.



Dates:
25–28 May 2027



Venue:
Ehime Prefectural Budokan



Abstract Deadline:
22 October 2026

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS NOW OPEN

Share your project. Share your ideas. Shape the future of cycling.

TOPICS INCLUDE

Urban Development • Transport • Health
Tourism • Sustainability • Regional Development

Velo-city is the European Cyclists' Federation's flagship world cycling summit, bringing together policymakers, local authorities, businesses, researchers and cycling professionals from around the world. In 2027, the event will be held in Ehime Prefecture under the theme "**Kyōsei: Co-creating a Future with Cycling.**" This will mark **the first Velo-city conference in Japan** and the second in Asia, following Taipei in 2016.

Subthemes:



Bicycle Use



Urban Planning
& Regeneration



Multimodality



Diversity



Journey

Ehime, one of Japan's leading cycling regions, has developed a distinctive "**Cycling Lifestyle Culture**" centred on health, a sense of purpose and friendship. Home to the renowned **Shimanami Kaido**, the region has actively promoted cycling as a driver of tourism and regional development. Velo-city 2027 Ehime will showcase the prefecture's cycling initiatives while bringing together knowledge and ideas from around the world to explore the future of cycling.

The Call for Abstracts* is now open, with submissions accepted **until 22 October 2026**. We welcome contributions from a wide range of fields, including **urban development, transport, health, tourism, sustainability and regional development**. Share your projects and insights with the global Velo-city community, connect with practitioners from around the world, and help shape Velo-city 2027 Ehime.

* A short proposal outlining an idea, project, initiative, research or experience you would like to present at Velo-city.

Learn More Velo-city



<https://www.velo-city-conference.com/>

Submit via the official Velo-city website



<https://www.velo-city-conference.com/en/programme/call-for-abstracts/>

International Consumer's Symposium in Tokushima 2026

October 17,

2026 (Saturday)

13:00–16:40

JR Hotel Clement Tokushima — 3F Kinsen Hall

Main Theme

Realizing A Sustainable Society
— The Next Step from Tokushima



This symposium will be streamed online from Tokushima, Japan, and will feature sessions with young people who will shape the next generation and consumer policy experts from Japan and abroad.

Theme

Realising a Sustainable Society — The Next Step from Tokushima

Date

Saturday, October 17 2026

Format

Online Streaming (Simultaneous Japanese-English Interpretation)

Sessions

- ◆ Global Youth Session: Tokushima and South Korea! Young People's Thoughts on Sustainable Futures
- ◆ Feature Address: Building a Sustainable Society with Sustainable Shopping and Consumption
- ◆ Expert Session on Consumer Policy:
How Can We Reduce 'Mottainai'? Rethinking Purchasing, Retail and Systemic Design

For more details, please visit the link below.

<https://www.pref.tokushima.lg.jp/.../shohiseikatsu/7314530/>





Recently, I had the privilege of attending a commemorative event in Nelson, New Zealand, celebrating the 50th anniversary of its sister city relationship with Miyazu City in Kyoto Prefecture. Reflecting on half a century of exchanges between the two cities and seeing the strong bonds their communities have built together, I was reminded of the significance of sister city relationships and local government exchanges.

In recent years, local government international exchange initiatives have often been expected to deliver tangible economic benefits, such as increased tourism and export growth. While these are undoubtedly important outcomes, this commemorative event reinforced my view that the true foundation of local government exchange is, after all, the connections between people.

The relationship between Nelson and Miyazu has been sustained not only through ties between their local governments, but also through student exchanges, homestay programs, and the efforts of countless community members. Through these ongoing exchanges, mutual understanding and trust have been fostered over time, enabling the relationship between the two cities to flourish for more than 50 years.

Today, advances in digital technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI), have significantly reduced language barriers and the challenges posed by geographical distance, making communication across countries and regions easier than ever before. By using these technologies, we can connect with countries, regions, and people with whom we previously had little or no contact, better understand one another, and work more closely together.

At the same time, while AI and digital technologies are powerful tools for expanding the possibilities of exchange, I believe that no matter how much technology advances, the driving force behind maintaining and developing relationships between local governments will always be the human connections that underpin them. The trust built through meeting face-to-face, experiencing one another's cultures and values, and developing friendships cannot be cultivated overnight, nor can it be replaced by technology.

Looking beyond our own communities, we can see growing signs of division and confrontation within the international community, driven in part by the spread of increasingly inward-looking, nation-first approaches. These tensions can leave us feeling uncertain about the future of the world. In times like these, I believe that genuine efforts to understand one another and build trust across national and regional boundaries, together with opportunities for people to connect with one another face to face, become all the more important.

The 50-year history of exchanges between Nelson and Miyazu served as a valuable reminder that people are at the heart of local government exchange. As local governments continue their international engagement, I hope they will cherish these people-to-people connections while embracing new technologies, to foster even richer and more meaningful exchanges in the years ahead.



Yuko Mitsunaga
Executive Director