



Japan Local Government Centre (CLAIR, Sydney)

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W e l c o m e t o M i h a r a C i t y

Mihara City, Hiroshima Prefecture

The History of Mihara City

Mihara, a former castle town in the midst of much natural beauty, is a city with a long and interesting history. The city now stands as a vital land, sea, and air transportation link in Japan and holds much promise for the future as a developing centre of commerce and industry.



Famous places to see: Mihara Castle Ruins

Kobayakawa Takakage, a notoriously resourceful war-lord built this famous castle 450 years ago during Japan's period of civil strife.

Because the castle almost seemed to sit on the ocean, it was called "Ukishiro" or floating castle. Just the lookout platform and surrounding moat remain of that great castle.

Festivals: The Yassa Matsuri

The main festival in Mihara is the Yassa Matsuri, said to have been started after Kobayakawa Takakage completed Mihara Castle about 450 years ago. The Yassa Matsuri is a three-day event, starting on the Friday before the second Sunday of August. When the Matsuri is in full swing, the streets are full of a whirlwind of energetic dancer, a scene which is now associated with summer in Mihara.



Famous products: Tako (octopus) Cuisine

From olden days, fishermen have enjoyed big catches of delicious tako from the ocean around Mihara. These tako go into a variety of dishes, so there is plenty to choose from.

There are many other fascinating festivals and delicious foods to try in Mihara, in addition to the Yassa Matsuri and tako cuisine! And with access made easy by the close proximity of the Hiroshima airport and the shinkansen train station, why not stop by and enjoy all that Mihara has to offer? We hope to see you there one day!

Presentations at the University of New South Wales

On March 4th, Mr Yusuke Sasaki, Assistant Director, and Ms Carol Cheng, Research & Liaison Officer at CLAIR Sydney, presented for a Japanese class at the University of New South Wales.

The two CLAIR Sydney staff made the presentations at the request of Professor Yumiko Hashimoto, and there were approximately 30 students in attendance on the day. Mr Sasaki presented on the variety of Japanese dialects through a comparison of the Nambu dialect, which is spoken in the eastern part of Aomori Prefecture, and the Tsugaru dialect, which is spoken in the western part of Aomori.

Students were surprised by the differences between standard Japanese, which is what they study at university, and the two dialects. Ms Cheng gave a presentation on her Japanese study experience through studying abroad and joining the JET Programme. As Ms Cheng graduated from UNSW herself, students were able to relate to her and asked about her experiences working in a city hall in Japan.





We hope that the presentations will motivate the students to develop further interest in Japan.

2019 CLAIR Forum

On March 8th, CLAIR Sydney held the 2019 CLAIR Forum in Newcastle, in collaboration with the Institute for Public Policy and Governance at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS: IPPG).

This year's theme was Tourism Policies. Mr Glenn Caldwell, General Manager of Destination Sydney Surrounds North. Ms Carol Mills, Director of UTS: IPPG, and three of our staff members presented on different initiatives and policies related to this theme. The attendees engaged in lively group discussion after the presentations.

Newcastle was selected as the forum venue as the city is a great example of highly successful tourism policy. Newcastle prospered predominantly as an industrial city in the past, and is now flourishing anew as a popular tourist destination thanks to its stunning coastline and beautiful beaches. The city's new identity as a popular tourist destination is reflected in the high ratings on travel guides and websites.

Thank you to all the attendees for coming to the CLAIR Forum. CLAIR Sydney will continue sharing knowledge with local governments and universities in Australia.



Perth Japan Festival 2019



On March 9th, CLAIR Sydney ran a booth at the Perth Japan Festival 2019. The Perth Japan Festival is an event that showcases various aspects of Japanese culture, from traditional to modern pop culture, and this was the sixth year the festival has been held. On the day, there were performances such as Taiko drums, Yosakoi dance, and a jumbo sushi roll making event for children. Despite the rain, the entire plaza was filled with spectators who were eager to see the finale performance of Tsugaru-jamisen (shamisen music that originated from Tsugaru Peninsula) and Wadaiko (Japanese

drums).

CLAIR Sydney staff promoted various Japanese tourist destinations, including Perth's sister city Kagoshima City, at the booth of the Consulate General of Japan in Perth. The CLAIR Sydney staff also promoted upcoming events to be held in Japan such as the Rugby World Cup 2019, the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, and the World Masters Games 2021 Kansai. Although it was raining on the day, many visitors came to our booth to pick up brochures of travel destinations from all over Japan.



CLAIR Sydney will continue our activities in supporting sister city exchanges, promoting Japanese travel destinations, as well as promoting upcoming large-scale international sports events held in Japan.

Surfing's Olympic Debut at Tokyo 2020

Surfing will make its debut at the 2020 Summer Olympics, and the competitions will be held in Chiba Prefecture, which is located just outside of Tokyo. As Australia is internationally known for surfing and water sports, a delegation from the Chiba Prefectural Government recently visited Australia to learn how Australian councils implement surfing and other sporting events. On Thursday, 14th March the delegates visited the CLAIR Sydney office and discussed sports events and tourism promotion in Australia with CLAIR Sydney staff.

You may already know that the Tokyo Disney Resort is located in Chiba Prefecture, but the prefecture also has many other spectacular points of interest that you do not want to miss! Every year, Naritasan Shinshoji Temple in Chiba Prefecture hosts one of the largest bean-throwing ritual in Japan known as 'mame maki', on the day of the Setsubun Festival in February. It is believed that by throwing dried soy beans outside on the day of Setsubun, evil spirits will be scared away and you will be surrounded by good fortune for the year. Celebrities, sumo wrestlers, and kabuki actors appear at the event at Naritasan Shinshoji Temple every year to participate in the auspicious bean-throwing ritual with the 40,000 visitors.

There are also beautiful sights to see in Chiba Prefecture such as the massive field of moss phlox and poppies in spring at the Country Farm Tokyo German Village. The mysterious natural scenery at Nomizo no Taki Waterfall makes you feel as if you were in a scene from a Ghibli movie! If you are interested in Japanese history, the National Museum of Japanese History is the best place to satisfy your curiosity. Chiba is said to be one of the birthplaces of soy sauce in Japan, and the Kikkoman Soy Sauce Museum provides interesting facts of soy sauce for you to learn more about the Japanese food culture. You can also see the soy sauce production process at the factory (booking required).

Narita Airport is located in Chiba, making the prefecture a perfect location to explore after you fly in, or before you fly out of Japan! The Narita Airport Transit & Stay Program and other bus tours held in the surrounding areas are easy ways to explore and travel around the prefecture.

For more details, please see the link below:

<http://japan-chiba-guide.com/en/>

<https://www.narita-transit-program.jp/>

http://www.jrbuskanto.co.jp/narita_en/

Cowra Festival of International Understanding

From March 15th to 17th, the Cowra Festival of International Understanding was held in Cowra, a town 320 kilometres west of Sydney. The festival has been held annually since 1965, and is a community event that features a different guest nation every year. At the event, there are parades, shows and other performances related to the guest nation for visitors to enjoy, and through the festival, visitors develop understanding of the guest nation's culture and tradition. This year's guest nation was Japan, and it was the second time that Japan was featured in the festival since 1966. CLAIR Sydney ran a booth to promote Japanese Local governments, especially Joetsu City in Niigata Prefecture, which has a friendship relation with Cowra Shire



Council.

In Cowra, there is a site where a prisoner of war camp site stood during World War II. A tragic incident, the Cowra Breakout, occurred on August 5 in 1944, and 231 Japanese prisoners of war and four Australian soldiers were killed in this incident.

The cemetery for the casualties of the Cowra Breakout had been neglected for some time after the war until it was restored with the assistance of the Cowra Returned

and Services League. This initial restoration by the Cowra Returned and Services League, together with the cooperation of the Embassy of Japan, the Cowra Shire Council and the Australian Government since, has ensured the proper maintenance of the graves and the cemetery. The City of Cowra is now a symbol of the friendship between Japan and Australia.

This year will mark the 75th anniversary of the Cowra Breakout. There was a prisoner of war camp site in Joetsu City, and similar to Cowra, the prisoner of war camp site in Joetsu also had a sad history where many prisoners of war died.



CLAIR Sydney will continue to support the friendship between Cowra and Joetsu City, and through the similar sad history shared between the two cities, they hope to work together to contribute to world peace.

UQ Careers Fair 2019

On March 20th, the UQ Careers Fair 2019 was held at the University of Queensland in Brisbane. The Fair is mainly for students of the university. CLAIR Sydney joined JETAA Queensland at their booth to promote the JET Programme. We showcased the JET Programme and promoted tourist destinations in Japan to students. JETAA QLD has attended the event and promoted the JET Programme for over 10 years. While some students

heard about the JET Programme for the first time at the event, others were thinking about applying for the Programme after they graduate from the university. We found that there is a high level of interest in working in Japan, as the students were very enthusiastic and full of great questions about the requirements and the application process for the JET Programme. We hope they will succeed in Japan as JETs and beyond in the future.



Icebreaker Shirase Port of Call in Sydney

On March 20th, a reception was held on board the Japanese icebreaker, Shirase, which docked at Sydney on its way back to Japan after the 60th Japanese Antarctic Research Expedition team completed their expedition at the Showa Station in Antarctica.

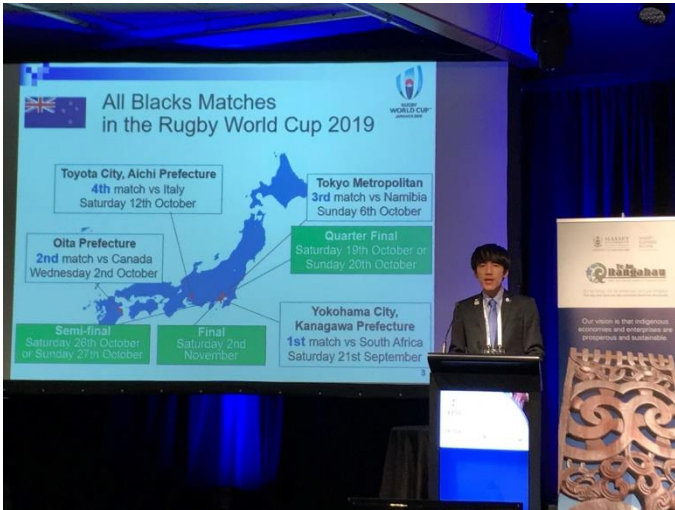
The Commanding Officer of the Shirase, Captain Koji Miyazaki, and Consul-General of Japan in Sydney, Mr Keizo Takewaka, gave speeches at the start of the reception and spoke about the active exchange activities between Australia and Japan. A Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force officer provided details of the Shirase's recent expedition in Antarctica.



During the reception, drinks garnished with Antarctic ice were served, making it a unique experience for the attending guests.

CLAIR Sydney strives to develop and maintain professional relationships with personnel involved in the Australia-Japan bilateral relationship.

Sister Cities New Zealand Conference 2019



On March 21st to 23rd, the Sister Cities New Zealand Conference 2019 was held in Palmerston North, New Zealand. There were approximately 150 attendees from government organisations, sister city committees, and universities at the conference, and discussions were held on various best practices for sister city activities and their theoretical aspects. This year, attendees came from not only New Zealand, but also Australia, United States, China, and Japan. CLAIR Sydney gave a presentation on upcoming large-scale international sporting events (such as the Rugby World

Cup, Tokyo 2020 Olympics and Paralympics, and the World Masters Games 2021 Kansai) in Japan, and what these events mean from the points of view of Japanese sister cities.

On the second day of the conference, two minutes of silence was held via a national television broadcast to mark a week since the terrorist attack in Christchurch.



We will continue to take every opportunity to promote Japanese initiatives and contribute to further exchanges of local governments between Oceania and Japan.

CLAIR Sydney expresses our sincere condolences to the victims of the attack and their families.

Sister City relationship signing ceremony between Mihara, Japan and Palmerston North, New Zealand

The sister city relationship signing ceremony between Mihara City, Hiroshima Prefecture and Palmerston North was held in Palmerston North, New Zealand on March 21st. Both cities have fostered their strong ties through sport, staff, and communication exchanges such as the Sagishima Triathlon, emergency management staff exchange, and Skype exchange.



Palmerston North Mayor Grant Smith and Mihara Mayor Yoshinori Tenma signed the agreement before many Sister Cities New Zealand Conference 2019 participants, and the new sister city partnership between Japan and New Zealand was born.



It is our sincere hope that this agreement will be a catalyst for the further deepening of many friendships and ties between the two cities for many more years to come.

Tokyo Metropolitan Koiwa High School Teachers' Visit to CLAIR, Sydney

On March 26th, Mr Takeyasu Kazami and Daisuke Shibata from Tokyo Metropolitan Koiwa High School visited our office. Koiwa High School is designated as one of Intensive English Study Schools by Tokyo Metropolitan Board of Education, and facilitates cultural awareness initiatives including employing two JET-ALTs, and conducting an overseas school trip. They visited high schools in Wellington and had a meeting with Education New Zealand, which is New Zealand's government agency for building international education. They utilised

the stopover to Wellington and came to our office. In the near future, they would like to organise a study tour to New Zealand or Australia in the summer holiday of Japan.

CLAIR Sydney gave information on student exchanges between Japanese schools and New Zealand/Australia schools. We will continue to support Koiwa High School's activities in New Zealand and Australia.

JET Programme Returnee and Alumni Career Networking Seminar

On Tuesday March 26th, the Consulate-General of Japan in Sydney hosted the JET Programme Returnee and Alumni Career Networking Seminar at the JETRO Sydney office, and CLAIR Sydney staff attended the event. A staff member of JNTO Sydney, who is also an executive committee member of JETAA NSW, delivered a keynote speech about her time on the Programme and her subsequent career path. After the keynote speech, the keynote speech presenter joined three other former JET participants in a panel discussion to talk about how the JET Programme shaped their career paths, and suggestions they have for other former JET participants. A Q&A was held after the panel discussion. The second half of the event was a networking session where everyone was able to talk about their experiences on the Programme, their lives back in Australia, and share career tips.

The seminar was a great opportunity for recent JET returnees and former JET participants to get to know one another and establish ties, and for the recent returnees to meet members of JETAA NSW.



Photos courtesy of the Consulate-general of Japan in Sydney

JETAA Canberra

As returnees from the Japan Exchange & Teaching Programme, JETAA Canberra members have had a long tradition of supporting grassroots international exchange as an ever-strengthening bridge between Australia and Japan. JETAA Canberra is proud to support several events and initiatives in the Canberra region, and works strongly together with several Canberra-based Japanese clubs and associations, namely, Canberra-Japan Club (CJC), Australia-Japan Society (AJS) ACT, University of Canberra Japan Club and ANU Japan Club. These events and initiatives include:

1. March 11 Great East Japan Earthquake Memorial Service



This memorial service commemorates the 2011 disaster and is held in front of the Peace Bell within the grounds of Canberra-Nara Park. The organization of the service is shared among the Canberra-Japan Club, Australia-Japan Society ACT and JETAA Canberra. In 2018, JETAA Canberra organized the memorial service. Several guest speakers from Canberra's Japan-related associations and the Japanese Ambassador are asked to give a memorial address. This year, JETAA President Ben Raven, was asked to speak about his experience during his time in Japan in 2011, as well as the disaster's connection to two members of the JET Programme who unfortunately lost their lives in Miyagi and Iwate Prefectures.

2. JETAA Canberra's Tohoku Youth Program Trivia Night

Every year, JETAA Canberra holds a trivia night to raise money for AJS ACT's Tohoku Youth Program. From early 2012 the AJS ACT has been running a program to bring students who lost parents in the disastrous Tohoku Earthquake and Tsunami, for a brief respite holiday in Canberra. It is an extremely fun event with well-experience quiz master duo team of Keith and Ken delivering both general knowledge questions and ones about Japan. Over 60 people attended the event on 30th June last year and we raised \$1500 towards the program. This year's event will be held on June 15th.



3. Canberra-Nara Candle Festival

The Canberra-Nara Candle festival is held every year at the end of October in the Canberra-Nara Park to commemorate the establishment of the sister-city relationship between the two cities. It is a very popular festival with over 10000 people visiting the festival. JETAA Canberra operates a community stall selling gyoza



and Japanese alcohol and promotes the JET Programme through displays and flyers. The booth is staffed by JETAA Canberra members and we thankfully have great support from the members of the University of Canberra Japan Club who are great spruikers for gyoza and of course, great chefs! The stall is filled with the sound of many voices yelling “irasshaimassssssse”. We are by far one of the most popular stalls at the festival, along with a spectacular candle light-up display within the gardens and stage performances of Japanese school students from Nara University High School. Funds raised from the stall support JETAA Canberra events and activities and also the Tohoku Youth Program.

Introducing our new staff members



Masaaki Handa

Deputy Executive Director from
City of Nagoya

Hello, my name is Masaaki Handa. I am from the City of Nagoya, located close to the centre of Japan.

As of this April, I’m the Deputy Executive Director of CLAIR Sydney.

Nagoya and Sydney have enjoyed a sister city relationship since 1980 and next year, 2020, marks the 40th anniversary of the Sydney-Nagoya sister city partnership. I am proud to work in Sydney during this memorable time.

The origins of the current city of Nagoya can be traced back to 1610, 400 years ago. Tokugawa Ieyasu moved the entire town that had been in Kiyosu to this place. Since then, the city has continued to expand and flourish, and heritage such as samurai culture still remains today.

Recently, the reconstruction of the Nagoya Castle Hommaru Palace, which was destroyed in the Second World War, has garnered a lot of attention.

If you are interested in learning more about Nagoya, you can find more information here:

<http://www.city.nagoya.jp/en/index.html>

<http://www.city.nagoya.jp/en/page/0000013904.html>

<https://www.nagoya-info.jp/en/>

This is my first time visiting Australia, but I am impressed by the beauty of the city and the kindness of the people.

Through my new role at CLAIR Sydney, I look forward to working with many new people and enhance the relationships between Japan, Australia and New Zealand.

Hello everyone, I am Hiroko Nishi. I'm from Tsu City in Mie Prefecture.

Mie Prefecture is famous for Ise Grand Shrine, Matsusaka beef, and as the place where the G7 Summit was held three years ago.

When I first visited Australia about 10 years ago, I was very impressed by the beautiful ocean. Mie Prefecture also faces the sea, but it isn't as beautiful as it is in Australia.

When my transfer to Sydney was decided, everyone envied me so much. There are many people who love Australia around me. They say that Australia is a very comfortable place to live and Australian people are very friendly.

Although I have never been to New Zealand, my niece has done a homestay there, and her host family was very kind to her. Thanks to that experience, she has become a big fan of New Zealand.

I'm very happy to live and work in such a wonderful place. For two years, I want to communicate with all of you as much as possible.

Please talk to me whenever you see me!!



Hiroko Nishi

Assistant Director from
Tsu City in Mie Prefecture



Suguru Takahashi

Assistant Director from
Kuroishi City in Aomori Prefecture

Hello everyone, my name is Suguru Takahashi. I am from Kuroishi City in Aomori Prefecture. I was a civil servant in the Kuroishi City Hall before coming to CLAIR, Sydney.

As you may know, Nebuta is the most famous summer festival in Aomori. In winter, you can enjoy skiing in deep powder snow at Mt. Hakkoda. Kuroishi city is located nearby Mt. Hakkoda and has a famous hot spring area. Please come to Aomori, especially Kuroishi, and enjoy Nebuta festival in summer, and powder snow skiing and hot springs in winter!

I am interested in astronomy. When I was in university, I studied about the inside of the Earth. I am excited to be able to see stars here that I

cannot see in the Northern Hemisphere. My hobby is photography. I spend my time off taking landscape photos and, of course, I often take photos of the stars.

This is first time to visit Australia and New Zealand, so I want to enjoy staying in Sydney and taking photos.

I would like to support international exchanges for building good relationships between Australia, New Zealand and Japan.

I am looking forward to meeting you all!

My name is Daisuke Kikuta. I was dispatched to CLAIR from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC). MIC is responsible for the fundamental framework of Japan, such as the various organisations relating to the economic and social activities of the nation, and supports the basis of the nation. One of the main responsibilities of MIC is the local administration of Japan.

Firstly, I was in charge of Japanese local finance at MIC. Two years later, I was dispatched to Ibaraki Prefectural Government. At there, I was in charge of the rationalising of administrative management of municipalities. Another two years later, I was dispatched to the Ministry of



Daisuke Kikuta

Assistant Director from
the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications

Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT), where I was in charge of planning and promotion of national land development plan (National Spatial Strategy -National Plan-). And another two years later, I was dispatched to the Fire and Disaster Management Agency (FDMA) of MIC. I worked there before coming to CLAIR.

As you can see above, I was dispatched to a variety of workplaces, but I never expected to work overseas. So, I'm very excited to be learning many new things in Australia and New Zealand. I'll do my best to enhance the relationships between Japan, Australia and New Zealand.

Finally, on a personal note, I moved here with my wife and children (three year old boy and baby). This is our first time living in a foreign country, so I'd like to enjoy and experience all there is to see and do here with my family.

I'm looking forward to seeing you soon!

From the Executive Director

- What April means for CLAIR Sydney as a Japanese organisation -

For those who missed our newsletter last month, many Japanese organisations, both public and private, set the end of March and the beginning of April as the time when staff rotations are to take place (in Japan, staff are regularly rotated into new positions and even branches depending on their company and role). Because of this, April is the season of welcoming new staff for many Japanese organisations.

Similar to other Japanese organisations, April is the month of staff transfers for CLAIR Sydney. As shown in the 'Introducing our new staff members' segment in this newsletter, four new staff members assumed their duties at CLAIR Sydney at the beginning of April.

I would be grateful if you would welcome them as you did in the past and present CLAIR Sydney members. I believe that all four new staff members are excited to enjoy their professional and private lives in Australia and New Zealand, and are looking forward to meeting you in the near future. As they have different career experiences and personal backgrounds in Japan, I hope you also look forward to hearing about their experiences, their Japanese home towns, and what they are going to do in Australia and New Zealand.

All the CLAIR Sydney team members, including the four new staff will make every effort to commit to CLAIR Sydney's mission: developing friendly relationships between local governments in Australia/New Zealand and Japan, promoting sister city relationships and supporting economic ties between Japan and Australia/New Zealand, and supporting all the former and future Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme participants.