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Our New Director: Hirotomo Akaiwa

We would like to introduce our new Director. Welcome to Sydney 😊!

I am very honoured to introduce myself as the new Director of the Japan Local Government Centre (CLAIR Sydney). CLAIR Sydney has been committed to the mission of developing and strengthening the friendly relationships between local governments in Japan and Australia/New Zealand for over 23 years. CLAIR Sydney promotes sister city relationships and supports economic ties between Japan and Australia/New Zealand. Another important mission for us is to support all the former and future Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme participants. CLAIR Sydney and I thank you for your ongoing support.



Hirotomo Akaiwa

(middle in the first row)

Director of CLAIR Sydney

From Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications

I have experience in working in the central, prefectural and municipal levels of government in Japan. Through these experiences, I have developed skills in management of local public finance, financial planning, budgeting, intergovernmental fiscal coordination, local taxation, contract management, and public asset management. Meanwhile, I also endeavoured to attain master's degrees from graduate schools in the U.S., sponsored by the Japanese Government Long-Term Fellowship Program.

My recent career is as follows:

4/2014-3/2018 Chief Executive of Finance Bureau, Fukuoka City

4/2013-3/2014 Executive Director of Finance, Department of Finance Bureau, Fukuoka City

4/2009-3/2013 Several positions at the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications

I will make every effort for the promotion and further development of good relationships between Australia, New Zealand, and Japan, together with the CLAIR Sydney team. In particular, I am looking forward to supporting local government activities.

I have been enjoying my life and work in Sydney since I arrived, and am delighted by the warm and welcoming local hospitality. I will be going on business trips to different regions in Australia and New Zealand, and I am looking forward to seeing you soon.

Hirotoomo Akaiwa

Hirotoomo Akaiwa

Local Cuisine around Japan: Vol.21

Akita



Akita Prefecture is located about 450 km directly north of Tokyo, and shares the same approximate latitude as Beijing, Madrid, and New York. People from Akita enjoy a close relationship with nature and cherish the surrounding mountains, forests and ocean. The prefecture boasts a wide selection of hot springs, the UNESCO World Heritage listed Shirakami mountain range, and many traditional festivals and regional cuisines that have been passed down through generations.

On the topic of local cuisine from Akita, there are various famous dishes such as Inaniwa Udon (an udon noodle dish that originated from the Inaniwa District), Ishiyaki dishes (dishes cooked on a heated stone) and Shottsuru Nabe (a fish sauce hot pot). However, the most famous dish is Kiritampo Nabe. It

is a hot pot style dish with rich chicken broth, vegetables, and cut up pieces of Tampo, a stick of rice made from fragrant roasted mashed rice. The soup uses chicken broth from local Hinai chicken, one of Japan's three most famous free range chickens, to create a soy sauce base soup that is light in texture but rich in

flavour. Japanese parsley is a crucial component of this dish and when added, it creates another layer of taste. When the chunky and chewy texture of the chopped Tampo pieces are marinated in this soup, it creates a flavoursome dish loved by the locals in Akita.

Kiritampo Nabe is a dish born from the combination of productive rice paddies, cold climate and good quality water in Akita Prefecture. Fermented fish seasoning Shottsuru, and fermented foods such as Miso and Koji were all created as a means to overcome the long winters, and are still popular today in Akita.

Another specialty popular with the locals is Japanese Sake, which is best enjoyed with some local dishes. Sake is also another specialty born due to the climate of Akita. In Akita, one of the leading sake production regions in Japan, there are many historic breweries founded more than 100 years ago; and the tradition, techniques, and pride of the sake makers have been passed down continuously. The locally brewed sake and local Akita cuisine add an extra touch to enjoying the history of the region.

<Kiritampo Nabe>

This is a hot pot dish cooked in special chicken soup with local ingredients such as green onion, Maitake mushrooms, burdock, Japanese parsley, and mashed rice roasted in a tubular shape.



<Babahera>

This is a locally renowned ice cream sold by elderly ladies under parasols on the streets in summer. Some of these ladies have a special technique to scoop the ice cream into the shape of a flower, so if you come across one you are very lucky! The texture of this ice cream is similar to a sherbet. At times, there are long lines formed in front of the small stalls as locals seek out this nostalgic taste.

<Inaniwa Udon>

This is a specialty from the Inaniwa District in Yuzawa City located in the southern part of Akita Prefecture. The characteristic of this handmade udon noodle is the chewy and silky texture.



Meikei High School visited CLAIR

The Deputy Director of Meikei High School, Mr Ishii, paid a visit to the CLAIR Sydney office on Tuesday, June 19. Mr Ishii visited our office to conduct a meeting with our staff to prepare for the school's excursion to Sydney in October, during which there will be a group of student from the school visiting the CLAIR Sydney office for the second consecutive year. Many Meikei High School graduates are currently playing an active role around the world. We look forward to welcoming the six students on Oct 9!



JET Programme pre-departure orientation sessions



The JET Programme pre-departure orientation sessions for new JET participants were held across Australia throughout the month of June. CLAIR Sydney attended orientation sessions held in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth, and gave information about support services available to JET participants during their time in Japan. A lot of JET alumni joined the sessions and explained about life in Japan and what the JET roles in different workplaces are like based on their experience. The new JET participants listened attentively to advice from former participants

and the question and answer sessions were full of lively discussion.

Among the new JET participants, quite a few told us that they have never been to Japan before, and said they were relieved to hear about all the support services provided by CLAIR. Every single participant has strong feelings for Japan. They are all really looking forward to starting their new life in Japan as JETs and are full of hopes to be a bridge between Australia and Jap



National General Assembly of Australian Local Government Association



CLAIR Sydney staff members attended the 2018 National General Assembly of Australian Local Government Association in Canberra from 17 to 20 of June.

The theme for this year's NGA was "Australia's Future: Make it Local". The discussion focused on a wide range of topics such as gender equality, liveable communities, and the balance between innovation and public interest. CLAIR Sydney staff

participated in various keynote sessions to learn about current challenges faced by Australian local governments.

CLAIR Sydney ran a booth to promote the upcoming Local Government Exchange and Cooperation Seminar, Japanese culture, and sightseeing destinations in Japan. We also exchanged ideas and information with many mayors and councillors during the conference. This conference was a great opportunity for us to further develop our understanding of Australian local governments.



Mayor Mark Eckel of Mildura, Australia (right), the sister city of Kumatori, Japan

The Lismore and Yamato-Takada 55th Sister City Anniversary



On June 22, the Lismore and Yamato-Takada 55th Sister City Anniversary Welcome Dinner and Reaffirmation Ceremony was held in Lismore. Staff from CLAIR Sydney were in attendance as Lismore City Council had kindly extended an invitation to us. The Mayor of Yamato-Takada City (in Nara Prefecture), Mr. Masakatsu Yoshida, and a delegation from Yamato-Takada City Government, as well as members from the Yamato Takada Lismore Sister City Association were also in attendance at the event. Established in August 1963, the sister city relationship is the first ever sister

city relationship between Australia and Japan. During the event, Mayor Yoshida expressed his desire to welcome a delegation from Lismore to Yamato-Takada City for the 60th Anniversary event, to be held in the city in the year 2023.

The following day, the delegation from Yamato-Takada participated in the annual Lantern Parade in Lismore. To commemorate the Yamato-Takada delegation's visit, the City of Lismore especially created a lantern in the shape of Yamato-Takada's mascot character, Miku-chan, which was on display during the event. Together with students from Lismore who went on exchange in Yamato-Takada, everyone who has an affiliation with the Lismore and Yamato-Takada sister city relation marched in the lantern parade.

We would like to express our gratitude to the staff at Lismore City Council for kindly inviting us to attend such a special event, and we hope the friendships between the two cities will continue to thrive in future.



Sister city activity written by Claire Stuckey

Having organised and participated in many Sister City events in Gosford City NSW, it was with great excitement that I presented English language programs at Nishi Kasai Library in Edogawa-ku recently. During a staff exchange program to Edogawa in 2010, I was privileged to meet and exchange information regarding all aspects of library service with library staff of all levels. The professional relationship between our cities developed further during a private visit when the IFLA Sister Library project, Jean Genies, a Gosford library initiative was on display.



As a professional librarian I offered to assist with English language programs as Edogawa and the new Central Coast Council acknowledge the 30th Anniversary of the Sister City agreement. I was invited to meet with Mayor Tada and other cultural representatives in the city office. My husband and I enjoyed a tour of the city including Gyosen Park. My personal offer of programs was warmly received and the adult program "Let's talk about the Central Coast" was delivered to 30 adults on April 14.

Using a range of photos provided by award winning local amateur photographers, I reflected on the diversity of the Central Coast flora, fauna and natural landscapes from the beach to the mountains. Supplementing the photos with large maps, I illustrated the many green spaces and outdoor recreation activities available including National Parks. The staff at Nishi Kasai had organised an afternoon tea with "Tim Tams" and Japanese biscuits, the atmosphere was relaxed and friendly with many questions and comments at the conclusion.

The Children's program "Let's play with English" was a great success with 65 children and 61 adults attending the library on Thursday, May 3, a public holiday! I presented picture books featuring Australian animals and birds. I also presented a traditional kamishibai story in English. The Australian animal puppets were very popular with the children who clapped and waved along with all my songs.

旧ゴスフォード市とワイオン市の合併により新たに誕生!
セントラルコースト市
 姉妹都市交流事業

講師 **Ms. Claire Stuckey**
 姉妹都市セントラルコースト市の図書館員として15年以上勤務。
 子どもたちのために、図書館での読書活動が社会学習活動と結びついている。
 江戸川区との姉妹都市提携に賛同している。

<p>一般向け</p> <p>英語で話そう 姉妹都市 セントラルコースト市 について知ろう!</p> <p>4月14日 15:00~16:00</p> <p>セントラルコースト市よりクレアさんをお迎えし、写真を見ながらゴスフォード市とワイオン市の合併により誕生したセントラルコースト市について、今年の生活や土地の景とどこぞど様々に話したいいただきます。</p> <p>同時に、参加者の方がオーストラリアやセントラルコースト市について、知りたいこと、疑問に答っていただくことも自由に質問していただけます。</p> <p>対象 中学生以上 40名 会場 西葛西図書館3階 ギャラリー 予約 4月2日(月) 午前9:00から 電話または2階窓口で受付</p>	<p>幼児・小学生向け</p> <p>Let's Play with English クレアさんと英語で遊ぼう!</p> <p>5月3日 本休 11:00~11:40</p> <p>クレアさんがオーストラリアの絵本を読んだり、歌を歌ったりしてくれます。昔ながらの物語の紙芝居も見せてくれます。</p> <p>対象 幼児(保護者同伴)と小学生 会場 西葛西図書館3階 ギャラリー 予約不要・当日受付</p>
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江戸川区立西葛西図書館
 03-5658-0751

I was welcomed once more by staff at the special Shinozaki Children's/Kodomo-Mirai-Kan Library. We exchanged updated information on children's library services, programs and collections. Edogawa City supports this fantastic facility which integrates high quality library services with a range of award winning science, environment and cultural programs.

I believe that cultural exchange between library professionals is a wonderful method of developing and extending existing and new Sister City relationships.

Claire Stuckey - Children's Librarian

Claire is a member of Society of Asian Pacific (SOAP) Central Coast. Her previous roles at Gosford City Council included Sister City Liaison Officer. She is a member of the International Federation of Librarians and International Board of Books for Young People (IBBY). Sitting on the Australian National Executive of IBBY she has also liaises with the Japanese Arm of this International Body JIBBY.

JETAA Wellington in 2018

As the capital of New Zealand, Wellington is home to the Japanese Embassy and a very multicultural community enjoying the windy city together. JETAA is proud to work closely with the Embassy to connect our alumni members, newly departing JETs, and the local Japanese community together over a shared love and appreciation of Japan.

In 2018, we've sought to increase the variety and number of events that we host, as well as improving communication with our members.

This has resulted in some fun first-time events like a sushi-making class and an upcoming trip to a local cat cafe, as well as bigger turnouts for our ongoing annual events like our New JET Orientation dinner and AGM.



Many of our activities are done alongside the Japanese Embassy's Japan Information and Cultural Centre. Every year, we assist with orientating and welcoming back Wellington JETs, creating a strong bond between the alumni and newer JETs. Most recently, a dozen JETAA members hosted a Q&A panel for the 2018 JETs at the Embassy's request, where members discussed their JET stories and used their experiences to answer questions. Several of our members gave more focused presentations the following day on topics like working with Japanese colleagues, running activities, and handling gender issues in a foreign country.

Another ongoing event we offer – made possible by the wonderful support of the Embassy – is a monthly Japanese conversation night called “Jkaiwa.” These nights are well attended and connect Japanese learners of all levels with the local Japanese community over some sushi and friendly conversation. At the end of last year, Jkaiwa had a bonenkai with a Wellington twist: a pub quiz. Groups of Japanese and Kiwi friends gathered

around to answer tricky Japan trivia over local food and drink. In addition to Jkaiwa, JETAA Wellington also organises Japanese language lessons, which run over several weeks a few times a year. We're proud to say that many new JETs over the years practiced their Japanese with us before heading to Japan!



This year will see the return of Wellington's bi-annual Japan Festival. Our members and other JET alumni are taking an active part in organising the festival alongside the Embassy and Wellington's Japanese organisations. During 2016's event, JETAA Wellington ran a very successful taiyaki booth and a stamp rally with other local groups and businesses, both of which we plan to continue. Speaking of taiyaki, we were happy to bring it out to nearby Lower Hutt for their inaugural Japan Day, which featured tonnes of great food, music performances, and handcrafts.

Wellington is a "foodie" city, and so of course we also enjoy a number of Japanese food events! We've had hands-on classes about making bento boxes - hosted by a local JET alumni who now runs a bento-making business. Another alumni member now in the Japanese food business taught us how to roll sushi. We've also hosted okonomiyaki parties, casual dinners, and a few nomikai as well.

Whether it's acting as formal, suited-up representatives of the Programme at the Embassy, or having some casual fun while talking about our adventures in Japan, JETAA Wellington greatly enjoys helping its members and the wider Wellington community stay connected with Japan. After the recent JETAA Oceania conference in Auckland, we're full of new, exciting ideas and are very much looking forward to our next fun event!

If you want to keep up with us, you can check us out online here:

Website -- www.jetaawgtn.org.nz

Facebook -- www.facebook.com/JETAWellington

Twitter -- @JETAWellington

Instagram -- @JETAWellington

Introducing our new staff

Hi everyone, my name is Sarah. I am excited to join the CLAIR Sydney team as a Research and Liaison Officer from June 2018.

I was born and raised in the beautiful coastal town of Woolgoolga near Coffs Harbour, New South Wales, and it was there that I first undertook Japanese lessons as a high school student. I visited Japan for the first time as part of a school trip when I was 14, and was incredibly moved by the beautiful Japanese landscape, delicious food, and the kindness of Japanese people.

In 2013 I spent four months in Kyoto as an exchange student before returning to Sydney. After graduating from university, I worked full time in Sydney for Macquarie University before returning to Japan as a Coordinator for International Relations on the JET Programme. Making the move from Sydney to a tiny

town with a population of only approximately 4,500 people in the countryside of Shimane Prefecture was a big change, but I am grateful to have had the opportunity to experience rural Japan and learn about Shimane's many fascinating cultural and historical features and locations.

Living in Shimane provided me with a close insight into some of the challenges faced by rural and regional areas in Japan, and deepened my interest in community and regional revitalisation, support and services for



Sarah Laverty

Research & Liaison Officer

the integration of foreign residents in Japan, and the development of workplace policies and education in Japan around topics such as gender equality, LGBTQ+, parental support and multiculturalism.

My hobbies include cooking with Japanese recipes, Kyudo, manga and anime, cosplay and karaoke. As a born and raised beach girl I love the ocean, and I enjoy all Japanese foods except the more obscure, very fishy delicacies such as uni (sea urchin), shiokara (a paste made from salted fermented seafood) and kanimiso (just Google it!). My favourite season in Japan is late summer.

Although my Japanese language ability and understanding of local governance are far from perfect, I am looking forward to increasing my knowledge, and working with everyone to contribute to Japan-Australia/New Zealand relations and deepen the bonds between our beautiful countries.

A Farewell Message from Director Katsunori Kamibo

Our Director Katsunori Kamibo has left Sydney in early July to take up his new role in Japan!

By the time you see this newsletter, I will have already departed from Sydney. So in my message this time, I am writing to bid farewell to you as my tour of duty in this splendid city of Sydney comes to an end.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all of you for the kind support and warm friendship extended to me and CLAIR Sydney during my three year tenure. Mr Hirotomu Akaiwa has replaced me as the Director. I ask you for your ongoing support for him and his team.

It was my pleasure to have the chance to meet and work with people dedicated to developing their local community and fostering friendships with Japan.

With my background of local government and decentralisation reforms for many years, it was interesting to find differences in the structure and operation of local governments between Japan, Australia and New Zealand, but what I have learnt most is the common challenges local government face, such as financial sustainability, regional cooperation and revitalising rural areas.

It is my great honour if you have learnt something new through my presentations about Japanese local government and decentralisation reforms.

I have come and stayed here in Sydney for three years with my wife and two children (an eight-year-old son and a five-year-old daughter). Our family have fully enjoyed the various Australian sites, natures and kindness. For our kids, they have spent almost half of their lives here in Australia surrounded by friendliness and kindness of their friends and teachers. My family and I will cherish the great experiences and memories we have had in the three years in Australia for the rest of our lives.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks for your kind cooperation and friendship, and I wish everyone well

in your future endeavours. I will continue to work for Japanese local public administration and strengthening the friendships between Australia/New Zealand and Japan. I hope that our paths will cross again.

All the best!

上坊勝則

Katsunori Kamibo

