



Japan Local Government Centre (CLAIR, Sydney)

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W e l c o m e t o M i e P r e f e c t u r e

There are three sacred sites in the Kii Mountain range located roughly in the centre of Japan, namely the Kumano Sanzan (Three Grand Shrines of Kumano), Koyasan, and Yoshino and Omine. There, different types of religion have been fostered over many years, such as the animistic Shintoism, and Buddhism that was introduced from China and developed in a unique way in Japan, and Shugendo spread as a mixture of Shinto and Buddhism.

Since ancient times, many people have made a pilgrimage to Kumano Sanzan from all over Japan, and three major pilgrimage routes, resulting in the formation of what is currently known as the Kumano Kodo Pilgrimage.

In July 2004, the three sacred sites and the pilgrimage routes connecting them, as well as their traditional cultures, developed





in harmony between nature and human beings over time, were recognised by UNESCO as shared properties of all humankind and registered on its World Heritage List as the 'Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range'.

The Kumano Kodo Iseji Route, one of the three routes, is the path to connect Kumano Sanzan

(Three Grand Shrines of Kumano) and Ise-jingu Shrine, a very special sacred site for Japanese people.

It is said that pilgrims in traditional pilgrimage clothing crossed a lot of steep mountains to get to Kumano after they had visited Ise-jingu Shrine.

Today, you can still enjoy the traditional landscapes and feel the rich history and culture of each area along the Kumano Kodo Iseji Route.

<http://www.kodo.pref.mie.lg.jp/en/>

The Sydney Launch of Cowra Voices

On 5 September, the Sydney launch of Cowra Voices, organised by the Australia-Japan Society of NSW was held at the Japan Foundation, Sydney.

Cowra Voices is an app that was created by volunteers as a part of the 75th anniversary projects for the Cowra Breakout. The app contains narratives and photographs from the



people of Cowra with explanations of the unprecedented history that took place in Cowra, with the purpose of post-war reconciliation and peace. It also contains information on historically important locations in the city, such as the Cowra Prisoner of War camp site.

You can download the app for free via the following link.

<https://www.cowravoces.org/>

Click on the below for the Cowra Japanese War Cemetery online database.

<https://www.cowrajapanesecemetery.org/>

Support Activities for Chugoku-Shikoku Region University Students



On 6 September, 14 university students from the Chugoku-Shikoku region of Japan visited our office. The students came to Australia on a study tour organised by the Chugoku-Shikoku Business Association of University Co-Operatives in Japan, and during their time here, they participated in cross-cultural experiences and visited business firms in Australia.

Staff members of CLAIR Sydney provided a brief outline of Australia and information on CLAIR Sydney's activities.

They also spoke about their professional careers, and the decisions behind their secondment to Australia. There were various questions from the students, including the cost of living in Australia, and the CLAIR Sydney staff members' personal career motivation. All the students listened attentively and showed a lot of interest in learning about Australia and work life.

CLAIR Sydney hopes that this visit will help the students in choosing their future career path. We will continue to welcome similar student visits to our office.



Presentation on Aomori at the Australia-Japan Tourism Cooperation Dialogue

On 6 September, the Australia-Japan Tourism Cooperation Dialogue was held in Perth, Western Australia. A staff member of CLAIR Sydney attended the event and gave a presentation on tourist destinations in Aomori Prefecture as a part of CLAIR Sydney's support activities for Aomori.

The Dialogue was held in Perth following the launch of the daily direct service between Perth and Tokyo (Narita Airport) on 1 September 2019. The Dialogue was attended by government officials from both Australia and Japan, led by Ms Julianne Merriman, Assistant Secretary of Competitiveness and Business Engagement Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and Mr TABATA Hiroshi, Commissioner of Japan Tourism Agency, respectively. Representatives from the tourism industries of both countries, such as



travel agencies and airlines, also participated in the Dialogue. The Hon. Richard Court AC, Australian Ambassador to Japan, also attended from Japan and listened to the discussions and presentations on the tourism promotion efforts by the public and private sectors of both Australia and Japan.

At the event, a staff member of CLAIR Sydney, who is seconded from Kuroishi City in Aomori Prefecture, gave a short presentation on tourist destinations in Aomori, focusing on snow activities in Aomori and the hot spring area in Kuroishi City. During the presentation, the staff member wore a 'happi' coat* with symbols that represent Aomori, such as snowflakes and apples. Feedback from the audience included an attendee who said she would like to pass on the information to her friends who are going to travel to Aomori, and another attendee who expressed keen interest in visiting traditional streets in Kuroishi City.

CLAIR Sydney will continue to support Japanese local governments' destination promotion activities in Australia.

(*The happi coat is traditional outerwear that Japanese people don at special occasions, such as festivals)

CLAIR Sydney attended the South West Festival of Japan!

On 7 September, CLAIR Sydney ran a booth at the South West Festival of Japan, held in Bunbury, Western Australia. At the Festival, we promoted tourist destinations and specialties in Setagaya, Bunbury's sister city, as well as many attractive tourism locations from across Japan. We also promoted the Rugby World Cup 2019, the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, and the World Masters Games 2021 Kansai. Ms Carol McDowall, Senior Officer of International Relations at the City of Bunbury, who is one of the participants of the Local Government Exchange and Cooperation Seminar held by CLAIR in 2018, visited our booth.



as an origami workshop.

CLAIR Sydney will continue to promote sister city exchanges and provide support for promotional activities of Japanese local governments in Australia and New Zealand. We look forward to seeing the South West Festival of Japan continue to thrive in future!

CLAIR Sydney staff member attended Macquarie University

On 10 September, a CLAIR Sydney staff member attended Macquarie University to give a presentation to Japanese Contemporary Culture students at the request of Dr Mio Bryce. The staff member spoke on her experiences on the JET Programme as a Coordinator for International Relations, studying the Japanese language, and Japanese popular culture.

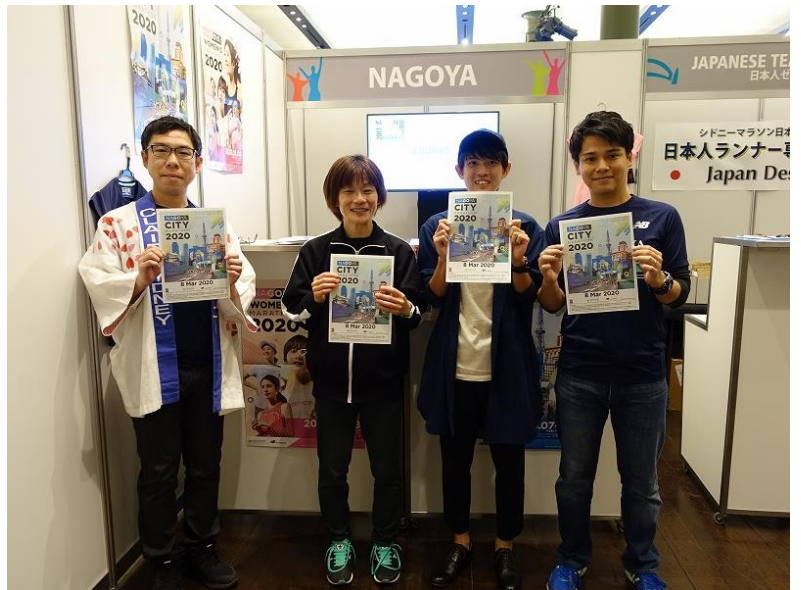
The students enthusiastically engaged with the presentation and asked great questions about volunteer, employment and study opportunities in Japan, including the JET Programme. It was great to see so many people from such a diverse range of academic courses united by their love of Japan and Japanese culture. The JET Programme is a Japanese government initiative that provides foreign workers with the opportunity to live and work in Japan as assistant English language teachers, coordinators of international relations or sport exchange advisers. This programme provides a unique life experience with the purpose of strengthening the mutual cultural understanding between Japan and other nations at a grassroots level.

CLAIR Sydney wishes the students all the best with their studies and ongoing engagement with Japan! We will continue to support Australian and New Zealand universities' efforts in the education and promotion of Japan and related opportunities such as the JET Programme.

Sydney Running Festival and Expo

From 12-15 September, the Sydney Running Festival Expo and Sydney Running Festival were held in Sydney, which shares a sister city relationship with Nagoya.

The Nagoya City Marathon and the Sydney Running Festival are sister marathon events. Every year, the winning runners from each of the two marathons are sent to participate in their respective sister marathon. There are expo events held the day before each of the marathons, where the sister cities and sister marathons are mutually promoted.



This year, two runners selected from the best performers at this year's Nagoya City Marathon ran in the Sydney Running Festival, and a booth from Nagoya City was exhibited at the expo.



On 16 September, the two runners paid a courtesy visit to Cr Robert Kok at Sydney Town Hall. Cr Kok welcomed the runners warmly and together they shared their thoughts on the marathon held the day before. The runners also interacted with members of the Sydney Nagoya Sister City Committee during the visit.

From CLAIR Sydney, a staff seconded from the City of Nagoya provided support for appointment acquisitions during the runners' visit, promotion at the Expo, assistance for the runners on the day of the marathon,

and accompanied them on their visit to Sydney Town Hall.

CLAIR Sydney will continue to support the City of Nagoya in their sports exchange and sister city exchange activities in Australia.

Showcasing Activities of Gifu Prefecture



On 13 September, the Gifu Prefectural Government hosted the Gifu Prefecture Tourism Promotion Seminar and the Gifu Prefecture Tourism, Food and Local Product Promotion Reception in Sydney. The Prefectural Government held the two events with the aim of further increasing the number of overnight visitors from Australia to Gifu, which has already seen a tenfold increase over the past nine years, as well as boosting the sales of local products from Gifu.

The Tourism Seminar was held with local travel agencies and media representatives in attendance. Seminar participants were able to find out more about the wide variety of attractions in Gifu Prefecture through dialogue with Australians who have had the experience of travelling extensively through Gifu and a presentation by a Coordinator for International Relations from the Gifu Prefectural Government. These attractions include the Historic Village of Shirakawa-go, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the various festivals listed as UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage, historic streets, castles, hot springs, traditional crafts and cycling routes amongst others. At the Reception, many representatives from the tourism and media industries, as well as representatives from the government sector in Australia, the Australia Japan Society, restaurants, and wholesalers were also in attendance.

At the Reception there were tastings of Hida beef, one of Japan's top wagyu brands, and sweetfish, which can only be found in clear river streams. There was also a presentation on Mino washi, the traditional Japanese paper which will be used to produce the certificates of merit for competitors in the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games, and performances of Gifu Ji-Kabuki (local Kabuki). Seminar participants were able to thoroughly enjoy the varied appeals of the tourism, food, and goods from Gifu Prefecture.

Before and after these events, the Governor of Gifu Prefecture Mr FURUTA Hajime conducted promotional activities in Melbourne to expand the sales of Hida beef in Melbourne, and promotional activities in Sydney to expand the sales of Hida beef, sweetfish and other local products from Gifu. Governor Furuta also met with the Australian Minister for Agriculture, Senator the Hon. Bridget McKenzie in Canberra as a part of these promotional activities.

CLAIR Sydney assisted with preparations for the Gifu Prefectural Government's visit to Australia, in response to an activity support request from the Gifu Prefectural Government. Our office will continue to support the proactive activities of the Gifu Prefectural Government to promote tourism, food and local products.

The Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force Training Squadron in Sydney

On 13 September, a reception was held by the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) Training Squadron at the Royal Australian Navy Fleet Base in Sydney.

The Training Squadron consists of the training ship, Kashima, and the escort ship, Inaduma. Both ships carry approximately 570 self-defense officers, including approximately 190 junior officers who graduated from the Officer Candidate School. The Training Squadron are spending around five months sailing around

the world, making stops at 11 different countries, including Australia, with the aim of fostering seamanship in the junior officers through training at sea, fostering the international awareness of the junior officers, and deepening friendship with the countries to be visited by the Training Squadron.

The reception began with the beautiful singing voice of Ms MIYAKE Yukari, a vocalist who is known as 'the Diva of the JMSDF'. There was an opening speech by the Rear Admiral KAJIMOTO Daisuke, Commander of the Training Squadron. At the reception, Japanese dishes were served by the JMSDF chefs on board and the JMSDF band gave musical performances. There was also a tea ceremony class held to entertain the guests. CLAIR Sydney will continue to strengthen the ties with individuals and organisations involved in the Australia-Japan bilateral relationship.



Supporting Activity for the Wakayama Prefectural Government

Representatives from Wakayama Prefecture visited Australia to promote their local products at the Wakayama Food Showcase, held in Sydney on 16 September, and Melbourne on 19 September. Attendees of the events indulged in a wide variety of dishes using ingredients such as Wakayama persimmon, which was exported to Australia for the first time last year, and umeboshi (pickled plum), sansho (Japanese pepper) and rice vinegar. Attendees were surprised to find that 'hishio' (a traditional fermented soy and wheat paste) tastes like Vegemite,



and that umeshu (plum wine) has a variety of tastes that range from sweet like dessert wine to dry like whisky. Attendees also enjoyed the rich and aromatic flavours of mikan (Japanese mandarin) and peach juice served at the events. Wakayama is known as a veritable 'kingdom of fruit' in Japan, and it lived up to this reputation at the event!

Attendees were also intrigued by food-related information that is lesser-known in Australia, such as the fact that Yuasa Town in Wakayama is the birth place of Japanese soy sauce. They also had the opportunity to learn about the unique plum growing system in Wakayama. Mr MATSUNAGA Kazuyoshi, the Consul-General of Japan in Melbourne was also in attendance at the Melbourne event and in the speech he gave, he highlighted the food in Wakayama and the appeals of Wakayama as a tourist destination.

A CLAIR Sydney staff member who is seconded from the Wakayama Prefectural Government assisted with the persimmon promotion at the booths ran by JA Kihoku-Kawakami and the Wakayama Prefectural Government at both events in Sydney and Melbourne. CLAIR Sydney will continue to support the activities of Japanese local governments in their promotion of local products in Australia and New Zealand.

Sister Cities Australia Forum 2019

On 19-20 September, the Sister Cities Australia Forum 2019 was held in Perth, Western Australia. Approximately 50 representatives from Australian local governments, sister city committees, and relevant organizations in Australia, New Zealand, United States of America and China participated in this Forum. At the forum, discussion were held on topics such as examples of outstanding sister city exchanges, management of sister city relationships, engagement of the younger generation, and the economic benefits of sister city exchanges.



The Executive Director of CLAIR Sydney gave a presentation to introduce Japanese local governments' initiatives relating to upcoming major sports events in Japan, such as the host town initiatives for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, from the sister city exchange perspective. The presentation also spoke about the Rugby World Cup 2019, which started on 20 September, and the World Masters Games 2021 Kansai. The presentation prompted a question from the audience regarding the registration to compete in the rugby sport category at the World Masters

Games 2021 Kansai. In fact, when the World Masters Games Organizing Committee made a visit to Sydney, a representative from the Blacktown Rugby Union Football Club was also present, leading to a meaningful meeting for both parties at the CLAIR Sydney Office.

At the Sister Cities Australia Forum 2019 venue, there was an area with booths run by relevant organisations. Staff from CLAIR Sydney ran a booth and networked with forum attendees who are interested in finding more about CLAIR or have an existing relationship with CLAIR. We were able to network with not only attendees from Australia, but also attendees from New Zealand and the United States of America.



CLAIR Sydney will continue to take up every opportunity to promote Japanese initiatives, and contribute to further exchanges between local governments in Oceania and Japan.

Ms KIMOTO from the Immigration Services Agency of Japan visited the CLAIR Sydney

On 25 September, Ms KIMOTO Yui, Research Fellow from the Immigration Services Agency of Japan visited the CLAIR Sydney office. The Immigration Services Agency, to be established as an agency of the Ministry of Justice of Japan, was upgraded from the Immigration Bureau in April this year. The agency oversees areas such as immigration control and managing and supporting foreign nationals residing in Japan.



Ms Kimoto visited governmental and relevant organisations in Australia to learn about the policy for immigrant and refugee social integration in Australia, which has a long history of providing settlement services for immigrants. The information and knowledge that Ms Kimoto gained will be taken into consideration for Japan's enhancement of support systems for the increasing number of foreign nationals living and working in Japan.

Assistant Director at CLAIR Sydney, SASAKI Yusuke explained Australian multicultural policies and had a discussion with her.

In April this year, Japan's Central Government introduced two new resident statuses that are specifically for labourers with expertise and specialised skills. This change is expected to complement the increasing trend of foreign residents living in Japan, however further efforts to welcome people from overseas are required. CLAIR Sydney will continue to research multicultural policies in Australia and assist Japanese local governments in their development of initiatives for intercultural society.

New Zealand SOLGM 2019 Annual Summit

The New Zealand Society of Local Government Managers (SOLGM) 2019 Annual Summit was held on 26-27 September in Napier, New Zealand. The conference is an international event with guests from not only New Zealand but also the USA, UK and Australia.

The conference featured discussions about several challenges faced by local governments in New Zealand. Ms Julie Gardyne, an alumna of this year's CLAIR's Local Government Exchange & Cooperation Seminar, gave a presentation as a panel member about crisis response and recovery.



We attended this SOLGM Annual Summit for the first time at the kind invitation of the SOLGM, with whom we networked during the LG Professionals Australia National Congress & Business Expo held in Darwin 31 July to 2 August this year.



At the Summit, CLAIR Sydney provided information about our recent activities, opportunities such as the Local Government Exchange and Cooperation Seminar, upcoming notable sports events (in particular the Rugby World Cup 2019, 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games and World Masters Games 2021 KANSAI) and Japanese tourism destinations. CLAIR Sydney was also able to strengthen our relationship with alumni of the CLAIR Local Government Exchange and Cooperation Seminar and local government managers in New Zealand.

We aim to continue to learn and research about the current challenges and best practices of New Zealand local governments, strengthen our relationship with New Zealand local governments, and support Japanese local governments.



JETAA QLD-Promoting the JET Programme at Universities in Queensland

In cooperation with the Consulate-General of Japan in Brisbane and CLAIR Sydney, JETAA Queensland has been helping to promote the JET Programme to university students. In addition to the booth that our chapter runs at the University of Queensland Career Fair which was attended by a staff member of CLAIR Sydney, a representative from our chapter has also attended two events at Griffith University; the Australia-Japan Society QLD Japan Careers Evening held on August 7, and the information session about the JET Programme at the Gold Coast Campus on October 3.

Returnee JETs have a lot to offer these kinds of events. By listening to the lived experiences of former JETs, future applicants can visualize what their lives may look like in Japan. They can also hear about the benefits of participating in the program, what skills they can expect to learn, and how these skills can help them in their future career. For some who may be a little apprehensive to apply for the program, hearing how a participant overcame adversities such as culture shock and having the opportunity to ask questions in person, may help to calm any worries. Or for those who are hearing about the program for the first time, returnee JETs can help to legitimize the program by giving their testimonial.



We received positive feedback from participants at both of these events, and it was great to see a lot of interest in the JET Programme. Some of the participants are currently studying Japanese at university, and would like to take their studies further by living and working in Japan. Others have not had any formal instruction in the Japanese language, but are interested in grassroots exchange, teaching, and learning more about Japanese culture. It is always fascinating to hear the different backgrounds of participants and how they became interested in Japan. Contrary to

popular belief, most people did not first become interested in Japan because of manga or anime. Especially in Australia, where many primary schools and high schools offer Japanese language classes, and many Japanese people reside, it is often the case that school or a personal encounter with a Japanese has led to an interest in Japan. However, the reasons are truly as diverse as JET participants themselves, and it is wonderful to see so many people pursuing their interest and dream to live in Japan.

As some of our members first heard about the JET Programme through similar information sessions at university, we recognize the importance of attending these sessions whenever possible. Additionally, it is a great opportunity for us to share our knowledge and give back to a program that we feel gave us so much. We would like to continue working closely with the Consulate-General of Japan to further promote the JET Programme to Queenslanders.



From the Executive Director

- Next Step after the Rugby World Cup 2019 in Japan-

As described in the CLAIR Sydney Newsletter No 130 Dec. 2018, the Japanese people know very well that the Rugby World Cup is a very special event for New Zealanders and Australians. Japanese people have wholeheartedly welcomed New Zealanders and Australians' visit to all areas of Japan in these exciting weeks of the Rugby World Cup 2019 in Japan.

Although it was a pity that neither the All Blacks, the Wallabies, nor the Brave Blossoms proceeded to the final match, Japanese people have been really impressed with all the players and 'no side' spirit of these three teams. I believe that the passion shared by the players, visitors and game spectators from New Zealand and Australia, and Japanese locals through the Rugby World Cup 2019 can easily transcend cultural and linguistic barriers. I think that this may be very good timing for your city to develop the existing ties with Japanese partners or initiate exchange activities with them.

If your city has any connections with the host cities or pregame host cities of the Rugby World Cup 2019, now is an excellent time to further develop these existing ties. Even if your city does not have connections with the host or pregame host cities specifically, this is likewise a good chance to further any existing relationships your city has with Japan. If your city is considering initiating any exchange activities with cities in Japan, now is the perfect opportunity.

I hope that your city will maximise the benefits which the Rugby World Cup 2019 in Japan has to offer and utilise this special opportunity as a springboard to the next stage with your Japanese partners.