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In light of the current circumstances due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, we have decided to suspend the publication of the Japan local destination travel guide section of our monthly newsletter.

We sincerely hope that through the unified commitments and efforts of local communities, industries, and countries around the world, we can win the battle against the COVID-19 virus in the near future.

-CLAIR, Sydney

## Supporting Activity for Aomori Prefecture

On 1 and 2 Feb, the World Travel Expo was held at the Sydney Olympic Park hosted by Flight Centre.

CLAIR Sydney provided support for the Aomori Prefectural Government, which had staff attending the event alongside the Japan National Tourism Organisation (JNTO), and promoted the various accommodation and activities on offer in Aomori. The large venue was filled with many attendees who were there to find their next travel destinations, many of whom visited the booth to find information on Aomori.

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



## Research in Melbourne on Government Grants for Multicultural Projects

From 4 to 5 Feb, SASAKI Yusuke, Assistant Director at CLAIR Sydney, visited Melbourne to research on government grants for multicultural projects in the state.

Mr Sasaki met with Ms Liz Lim, Acting Manager of Programs and Grants in the Multicultural Affairs Division of the Victorian Government's Department of Premier and Cabinet to learn about the Multicultural Grants Programs, the structure of the Grants team, and challenges the team faces.

The Grants team is in charge of many grants programs for multicultural communities in Victoria, and at least one grant program is open for application throughout the year. The Grants team is striving to streamline the assessment process of the grants applications by accepting applications online. However, the online application system has limitations and cannot check all the eligibilities of the applications, so Grants Officers have to check all the applications manually. Ms Lim explained that upgrading the online application system is one of their challenges.



Mr Sasaki also visited Melton, 35km north east of Melbourne CBD, and met with Ms Alexandra Maggi who is a Community Development Officer at the Melton City Council, to learn about the Council's Community



Partnership Program. The Community Partnership Program is a grant program to support projects and events organised by community groups, on the condition that the groups are working together with other groups from culturally, religiously, and socially diverse backgrounds. The Program aims to foster mutual understanding between different groups. The program is managed by Council Officers who provide support to community groups throughout the annual life cycle, from planning to implementation, to helping build community groups' capacity.

Mr Sasaki will complete his CLAIR report with an aim to provide information to Japanese municipal and prefectural governments to assist with the planning and implementation of their multicultural initiatives.

## The Auckland Japan Day 2020

The Auckland Japan Day 2020, the largest Japanese festival in New Zealand that attracts thousands of visitors each year, was held at the ASB Showgrounds in Auckland on 9 Feb.

The event was packed with visitors, and was a fantastic way for them to experience Japanese culture, with classes such as kimono wearing, tea ceremony, calligraphy, karate and sake tasting at the venue. The event also featured performances such as Japanese



drums, Japanese harp, Noh dance, and Yosakoi Soran dance on the indoor stage, and performances of mochi pounding and a Mikoshi performance outdoors, and much more.



CLAIR Sydney ran a booth at the event for the first time next to the Consulate-General of Japan in Auckland and Auckland JETAA (JET Alumni Association), and provided visitors with information on tourist destinations all across Japan. CLAIR Sydney staff also handed out information on the Tokyo 2020

Olympics and Paralympics Games, the World Masters Games 2021 KANSAI, and the 19th FINA World Championships 2021 Fukuoka & 19th FINA World Masters Championships 2021 Kyushu.

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



## JET Programme New Returnees Reception in Christchurch

On 10 Feb, the Consular Office of Japan in Christchurch hosted a reception for new returnees of the JET Programme.

Three returnees joined the reception and were praised for their success on the JET Programme and welcomed warmly by the reception attendees.

One of the recent returnees is already involved in JETAA (JET Alumni Association) activities as a member of the JETAA South Island Chapter.



We hope that all returnees will be ambassadors for the Programme and further strengthen the relationship between New Zealand and Japan by utilising their JET Programme experiences.

# Reception Celebrating the Birthday of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan in Sydney



On 11 Feb, a reception celebrating the birthday of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan was held at the Official Residence of the Consul-General of Japan in Sydney. This was the first reception to celebrate the birthday of his Majesty Emperor Naruhito after his accession to the throne, which marked the start of the Reiwa Era. There were more than 250 guests invited to the reception, which included various representatives from the NSW Government, Japanese government organisations, companies, and affiliated organisations.

CLAIR Sydney ran a booth at the reception to provide general information and tourist destination information on Japanese local governments that have a sister city relationship with local government areas in New South Wales and the Northern Territory, the two Australian states under the jurisdiction of the Consulate-General of Japan in Sydney. Many guests who visited our booth showed a keen interest learning about sister city exchanges between Australia and Japan, and some of them stopped by to find information on the local governments in Japan that have a sister city relationship with their local council area.

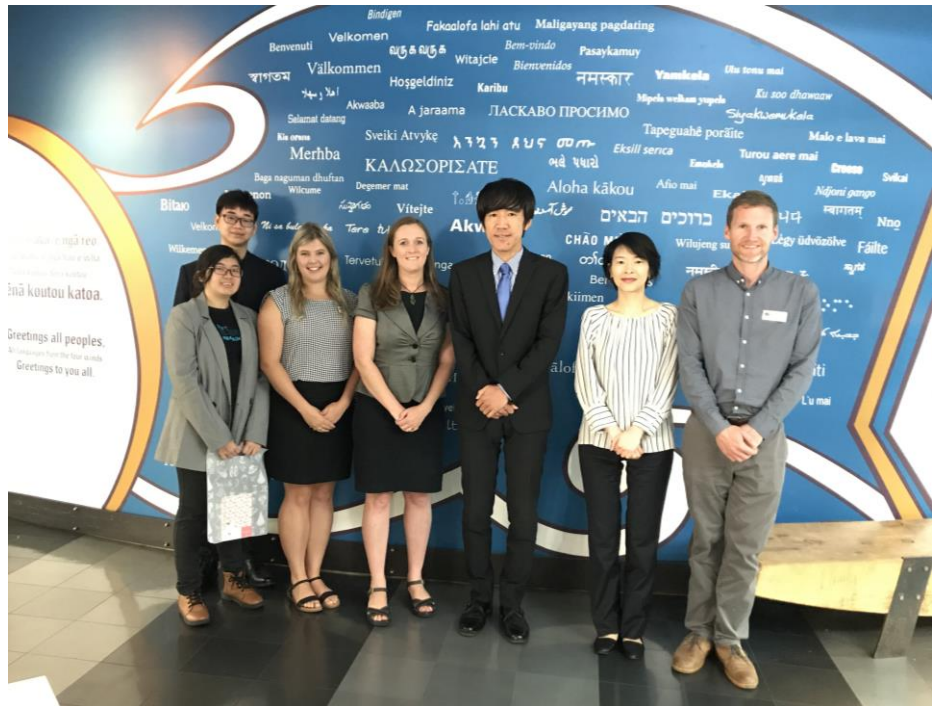
CLAIR Sydney will continue to support sister city exchanges between Australia/New Zealand and Japan.



# Visit to Palmerston North City Council

On 12 Feb, CLAIR Sydney staff members visited Palmerston North City Council in New Zealand.

The number of foreign-born residents in Palmerston North City has increased in recent years, accounting for 20% of the population. Statistics New Zealand projections suggest that Palmerston North will become significantly more ethnically diverse in the future.



Palmerston North City has actively engaged in international exchange activities with its global partners, including Mihara City in Hiroshima Prefecture, with which Palmerston City established a partnership last March.

Thanks to the kind assistance of Council staff, CLAIR Sydney staff were able to learn about Palmerston North City Council's implementation of its 'Welcoming Communities' initiative. Palmerston North City Council has promoted this initiative to support new residents to the city, with the accreditation of Immigration New Zealand. CLAIR Sydney staff were also able to learn about the Council Liaison Officer's strong connections with the large number of cultural communities in the city, and the activities of the two 'Palmy Global Ambassadors' who will join the Festival of Cultures in Palmerston North. The week-long festival is held annually in celebration of the city's diversity.

CLAIR Sydney will continue to research ethnic diversity initiatives in New Zealand and Australia, and assist Japanese local governments with developing intercultural society strategies.

# JET Programme Returnees Reception (Wellington)

On 12 Feb, the 2020 JET Programme Returnees Reception was held at the Official Residence of the Ambassador of Japan to New Zealand.



Eight recent returnees attended the reception and were warmly welcomed and praised for their success in Japan by all of the reception attendees.

At the reception, the Ambassador of Japan to New Zealand, President of JETAA Wellington, and Executive Director of CLAIR Sydney all gave welcoming speeches. The returnees also gave a speech each and spoke about their memories of Japan.

The reception was an excellent opportunity for the JET community in Wellington to get to know one another as the returnees and reception attendees, which included past JET Programme participants, shared their experiences and future aspirations in the networking session.

We hope that all the recent returnees will make the most of their experiences in Japan, and that they will continue to play an important role to further strengthen the relationships between New Zealand and Japan.



# SCNZ Central New Zealand Regional Forum



On 13 Feb, the Central New Zealand Regional Forum hosted by Sister Cities New Zealand (SCNZ) was held in Wellington, New Zealand. Representatives from local governments, sister city committees and more were in attendance.

At the Forum, there were information given out about the upcoming Sister Cities Conference 2020, to be held in Ashburton, and discussions on a wide range of topics such as the role of SCNZ in future.

CLAIR Sydney gave a presentation on CLAIR's activities, as well as upcoming large-scale international sporting events, such as the Tokyo 2020 Olympics and Paralympics and the World Masters Games 2021 Kansai in Japan, and what

these events mean from the perspective of sister city relationships between New Zealand and Japan.



We will continue to support the exchange between Japan and New Zealand by collaborating with Sister Cities New Zealand.





# 2019/2020 CLAIR Forum



On 20 Feb, CLAIR Sydney held the 2019/2020 CLAIR Forum at the Japan Foundation, Sydney, in collaboration with the Institute for Public Policy and Governance and Centre for Local Government at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS: IPPG).

CLAIR Forum is the event for staff of CLAIR Sydney and UTS: IPPG, and representatives from local governments to present and discuss strategies of their organisations and the results of their researches concerning common challenges faced by local

governments in Japan, Australia and New Zealand.

This year, 35 participants gathered at the Forum under the theme of 'Local Governments and Environmental Challenges'. At the event, four CLAIR Sydney staff and two guest presenters made a comprehensive presentation each on local governments' policies and strategies that address environmental challenges in Japan and Australia. Many meaningful discussions took place during the Q+A sessions and networking sessions.



Thank you to all the attendees for coming to the event and thank you very much to UTS:IPPG and our wonderful guests speakers for your kind contribution to this year's CLAIR Forum.

We will continue to share knowledge and information with local governments and universities in Australia and New Zealand, and be involved in events and activities that are beneficial for both Japan and Australia/New Zealand local governments.



## Melbourne Japanese Summer Festival 2020

On 23 Feb, the Melbourne Japanese Summer Festival 2020 was held at Federation Square in Melbourne, Victoria.

CLAIR Sydney ran a booth at the event and promoted tourist destinations in regional Japan. On the day, one of our staff members even dressed up as SAKAMOTO Ryoma, the famous historical figure from Kochi Prefecture. At the booth, our staff also provided visitors with information on the Tokyo 2020 Olympics and Paralympics Games, the World Masters Games 2021 KANSAI, and the 19th FINA World Championships 2021 Fukuoka & 19th FINA World Masters Championships 2021 Kyushu. Many guests visited the CLAIR Sydney booth to find information on tourist destinations to visit in between watching the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Japan, as well as destinations for cherry blossom viewing and cycling.



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



# Sugito Sister City Delegates Participate in Iconic Busselton Jetty Swim as Part of 25th Anniversary Celebrations

*Written by Ms Tonia Kilian, City Relationships Officer of City of Busselton*



The City of Busselton welcomed twelve delegates from their sister city - Sugito, Japan in February as part of the Sister Cities community cultural exchange program.

Organised by the City of Busselton and Busselton and Sugito Sister Cities Association (BASSCA), members of the delegation included Mr TAKEUCHI Yasuki, Deputy Mayor of the Town of Sugito.

Guests were hosted by community members from Busselton, Dunsborough and Margaret River, and enjoyed sightseeing throughout the region.

The delegation were in Busselton to take part in the celebrations for the 25th anniversary of the Busselton Jetty Swim.

Mr FURUYA Hiroki, 30, and Mr SAKURAI Masao, 73, competed in the Busselton Half Marathon on Saturday, Feb 8, and Ms SHIMAZU Keiko competed in the One Mile Busselton Jetty Swim the following day. Ms Shimazu said her time in Busselton was enjoyable and competing in the Jetty Swim marked her first time swimming in the ocean.

“I enjoyed myself very much in the Jetty Swim... I wanted to stay in Busselton for a while,” she said.

“Such a nice place, nice people.”



Hosts will have their hospitality returned when a group from the City of Busselton travel to Sugito in July for the Japan 2020 Olympic Torch Relay and the Furutone River Floating Lantern Festival.

Mr Furuya said he looked forward to hosting a Busselton local later this year.

“ I hope that they enjoy Japanese culture, customs and difference between Australia and Japan,” he said.

## Life-long passion for Japanese Culture recognised with Life Membership

*Written by Ms Tonia Kilian, City Relationships Officer of City of Busselton*

Busselton and Sugito Sister Cities Association (BASSCA) President, Pauline Vukelic was recognised recently for her work with the City of Busselton's sister city relationship with Sugito Japan.

Pauline has been involved with BASSCA since 2001 and after taking on the Presidency of BASSCA in 2014, has overseen significant changes within the association.

Pauline's passion for all things Japanese began in the 1970s when as a 14 year old girl living in the small WA town of Northampton when her family hosted two Japanese students as part of the Geraldton/Kobe Lions Club Exchange Programme.

Her eyes widened to the opportunities within the wider world and she subsequently went on to participate in numerous exchanges to Japan herself and ultimately gained a scholarship to attend Keio University in Japan where she majored in Japanese studies. She also completed a BA in Asian Studies at Curtin University.

Always generous with her time and expertise, Pauline's involvement with the student and cultural exchange programmes has been invaluable.

She is a passionate advocate of the sister city relationship at local, state and international levels.

Pauline maintains a special relationship with the Consulate-General of Japan in Perth, the local Japanese community and she continues to visit Japan and Sugito regularly.

Pauline has a special talent for seeing opportunities at every level and works to leverage those advantages to the benefit of the sister city relationship and to the Busselton community.

Photo: Pauline Vukelic (centre) with the Consul-General of Japan in Perth, Mr SUZUKI Toru (right) and his wife Kumi (left). Photo taken at the Emperor of Japan's Birthday Reception at the Consul-General's Official Residence.



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# Farewell Messages

Our Assistant Directors NARITA Shizuka, TANIMOTO Takanori, and SASAKI Yusuke are leaving Sydney at the end of March to take up their new roles back in Japan.

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**NARITA Shizuka**  
Assistant Director  
from Wakayama Prefecture

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to every one of you whom I have met in Australia and New Zealand. It feels like yesterday when I first landed in Australia to take up my post at CLAIR Sydney. Australia is the first ever overseas country that I have visited and lived in. I am leaving Australia now and have mixed feelings as I have come to develop so much more affection for Australia and New Zealand than what I had imagined when I left Japan three years ago.

When I reflect on my time in Sydney, there are three highlights.

In the first year, I was in charge of organising our annual Multicultural Seminar, a study seminar for representatives from Japanese local governments to visit Australia to learn about the multicultural policies in Australia. The year I was in charge of organising the event was the first time in CLAIR Sydney's history that the seminar was held in Victoria. It was challenging for me to organise the seminar, but thanks to the kind and accommodating people of Victoria, the seminar was a huge success. I learned not only about multiculturalism in Victoria, but also Victorians' positive attitude to realise social inclusion. It was a real eye-opener for me.

In the second year, I visited the Meander Valley Council in Tasmania for a one-week study trip. I initially met the Mayor of the Meander Valley Council, Mr Craig Perkins at an ALGA Conference in Canberra and expressed my interest in visiting the council area as I know of some similarities between Meander Valley and Wakayama, where I am seconded from. Subsequently, Mayor Perkins gracefully invited me to visit his council for my study trip. I was very impressed by how local business owners dedicate themselves to the farming and tourism industries in different areas within Meander Valley.

In the third year, I mainly worked with the different Australian and New Zealander JETAA chapters. Their passion and love for Japan and the JET Programme are very inspiring and I really appreciate their contribution to the promotion of the JET Programme and the development of further close friendships between Australia, New Zealand and Japan.

I feel that I have come a long way when I have lunch with my Australian friends in the city centre of Sydney. We are all currently facing an unprecedented difficult period that no one in our generation has ever experienced before, but I truly hope we will be able to overcome this together. I look forward to seeing all of you again in the near future.

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G'day and Kia Ora everyone!

Two years ago, I moved to Sydney from Japan with many dreams and aspirations. At the time, I wrote the following in my self-introduction article.

*I am really excited for the new encounters in the future because I will try hard so that I can become a bridge between Australia/New Zealand and Japan.*

Now, if I ask myself whether I have achieved the goal I have set for myself, the answer is "Yes!".



**TANIMOTO Takanori**

Assistant Director from Kochi Prefecture

Through my professional and personal life in Sydney, I have met many people and have had countless meaningful conversations, from which I gained ideas and inspirations for my future.

What is the basis of internationalisation? I believe it is to cherish the time spent with those you meet, listen to their opinions, and enjoy the conversations you have with them. The wonderful people I have met in Australia and New Zealand taught me the importance of knowing other cultures and acknowledge each other's differences.

I believe in the Japanese saying of 'people are treasures, personal connections are assets', and I am very glad that my family and I could make many wonderful friends during our time in Australia and New Zealand.

I will miss you, and you may miss me, but we can meet again in Kochi Prefecture!

From the bottom of my heart, I am grateful to all the people I have met in the past two years!

Cheers and Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa

Taka



**SASAKI Yusuke**

Assistant Director from Tokyo  
Metropolitan Government

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to everyone I have met in Australia and New Zealand in the past two years. It was my great pleasure to be able to contribute to fostering grassroots exchanges between Australia/New Zealand and Japan. Every single moment I worked and talked with everyone I have met was a learning experience for me. Similarly to other CLAIR staff, this was my first time living outside of Japan and I had countless joyful memories despite facing difficulties at times, e.g. I missed onigiri from Japanese convenience stores. I will treasure the great experiences and memories I had in Sydney for the rest of my life, and I am sure so will my wife and my 11-month-daughter.

I will return to Japan to work for the people of Tokyo at the Tokyo Metropolitan Government. I am sure that I will miss the Australian laid-back lifestyle. Once again, I would like to extend my appreciation to everyone who kindly supported me and CLAIR Sydney during my time here, and I look forward to seeing you again in Tokyo!

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## From the Executive Director

- Networks with Past Participants of  
CLAIR's Annual Local Government Exchange & Cooperation Seminar -

For the past twenty-five years, CLAIR has been holding the Local Government Exchange & Cooperation Seminar every financial year which offers eligible participants in Australia and New Zealand the opportunity to visit Japan and exchange ideas and expertise with Japanese public servants on recent challenges faced by local governments. Under the Seminar program in recent years, every year, five successful applicants from Australia and New Zealand have been visiting Tokyo and a chosen regional area for over a week to learn about Japanese local governments and culture.

In the Seminar held in this financial year, five participants from local governments and a university in Australia and New Zealand had a very productive 10-days in Tokyo and Miyakonojo City in Miyazaki Prefecture. The theme for this financial year's seminar was 'Encouraging Local Development through Primary Industries: Local Industry Promotion'. Participants learned not only theoretical aspects of the Japanese local government system, but also had first-hand experiences in learning about local government issues in Japan such as primary industries promotion, regional revitalisation, and initiatives to tackle the declining birth-rate and population in regional areas.

From time to time, staff of CLAIR Sydney meet with past participants to catch up with them and discuss recent challenges in local governments. We also invite them to visit us at booths we run at various conferences held by organisations such as the Australian Local Government Association, Local Government New Zealand, Local Government Professionals Australia, Local Government NSW and the New Zealand Society of Local Government Managers, as well as events we organise such as the annual CLAIR Forum.

CLAIR Sydney highly values the networks we have with past participants of the Seminar, and we are also extremely pleased to see the development of networks amongst the past participants. We believe through these networks, we can share knowledge and ideas on recent local government challenges and join force to establish and maintain good relations with the wider network of local governments in Australia, New Zealand, and Japan. We hope that the networks between CLAIR Sydney and the past participants, as well as the extended networks amongst the past participants, will remain strong and that they will bring positive influences on local governments of Australia, New Zealand, and Japan.