



NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the revamped CLAIR Sydney Newsletter! After taking a six-month break, this is the first CLAIR Sydney Newsletter we have published since the first wave of the COVID-19 Pandemic. We will be releasing our Newsletter periodically, so please stay tuned for further editions. For further information about our release schedule, please see the 'From the Executive Director' section.

During the past several months, we have reduced face-to-face contact with our partners in compliance with COVID safe measures. Despite this, we have been keeping ourselves busy by participating in several online meetings, which you can find reports of in this edition.

Recently, after much delay, we also welcomed four new Assistant Directors to our office. Please see their self-introductions in the following pages.

We have started attending in-person events and meetings in the past few weeks and look forward to continue working with our partners into the New Year!

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WELCOME TO FUKUI

Fukui Prefecture is located in central Japan, right next door to Kyoto and to the south of Kanazawa, making it a convenient place to stop by for a visit on the way to these two popular destinations.



Fukui offers visitors a rare opportunity to experience what Japan was like in different periods of the country's rich history. Some major attractions include the Fukui Prefectural Dinosaur Museum, which is amongst the world's three largest; the Eiheiji Temple, which was established during the Kamakura Period (1185-1333) and is still used as a Zen Buddhist training site to this day; and the Ichijodani Asakura Clan Historic Ruins, the first site in Japan to recreate an entire town to portray everyday life during the 'sengoku' Warring States era (1467-1568).



In the Wakasa area in southern Fukui, you can admire the breathtaking scenery offered by the Sea of Japan and the deeply indented coastline, as well as the Satoyama Satomi Lake, a scene reminiscent of ancestral Japan. You can also take part in various activities to make the most of these natural blessings in the area!

One of the attractions we highly recommend is Tojinbo. Tojinbo is a place of scenic beauty where there is a kilometre-long stretch of serrated cliffs

formed over time by coastal erosion from the rough waves of the Sea of Japan. It is said that the unique geological formation can only be seen in three places across the world. There is no fence on the site, so you can go up to the very edge of the cliff, which is sure to be a thrilling experience! There is also the option to enjoy a ride on a sightseeing boat to see the cliffs from the sea, another great way to take in the impressive panoramic views.

Fukui Prefecture is also well-known for being the origin of the Wakasa-nuri lacquered chopsticks, which have been designated as works of national traditional crafts by the Government of Japan. Obama City, in the south of Fukui, is responsible for 80% of the lacquered chopsticks production in Japan. We would love for you to partake in a Wakasa-nuri polishing workshop while you are in the area! To make a pair of the beautiful lacquered chopsticks, the idea is to polish them with sandpaper so that the eggshells, seashells, gold leaves and other ornaments buried in the multiple layers of lacquer appear on the surface to form a lovely pattern, creating every time a finished product that is unique in the world.

We can't wait for you to come and experience the pristine nature and traditional Japanese culture on offer in Fukui Prefecture once the border restrictions have been lifted between Australia/New Zealand and Japan!

Introducing Our New Assistant Directors

Hello everyone, my name is Munekazu Kosugi and I am seconded from the Konosu City Government in Saitama Prefecture. I worked at Konosu City Hall as a public servant before coming to CLAIR, Sydney.

Konosu City has earned the nickname of 'Flower town' in recent years as it is one of the largest flower production regions in Japan. Konosu City is one of the origins of the Japanese hina doll and has a 400-year

history in producing these beautiful dolls.

Please visit Saitama, especially Konosu City on your next visit to Japan. I highly recommend visiting the city in autumn to enjoy the large firework festival that takes place in the city.

My hobby is outdoor adventurous sports such as mountain climbing and camping. I have travelled across Japan to climb and hike across mountains, cliffs and rivers. I am excited to see the nature and scenery in Australia and New Zealand that I cannot see in Japan. This is my first time visiting the Australasia region and I would like to spend my spare time outdoors as much as possible.



Munekazu KOSUGI

Assistant Director from
Konosu City in Saitama Prefecture

I would like to support international exchange between Australia/New Zealand and Japan to further the friendly relationships between the countries.

I am looking forward to meeting everyone in Australia and New Zealand!



Ryota ICHINOSE

Assistant Director from
Tokyo Metropolitan Government

Hello, my name is Ryota Ichinose and I am seconded from the Tokyo Metropolitan Government. I was born and raised in Osaka which is famous for its Japanese comedy culture and people who are really fun to be with. I have been heavily influenced by this culture so even after moving to Tokyo, my personality is still like the people from Osaka and I am often told that I am a typical Osaka person.

People also tell me that if they were to describe me with one Chinese character, they would choose “動” which means “movement” because I really like strolling around places I am unfamiliar with and visiting new places to explore.

Besides that, I love reading manga, Japanese comics, and I have more than 1,000 mangas in Japan. If you are looking for someone who can talk a lot about manga, please talk to me whenever you want!

It is my great pleasure to experience living and working here, and I am so excited about the opportunities to interact with people in Australia and New Zealand!



Aika FUKUDA

Assistant Director from
Wakayama Prefecture

Hello, I am Aika Fukuda from the Wakayama Prefectural Government in the Kansai region of Japan. I was born and raised in Wakayama, so I decided to work for my home prefecture. Wakayama has great food and many beautiful natural wonders and scenic areas. When you visit Wakayama, you can eat a lot of fresh seafood and fruits and you can also try many wonderful outdoor activities in nature! I do hope you can come to Japan and visit Wakayama in the future.

Visit Wakayama: <https://en.visitwakayama.jp/>

I have never lived abroad and have only visited one country overseas up until now, so I am very excited and a little anxious about the challenges I will face in my new life in Sydney. I am also excited about getting to know what people in Australia and New Zealand are like, their lifestyles and ways of thinking, and learn about the organisation of government institutions and so on in Australia and New Zealand.

I am proud of being able to work in Australia and will do my best as a staff of CLAIR Sydney and the Wakayama Prefectural Government.

Hello, everyone. My name is Yuya Negi and I am from Fukuoka Prefecture, which is located in Kyushu, the southernmost island of Japan's four main islands.

Fukuoka is the birthplace of "Hakata Ramen" (pork-bone broth with noodles), which is gaining popularity around the world. Fukuoka, known as a "gourmet prefecture", also has iconic dishes such as Mizutaki (chicken hot pot), Yakitori (grilled skewers) and Gomasaba (mackerel sashimi). Besides food, there are also plenty of local tourism destinations and events such as hot springs, historical shrines (e.g. Dazaifu shrine), Japanese sake breweries and summer festivals. Fukuoka is an ever-growing city with one of the highest population growth rates of young people. Travelling to the city is also really easy and convenient as the airport is only five minutes away from the city centre by metro. I hope that there will be more people from Australia and New Zealand who will come and visit my hometown.



Yuya NEGI

Assistant Director from
Fukuoka Prefecture

I was amazed by the grandness of nature and the kindness of people in New Zealand when I visited for the first time on a school trip. I am really grateful for the chance to be able to come to Oceania again. I believe this will also be a great experience for my two children to discover different cultures and interact with people in the multicultural societies of Australia and New Zealand.

I cook every day as a hobby, and would like to cook with local products, especially fresh seafood, and serve the Japanese dishes I cooked to the locals here.

Through my role at CLAIR Sydney, I look forward to meeting many of you and creating mutually beneficial relationships between Australia/New Zealand and Japan!

LGAQ Sister City Group Meeting



On 2 Jul, CLAIR Sydney attended an online sister cities meeting organised by the Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ). Approximately 20 representatives from the Queensland Government, local councils across Queensland, and Sister Cities Australia also attended the meeting. A number of local councils with representatives in the meeting have sister city relationships with local governments in Japan.

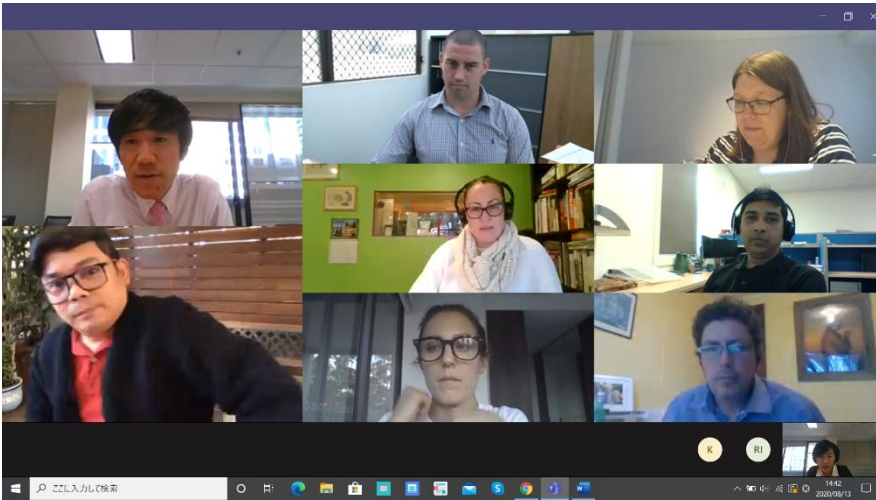
In the meeting, there was a report on the current situation of sister city relationships, as well as dynamic discussions on the future of sister city relationships.



CLAIR Sydney attended the meeting at the invitation of the LGAQ. In the meeting, we gave a presentation to promote further sister city exchanges between Australia and Japan and spoke about CLAIR's activities, the status of sister city exchanges in Japan, characteristics of sister city exchanges between Australia and Japan, and introduced the benefits of attending the World Masters Games 2021 Kansai and the Host Town initiative for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

CLAIR Sydney will continue to leverage similar online opportunities to contribute to the furthering of interactions between local governments in Japan and Oceania.

Japanese Local Governance Lecture at the UTS Graduate Program



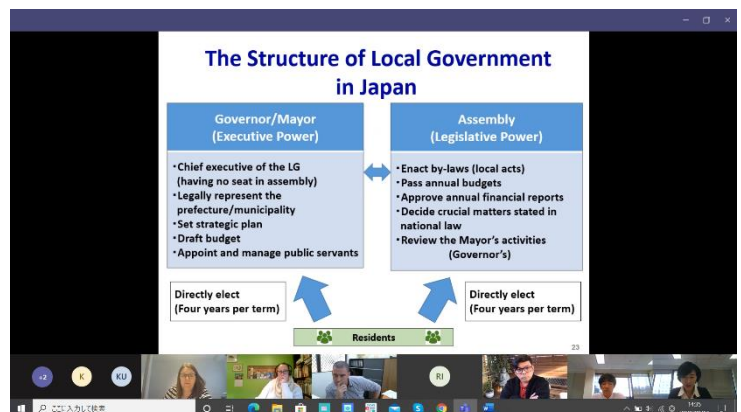
On 13 Aug, a CLAIR Sydney staff member delivered an online lecture on Japanese local governance as one part of a lecture series on comparative local governance for the Master of Local Government Program at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS). The opportunity to present arose after the Institute for Public Policy and Governance (IPPG) & Centre for Local Government extended an invitation to

CLAIR Sydney.

CLAIR Sydney and IPPG UTS have fostered a strong partnership in recent years. The two organisations have been co-hosting the annual CLAIR Forum in the past where participants from CLAIR Sydney, IPPG UTS, local councils in Australia, and other relevant organisations give presentations and hold discussions over local government policy topics that are common to Australia/New Zealand and Japan.

In the lecture, the CLAIR Sydney staff member provided background on a wide variety of similarities and differences between local governance in Australia and Japan to the attendees, which include local government professionals who are undertaking the master degree program. The lecture covered topics including national institutional governance systems, the position and role of local governments, local government administration, intergovernmental financial structures, and public financial conditions in Australia and Japan.

During the Q&A session, the attendees asked insightful questions regarding Japanese local government such as the structure of local governments, the personnel rotation system and local public finance. There were productive discussions in the session as there are significant differences between local governments in Australia and Japan.





CLAIR Sydney will continue to work closely and conduct research with distinguished experts from UTS and other academic institutions to provide Japanese local governments with relevant and quality information on topics such as the similarities and differences in institutional local governance system and current local government policy topics in Oceania and Japan.

Study Tour at the City of Newcastle



KIKUTA Daisuke, an Assistant Director at CLAIR Sydney recently underwent a study tour at the City of Newcastle in New South Wales. Mr Kikuta began his study tour on 23 Oct by participating in an online meeting held by the City Taskforce led by the City of Newcastle.

This City Taskforce is a specialised team newly created by the City of Newcastle to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, and is composed of 17 members including the Lord Mayor Cr Nuatali Nelmes and the CEOs of Newcastle's key organisations. Mr Simon Massey, Economic Strategy & Government Relations Manager of the City of Newcastle, kindly accommodated Mr Kikuta's request and invited Mr Kikuta to attend the online meeting prior to his field-based research in the city.

In the following week, Mr Kikuta visited the City of Newcastle and met with multiple city staff to discuss the City's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the City's Smart City and Safe City initiatives, which include the promotion of the nighttime economy.





During his time at the City of Newcastle, Mr Kikuta visited the digital library that was newly opened in September 2020 and a five-megawatt solar farm, watched a live stream of the City of Newcastle's Ordinary Council Meeting, and participated in meetings held by the City's staff members. Overall, Mr Kikuta gained great insight about local governance of the City of Newcastle from multiple perspectives.

Mr Kikuta is extremely thankful to Mr Simon Massey who kindly accommodated his request despite the currently ongoing COVID-19 pandemic; and Ms Caitlin McCulloch, Senior Administration Officer, who promptly organised the schedule and details despite the short notice. Mr Kikuta would

also like to express his deepest appreciation to all the staff who took time to meet with him in Newcastle.

JETAA SI



Currently Spring in Christchurch and we've had beautiful Sakura bloom, cold wet weather as well as sunny hot weather. The last few months have been a departure from regular life for everyone. However, JETAA South Island NZ has been staying active in the current environment.

Every two months JETAA SI hosts a J-Kaiwa at the local cafe/bar, Space Academy. It has become a staple in the Christchurch Japanese community over the past two years, with up to

50 people attending each event. Attendees are divided into groups with a mix of native Japanese speakers and non-native Japanese speakers. We have 30 minutes of English speaking only, followed by a quiz created by a committee member, then we switch to Japanese speaking only for the final 30 minutes.

In January this year, we held our first J-Kaiwa for 2020. Unfortunately, our March J-Kaiwa was postponed due to the pandemic and lockdown. It wasn't until July when we could finally hold another J-Kaiwa. We did not expect a large crowd, believing most people would still be nervous to go out after lockdown and recognising that most of the Japanese student population had already left New Zealand. We were surprised by the turn-out!

In total, there were 49 people who attended our July J-Kaiwa, including new attendances coming from word of mouth, Japanese working-holiday visa holders, and even recent successful JET applicants. There was a clear desire for people to re-engage with their local Japanese community.

Everyone had a great night and we are thankful for the community's continued support for our J-Kaiwa events. Our next J-Kaiwa is at the end of November.

We hope our fellow JETs, Alumni, and friends around the world can stay safe and healthy!

From the Executive Director

-Resumption of Publication of the CLAIR Sydney Newsletter-

After announcing the temporary suspension of the publication of the CLAIR Sydney Newsletter in April, we are recommencing the publication of our newsletter from this month. The CLAIR Sydney newsletter is an essential medium for us to share our recent activities with our readers and friends, and all of us at CLAIR Sydney are delighted to resume the publication of our newsletter. For the time being, we will publish the newsletter intermittently while the volume of our activities gradually returns to normal.

In the past six months, we have continued our activities on a reduced scale. Following the easing of travel restrictions and other rules under the Public Health Act, to restore the regular function of our office, we will actively seek to expand our day-by-day operation and increase our activities in a COVID safe manner.

In October, four new Assistant Directors have arrived in Sydney from Japan after some delay. You can find their introductions in this newsletter and I am sure they are all looking forward to meeting you at upcoming events and meetings.

We have noticed that in the past few months, local governments and schools in Australia/New Zealand and Japan have shifted their methods of communication from face-to-face to virtual-based interactions. We hope that these online-based communications are productive, and they will lead to meaningful in-person exchange activities in the near future.

We hope that you will take good care of yourself and that you, your family, and the wider communities around you will stay well and healthy in this pandemic period.