

Newsletter

Aug 2024

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DISCOVER JAPAN

Welcome to Fukuoka City

Fukuoka is the largest city on Kyushu island, located in the southwestern part of the Japanese archipelago.

The city has been playing an important role as a gateway to Asia since ancient times. It has flexibly absorbed diverse cultures from various foreign visitors and developed through over 2,000 years of exchange with other countries.

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Welcome to Fukuoka City



Fukuoka is also famous as a city of gourmet cuisine, where you can enjoy various food such as Tonkotsu ramen and “Mentaiko” (spicy cod roe).



Moreover, the city boasts numerous attractive tourism resources, including historical and cultural sites, as well as shopping spots.

Fukuoka City formed a sister city relationship with Auckland City, New Zealand, in 1986. Since then, they have strengthened their bond through biennial youth delegation visits and exchanges in various fields, including sports and economic activities.



A place that symbolises the bond between Fukuoka and Auckland is the “Fukuoka Friendship Garden,” located next to Auckland Zoo.

The garden is managed by the Auckland Council but is regularly maintained by volunteers from the Fukuoka Friendship Garden Group. Their activities, such as cleaning, help maintain the garden’s beautiful landscape.



In 2023, a Japanese plum tree was gifted by Fukuoka City as a token of appreciation to the group, and a tree planting ceremony was held in the garden. Fukuoka City hopes that the tree will grow, symbolising the enduring friendship between the two cities.



In 2026, Fukuoka City and Auckland will celebrate the 40th anniversary of their sister city relationship. To mark this milestone, the city is planning a range of exchange events to help more people in Auckland learn about their sister city. The city hopes many will take the opportunity to participate in these events.

Finally, Fukuoka City warmly invites you to visit, and they look forward to welcoming you!



News from CLAIR Sydney

School Exchange Opportunities

To support cultural exchange between schools in Japan and Australia/New Zealand, CLAIR Sydney has a dedicated page on our website that lists schools in Japan that are interested in initiating cultural exchange with schools in Australia/New Zealand. Please click on the link or scan the QR code below for more information on the respective schools.

Should you be interested in a particular school, please get in touch with them!



[Schools interested in exchange opportunities - CLAIR Sydney \(jlgc.org.au\)](https://www.jlgc.org.au)



Announcement from Fukushima Prefectural Government

Please see the information below about "Fukushima's Revitalisation Today".

Check out "Steps for Reconstruction and Revitalisation", which provides updates on "Fukushima's Revitalisation Today"



In order to clearly communicate "Fukushima's Revitalisation Today" to domestic and international audiences, the Prefecture has created "Steps for Reconstruction and Revitalisation in Fukushima Prefecture", which summarises the progress and challenges since the Great East Japan Earthquake.

The English version is now available on our website.

The cover of this issue features information and photos on local specialties from the Miyakoji area of Tamura City, where the evacuation order was lifted in April 2014. Please check it out.

<https://www.pref.fukushima.lg.jp/.../por../ayumi-en-15.html>

Towards achieving revitalization

Thanks to the hard work of Fukushima residents and kind support from Japan and abroad, reconstruction has progressed steadily in the 13 years since the earthquake and nuclear disaster. Evacuation orders have been lifted for all of the Specified Reconstruction and Revitalization Base Areas, and approval has been granted for Specified Living Areas for Returnees in the towns of Okuma, Futaba, Namie, and Tomonaka. Living environments have been improved, and export volumes of products from the prefecture have surpassed previous records.

On the other hand, about 26,000 residents of the prefecture are still living as evacuees (as of Feb. 2024). In addition, the Prefecture is faced with numerous challenges, such as rebuilding the livelihoods of disaster-affected residents, population recovery through the return and relocation of residents, revitalization of local industries, fighting deeply rooted harmful rumors and fading memories of the disaster, measures for the contaminated treated water and decommissioning of the reactors.

Prerequisite measures for revitalization

- Promoting safe and steady initiatives for decommissioning
- Responsible dealing with work related to the disposal of ALPS-treated water

Revitalization efforts still in progress

- Final disposal of contaminated soil outside the Prefecture within 30 years after launching the Interim Storage Facility
- Measures against deeply rooted harmful rumors and fading memories of the disaster
- Development of transportation networks such as roads
- Promotion of the Fukushima Innovation Coast Framework initiatives
- Export promotion for produce grown in Fukushima
- Passing down the records and lessons of the complex disasters to future generations

It is necessary to flexibly and carefully respond to new challenges which arise as revitalization progresses as well as the different issues faced in different areas according to their revitalization progress, and to realize them one at a time.

Promoting the reconstruction and revitalization of Fukushima to transform it from a "disaster affected area" to a "revitalization area"

I. Revitalization efforts and challenges

(i) Decommissionation

Current Status The transfer of removed soil and waste to the Interim Storage Facility has mostly been completed by March 2022, except in the Difficult-to-return Zones, and the restoration of land at Temporary Storage Sites is in progress. In the Difficult-to-return Zones, evacuation orders for all Specified Reconstruction and Revitalization Base Areas had been lifted by November 2023, and decommissionation in Specified Living Areas for Returnees began in December 2023. Atmospheric radiation levels in the prefecture significantly dropped, and are the same as other major cities throughout the world.

Municipality led decommissionation

Completed in Mar. 2018
Area: the national government (ALPS treated water) (ALPS treated water) (ALPS treated water)
Area: each municipality (ALPS treated water)

Decommissionation of Difficult-to-return Zones

Decommissionation of Specified Reconstruction and Revitalization Base Areas has mostly been completed. Decommissionation of Specified Living Areas for Returnees began in December 2023.

The Interim Storage Facility

The law stipulates that the removed soil and waste in the prefecture generated by decommissionation must be transferred to the Interim Storage Facility, and finally disposed of outside the prefecture within 30 years since the commencement of the Facility (by March 2045).

Air radiation dose in Fukushima Prefecture

Locations of the Interim Storage Facility (Okuma Town, Futaba Town)

12 Apr. - 16 Apr. 2011
10 Apr. - 9 May 2023

Environmental radiation dose rate in the prefecture and major cities

Challenges

- Acceleration of initiatives by the national government towards the final disposal of removed soil and waste outside the prefecture
- Safe and secure operation of the Interim Storage Facility until final disposal outside the prefecture
- Ensuring restoration of land used for Temporary Storage Sites
- Sufficient decommissionation of Difficult-to-return Zones (Specified Living Areas for Returnees)
- Disposal of designated waste newly identified in the prefecture

(6) Industry 1, Agriculture II

Strengthening distribution and sales capabilities

- Strategic branding: Original Fukushima variety "Yokote Berry"
- Expanding consumption and sales channels

Strengthening productivity and competitiveness

- Establishing high-value-added production areas
- Fukushima Model fisheries
- Obtaining GAP and other certifications
- Research and development supporting production

Challenges

- Rebuilding the price of agricultural products to the national average (Promoting branding of Fukushima products)
- Disseminating information about safety based on scientific evidence nationally and internationally
- Promoting "Fukushima Model of Fisheries" aimed at higher profits with less effort than before the disaster
- Strengthening productivity and competitiveness by establishing high-value-added production areas, obtaining GAP and other certifications and development demonstration of advanced technologies

Item	Number of Inspections	Number of cases exceeding the standard
Brown Rice (*1)	424	0
Vegetables & Fruit	1,817	0
Livestock products	1,480	0
Cultivated mushrooms & mountain plants	540	0
Fisheries products (Marine & cultured products)	2,702	0
Wild mushrooms & mountain plants	389	0
Fisheries products (River, lake, pond)	88	0

*1 When an inspection of a group of all help has been implemented for brown rice throughout the prefecture by the 2019 rice harvest, the number of inspections has increased to 4,242. *2 The number of cases of exceeding the standard is 0. *3 International food standards

CLAIR Sydney July Activity Report

JET Programme Farewell Reception in Canberra, Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Wellington and Auckland

In July and August, CLAIR Sydney attended a total of six farewell receptions for approximately 150 new JET participants. These receptions were hosted by various overseas diplomatic establishments, including the embassies in Canberra and Wellington, as well as the consulates in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, and Auckland.

During the receptions, representatives from these diplomatic establishments, other related organisations, and our staff offered words of encouragement to the participants. We expressed our hopes for their success in Japan, highlighting the crucial role that JET Programme participants play in strengthening the bonds between Japan and both Australia and New Zealand. Furthermore, members of each JETAA chapter urged the participants to serve as bridges between these countries and Japan, not only during the programme but also after its completion by actively participating in JETAA.



The new JET participants shared their motivations for joining the programme, including a desire to immerse themselves in Japanese language and culture and a long-standing interest in working in Japan. They have already departed from Australia and New Zealand and have begun their new lives in Japan. While they may initially find the new environment and the summer heat challenging, we sincerely hope they will have enriching experiences and make the most of their time in Japan through this programme.

For more information about the JET Programme, please visit the following link:

<https://www.facebook.com/clair.syd/posts/668799495432848>

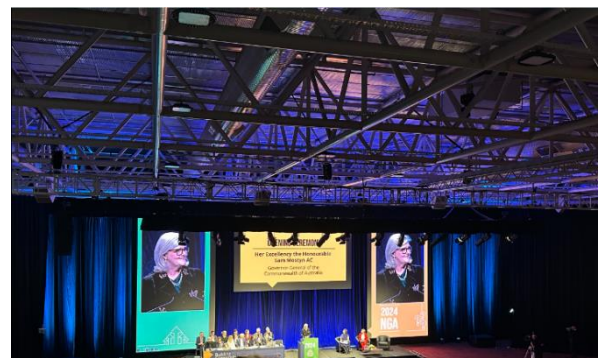




Understanding local governments' issues and strengthening networks at the Australian Local Government Association 2024 National General Assembly (2-5 July)

From 2 to 5 July, the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) held its National General Assembly (NGA) in Canberra, the capital of Australia. Over 1,000 local government executives, including mayors and councillors from across the country, gathered to discuss and exchange ideas on various issues related to local governance.

This year marked the 30th anniversary of the NGA, with the theme "Building Community Trust." The conference addressed critical challenges such as natural disasters, skills shortages, and



the rising cost of living, emphasising the importance of working with the federal government to enhance community support.

Various related organisations set up booths at the event. Our booth provided information about our activities, the upcoming Local Government Exchange and Cooperation Seminars, and the sister city relationships between Japan and Australia. We also engaged in discussions with local government executives to understand current trends in local governance and strengthen their network.

At CLAIR Sydney, we will continue to gather information and exchange ideas through similar opportunities, aiming to deepen mutual understanding of local governance trends between Australia and Japan.

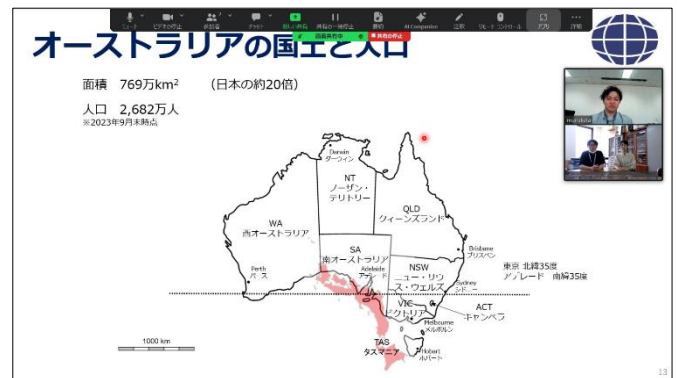


Support Activities for Kuroishi City in Aomori Prefecture (27 June & 10 July)

On 27 June and 10 July, we conducted an online presentation for six students from year 7 to 9 who were undergoing workplace experience at Kuroishi City Hall (two students on June 27 and four students on July 10). The briefing provided an overview of Australia, including its culture, customs, and its relationship with Japan.

During the briefing, a CLAIR staff member shared personal experiences of working and living abroad, offering insights for students that could help them consider their future career paths. The students engaged in a lively Q&A session, asking questions about the challenges of living abroad and the rewards of working in an international setting.

We remain dedicated to supporting Japanese local governments in their efforts to cultivate a global perspective among Japanese youth.



Adelaide Japanese Cultural Day (14 July)

On 14 July, the Adelaide Japanese Cultural Day was held in Burnside, a suburb of Adelaide, South Australia. This event was organised by the Australia Japan Association of South Australia and the Burnside City council.

Themed around "Winter Tanabata and Winter Obon" (two Japanese summer festivals), the venue was decorated with bamboo for Tanabata and a Torii gate. Attendees of all ages enjoyed various Japanese cultural experiences, including *koto* (Japanese string instrument) performances, calligraphy, tea ceremonies, kimono displays, taiko drumming, kendo demonstrations, and Bon Odori dancing.



For the first time, CLAIR Sydney had a booth at this event, where we promoted various Japanese tourist destinations and the JET Programme. We provided information about both well-known and lesser-known attractions in Japan. Whether they had been to Japan before or not, visitors found the information helpful for planning future trips to Japan. We will continue to promote Japan and attract tourists, building on our efforts in municipal PR at such Japanese festivals.

We sincerely thank everyone who visited our booth! See you again!



Sydney's Biggest Anime & Manga Event SMASH! (20-21 July)

On the weekend of 20 and 21 July, "SMASH!" the largest anime and manga event in Sydney, took place. The venue featured booths where companies sold anime and manga-related merchandise, as well as booths where private groups, such as uni societies, sold their works. There was also a dedicated area for cosplay photography, and popular anime voice actors from Japan made stage appearances, making this year's event very exciting.



CLAIR Sydney participated with its own booth, promoting tourism destinations in Japan associated with anime and manga, as well as cosplay events. Among those who visited our booth were planning their trips to Japan based on locations featured in anime and manga. This highlighted the growing presence of Japanese pop culture in Australia.

We will continue our efforts to promote various regions of Japan, featuring pop culture, so that many people can visit and explore different parts of the country. We would like to thank everyone who visited our booth.



50th Anniversary Ceremony of the Sister City Relationship between Kagoshima City and Perth City/Support Activities for Kagoshima City (22 & 26 July)

On 22 July, a ceremony was held to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the sister city relationship between Kagoshima City in Kagoshima Prefecture and Perth City in WA.

The two cities began exchanges due to their shared latitude of 32 degrees and established a sister city relationship on 23 April, 1974. Over the past 50 years, the cities have continued educational and cultural exchanges.



During the ceremony, participants acknowledged the significance of the sister city relations in areas such as education and business exchanges and pledged to work towards further enhancing the future relations, aiming for the advancement of both cities.

On 26 July, Mayor Takao Shimozuru of Kagoshima City, Chairperson Keiji Kawagoe of the Kagoshima City Council, and other members of the Kagoshima City delegation visited the CLAIR Sydney. We gave a presentation on an overview of Australia and urban development in Sydney, leading to a lively exchange of opinions on various Australian policies and the characteristics of local governments.

We remain committed to supporting and promoting the sister city exchanges between Kagoshima City and Perth City in the future.



Support Activities for Oyama City in Tochigi Prefecture (23 July)

On July 23, we conducted an online presentation to 22 high school students from year 9 and 4 of their teachers in Oyama City, Tochigi Prefecture, discussing various aspects of Australian culture, customs, and the relationship between Australia and Japan. The students and teachers visited Cairns, a sister city of Oyama City, at the end of August as a delegation.

Since it will be the first trip to Australia for all the participating students, they asked questions about differences in daily life such as food and living costs, as well as the differences between the English they study at school and the actual English spoken in Australia. Their enthusiasm and concerns about their upcoming visit to Cairns left a strong impression on us.

We also assisted in arranging an appointment for the delegation to visit the Consular Office of Japan in Cairns as part of our support services. We are committed to continually supporting the activities of local governments in Japan that aim to strengthen sister city relationships with Australia.

Support Activities for Taito City in Tokyo (30 July)

On Tuesday, 30 July, CLAIR Sydney conducted an online briefing for 20 high school students from year 7 to 9 and 5 chaperones from Taito City, who visited the Northern Beaches in early August as part of the “Taito City High School Students Overseas Exchange Program 2024.” The briefing consisted of an overview of Australia, including its culture, customs, and the relationship between Japan and Australia.

During the Q&A session, participants asked questions about various aspects of daily life, such as appropriate clothing for winter, meals, and the cost of living, as well as important points to keep in mind when using public transportation.

CLAIR Sydney will continue to support the activities of Japanese local governments involved in sister city exchanges with Australia.

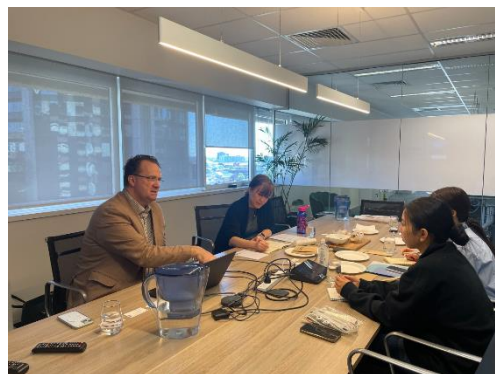
Support Activities for Hikone Technological High School of Shiga Prefecture (29 & 31 July)

To investigate environmental countermeasures, a student and her chaperone from Hikone Technological High School of Shiga Prefecture visited Australia from late July to early August. CLAIR Sydney conducted a briefing on 29 July about Australia's culture and customs, and accompanied the group to a company visit in Brisbane on 31 July, where the company, known for producing products using a type of seaweed called Asparagopsis, shared insights into their research and production processes.



During the visit, they received information on efforts to reduce methane emissions from livestock using Asparagopsis, viewed from a carbon-neutral perspective. The student's proactive participation in the meetings, driven by a desire to engage in environmental initiatives in the future, was impressive.

In addition to the briefing and accompaniment, we also reached out to the company to request a representative to discuss their Asparagopsis research. CLAIR Sydney will continue to support the activities of Japanese local governments conducting research on topics related to Australia.



From the Executive Director

Local Allocation Tax – important revenue for local autonomy

In this month's issue, I would like to discuss about the Local Allocation Tax, a crucial revenue source for Japanese prefectural and municipal governments, with a particular focus on the Regular Local Allocation Tax, which constitutes most of this funding. Local Allocation Tax is designed to adjust imbalances in revenue resources between local governments and to ensure their financial capacity to provide standard public services across the country.

Importantly, there are no restrictions on how these funds can be used.

Last month, in July, the central government determined the Regular Local Allocation Tax amounts for each local government for the current fiscal year. Out of 1,765 local governments, only one prefectural government (Tokyo Metropolitan Government) and 82 municipalities did not receive the Regular Allocation Tax, highlighting that the majority of local governments receive this funding.

The Regular Local Allocation Tax for each local government is calculated using the following formula. If standard financial revenues exceed standard financial requirements, the Regular Local Allocation Tax is not granted.

Formula:

- Regular Local Allocation Tax Amount = Standard Financial Requirements – Standard Financial Revenues
- Standard Financial Requirements = Unit Cost × Measurement Unit × Correction Coefficient
- Standard Financial Revenues = Standard Local Tax Revenue × Calculation Rate (75%) + Local Transfer Tax, etc.

Standard financial requirements are not based on the actual closing or budgeted expenditures of each local government. Instead, they are determined according to rational and appropriate service standards for each local government. These requirements are calculated for various administrative categories, such as police, fire rescue, roads, agriculture, primary schools, high schools, social welfare, etc. A Measurement Unit is assigned to each administrative category, such as population, area of roads, number of police personnel, teachers and staff, students, and farmers, etc. The Correction Coefficient adjusts these Measurement Units to account for significant variations in administrative costs caused by differences in natural and social conditions among local governments.

Standard financial revenue amounts are also not based on the actual closing or budgeted amounts of each local government's tax revenue. The Calculation Rate is set to ensure that local governments do not lose their incentive to maintain tax revenue sources.

The amount of the Regular Local Allocation Tax provided each fiscal year is a significant concern for local governments. We would appreciate the opportunity to discuss these differences in systems between Japan, Australia, and New Zealand with you.



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