

CLAIR Sydney celebrates its 30th Anniversary
1994-2024

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Newsletter



DISCOVER JAPAN

Welcome to Ikeda City

Ikeda City, which is located in the northern part of Osaka Prefecture, boasts a population of 100,000. The total area of the city is about 22 square kilometres and has a long shape that stretches vertically. Historically, the city has prospered as a key transportation hub for along time.

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Welcome to Ikeda City

Today, it still remains a city easily accessible to key places in Osaka, located just a 20-minute train ride from Umeda, the central district of Osaka, and also just a 20-minute train ride from Osaka International Airport. Despite its proximity to the city centre, it is rich in various natural landscapes including the Ina River and Mt. Satsuki.

Ikeda City is well-known for being the birthplace of Japan's popular instant noodles called 'Chicken Ramen', which also is the very first instant noodle to be created in the world, and the popular CupNoodles Museum Osaka Ikeda also attracts many tourists from all over the world.

Although Satsukiyama Zoo in the city is the second smallest zoo in Japan, it is a hotspot for wombat fans in Japan, as three of the only four wombats in Japan are kept here. One of the three named 'Wine' holds the Guinness World Record as the oldest bred wombat in the world.



Another attraction of the city is Gangara Fire Festival, where people parade through the city holding big torches lit with fire up to Mt. Satsuki to light the characters '大'-Dai and '大一'-Daiichi on the mountain slopes. This festival is held on 24 August every year. The city's Shin Inagawa Bridge that crosses over the Ina River is also a favourite location for many and is affectionately nicknamed the 'Big Harp.'

Ikeda City formed a sister city relationship with City of Launceston, Tasmania in November 1965, and they will be celebrating their 60th anniversary next year. This relationship has an interesting beginning; it was established by two high school students from each city who were pen friends and wrote to each other about their own cities. Eventually, they ended up requesting their respective local councils to become sister cities.



Since then, the cities have strengthened their bond through activities such as a youth delegation program and commemorative delegation visits on anniversaries. This year, Ikeda City was able to send a high school student to Australia, again, in August.



During the program, the participant stayed in Sydney for one week to attend language school, and visited CLAIR Sydney office where he was given a presentation on differences between Australia and Japan. He also experienced his first homestay in Sydney, and was able to experience a different culture and broaden his perspective, although cross-cultural communication would have been challenging for him.

In Launceston, the participant was very pleased to be given the unique opportunity to pay a courtesy visit to the city mayor and deputy mayor and visit local schools which cannot be experienced in a regular overseas study program.

When he visited Launceston college, he gave a presentation introducing Japanese culture, and was also given the opportunity to teach origami. Not only was it a good opportunity for him to practice speaking English, but it was also a rare opportunity for him to interact with local students.



Although it was his first visit to Launceston, he was sad to leave the city and wanted to stay longer as the people he met were so welcoming.

Ikedate City believes people-to-people exchange is the foundation and most important aspect of a sister city relationship. The city sincerely hopes that exchanges between the two cities will continue to further deepen in the future.



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 \(jlgc.org.au\)](http://jlgc.org.au)

Announcement from Gunma Prefectural Government

Gunma Prefecture Hosts International Urban Design Competition with Japan's Largest Prize Money

Maebashi City in Gunma Prefecture, like many other regional cities in Japan, has been facing a population crisis over the past few decades, with many young people choosing to move to larger cities in search of better job opportunities, resulting in an overall aging population.

Amidst this challenge, Maebashi City has been promoting sustainable urban development through public-private partnerships to enhance cultural and artistic exchanges within the city. Today, the city of Maebashi seeks to expand on its inherent small-city charm while establishing itself as an up-and-coming art hub that has easy access to both nature and the comforts of the city.

Through the competition, Gunma Prefecture aims to redevelop Maebashi City into an innovative and creative city with future-minded infrastructure and residents' well-being at the forefront. In line with this, Gunma prefecture is holding this competition with the goal of creating a public transportation and pedestrian-centred road space, accessible to both pedestrians and public transport, including autonomous buses.

We are waiting for innovative proposals from creative designers all over the world!

Website: <https://creative-city.pref.gunma.jp/>

Contact: Gunma Prefecture, Department of Land Development, Urban Development Division

Mail: creative-city@pref.gunma.lg.jp

Application Period (Tentative)
Registration Deadline : Late October 2024
Application Deadline : Mid-December 2024

Guidelines for Application
Please check the official website (<https://creative-city.pref.gunma.jp/>)

Organizer
Gunma Prefecture

Prize
-Top Prize Winner: 25 million yen(1proposer)
-First Screening Passers: 1million yen (4proposers)
(The Top prize includes 1 million yen awarded for outside the first screening.)

Eligibility for Participation
Individuals or groups
(At least one person must hold the required qualifications. Please refer to the application guidelines for details.)

Target Facility
◆ The main street connecting Gunma Prefectural Office to Maebashi Station (approx. 1.5 km)
◆ Front yard of Gunma Prefectural Office

Area Map

Schedule (Tentative)
Registration Deadline ▶ Late November 2024
Application Deadline ▶ Mid-December 2024
First Screening Results Announcement ▶ Early January 2025
Final Screening Results Announcement ▶ Late March 2025

introduction
Maebashi, the capital city of Japan's Gunma prefecture, lies just 100 kilometers northwest of Tokyo at the base of Mount Akagi. The four seasons come in full force here, with muggy, hot summers and dry, cold winds in winter. Over the past decade, Maebashi has been working to reinvent itself as a budding art destination, drawing in creatives from around the world. By becoming a creative, design-centered city that prioritizes green spaces, slow-living, and overall well-being, Maebashi strives to solidify its brand identity as a "creative slow city."

Despite revitalization efforts, foot traffic remains sparse, as most people prefer using cars to move around downtown, spending most of their time in the suburbs. This contributes to ongoing issues like traffic congestion at major intersections and poor pedestrian infrastructure.

Gunma aims to take inspiration from the walkability, mixed-use zoning, and creativity-infused urban landscape of Portland, Oregon along with the accessibility to green spaces and the sense of openness found in Melbourne, Australia. By reimagining the street experience, Gunma hopes to transform the main street into a space that interacts with the surrounding city in new ways while becoming a community gathering point. While new mobility solutions, such as autonomous public transportation, are being introduced to address these challenges, there is still an urgent need to transform Maebashi's downtown traffic flow.

To realize a walkable, design-first downtown, Gunma prefecture invites local and international designers, architects, urbanists, and landscape architects to lead the redesigning of Maebashi into a global creative hub. This competition aims to collect innovative proposals for a forward-thinking, inspired "transit mall" design that is pedestrian-oriented while contributing to the city's art-focused revival movement.

Competition theme
"Design an innovative, creative downtown that prioritizes sustainable urban infrastructure."

Proposal Content
1. Road space design from Gunma Prefectural Office to Maebashi Station.
2. Space design for the Front Yard of Gunma Prefectural Office.
3. Planning ideas for the entire site of Gunma Prefectural Office.

Requirements *(For further details, please refer to the guidelines for application.)*
-Proposals should utilize Maebashi City's unique regional resources, such as its culture and history, while addressing various challenges with a distinct local approach.
-Proposals should aim to create a walkable road space that prioritizes public transportation and pedestrians, where diverse individuals can gather, meet, and engage in activities (and more)

Related Plans
- Maebashi Vision "Midaku."
https://www.city.maebashi.gunma.lg.jp/maebashi/maebashi_vision/
- Maebashi City Urban Design, etc.
https://www.city.maebashi.gunma.lg.jp/maebashi/urban_design/
https://www.gunma.lg.jp/maebashi/maebashi_vision/maebashi_vision.html

Contact
[Inquiries] Gunma Prefecture, Department of Land Development, Urban Development Division
e-mail: creative-city@pref.gunma.lg.jp



CLAIR Sydney September Activity Report

Support Activities for Fukuoka Prefecture (2-7 Sep)

On 2 September, 6 university students from Fukuoka Prefecture visited CLAIR Sydney.

The students participated in a project organised by Fukuoka Prefecture for fostering globally-minded leaders, with the cooperation of the Sydney Fukuoka Prefectural Association and Japanese companies in Sydney.

During their week-long stay, they had the valuable opportunity to hear from those who are working successfully overseas, experience real business environments, and reflect deeply on their future careers, making the training an immensely meaningful experience for them.



CLAIR Sydney provided support such as handling various pre-arrangement procedures, organising meetings, and accompanied

them on their visits to different organisations and venues throughout the week. We will continue to support the activities of Japanese local governments that earnestly promote the fostering of international human resources.

We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to all those who cooperated in this program, including the Sydney Fukuoka Prefectural Association, GIM Capital Professionals, All Nippon Airways CO. LTD., Tokio Marine Management (Australia) Pty. Ltd., the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (Representative Office in Sydney), the Consulate-General of Japan in Sydney, Hitachi Australia Pty Ltd, Plenus AusT PTY. LTD., Ippudo Australia Pty Ltd, and the University of Sydney WASABI.



Matsuri Brisbane 2024 in Queensland (7 Sep)

On Saturday, 7 September, Matsuri Brisbane 2024 was held in Brisbane, the capital of Queensland. Despite the intense heat, the event attracted many visitors, with around 110 stalls and booths set up throughout the venue.

CLAIR Sydney participated in the event with a booth, distributing tourism brochures and other materials provided in advance by Japanese local governments that have friendly relations with municipalities in Queensland. This allowed us to promote different regions of Japan and highlight their unique attractions.



Many of the visitors to our booth had already travelled to Japan several times. Some shared comments like, "I plan to visit Japan again this year. I've mapped out a general route, but I'm still deciding on specific destinations, so these brochures are really helpful." We were glad to see how eager the locals were to gather information and how much they appreciated the resources provided.

This event was a great opportunity for us to reaffirm the importance of face-to-face engagement in sharing information. We will continue working with Japanese local governments to promote Japan and ensure that those interested in visiting have a meaningful and enriching experience.

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who visited our booth and to the Japanese local governments that provided us with materials!



South West Japan Festival in Bunbury, Western Australia (8 Sep)

The South West Festival of Japan was held in Bunbury, Western Australia on 8 September.

The event was first held in 2018 to celebrate the sister city relationship between Bunbury and Setagaya, Tokyo, and is considered one of the largest Japan-related events in south Perth. With many visitors filling the venue, there were various stalls selling Japan-related goods and snacks, as well as stalls offering different cultural experiences such as Kendama.



In collaboration with JETAAWA volunteers, CLAIR Sydney promoted tourism from various regions across Japan, including Japanese local governments that have a sister city relation with a local council in Western Australia.

Visitors, ranging from those planning their first trip to Japan to seasoned travellers seeking their next destination, enthusiastically shared their experiences and plans. The deep-seated popularity of Japan in Bunbury, some 180 km from the state capital Perth, inspires us every year.

CLAIR Sydney will continue to promote different regions from all around Japan and attract tourists, building on our efforts in municipal PR at Japanese festivals. We sincerely thank everyone who visited our booth, and hope to see you again next year.



Attendance at Taituarā Annual Conference 2024 (11-13 Sep)

The Taituarā Annual Conference 2024 was held from 11 to 13 September in Auckland and was attended by local government officials from all around New Zealand.

Under the theme of "Connect," the conference featured presentations, workshops, and panel discussions on topics such as the evolving relationship between local governments and residents, collaboration beyond municipal boundaries, future urban development, and waste reduction. These discussions highlighted how New Zealand's local governments are working to create a sustainable society and build meaningful connections for the future.



CLAIR Sydney attended all of the presentations, workshops, and panel discussions, gaining valuable insights into the challenges New Zealand's local governments are currently facing. It also provided an excellent opportunity to engage in frank discussions with participants about these issues.



We will continue to learn and research the current challenges and best practices of New Zealand local governments, strengthen our relationships with local governments in New Zealand and support the international activities of Japanese local governments.



Japan Festival Wellington (14 Sep)



On Saturday, 14 September, the Japan Festival Wellington was held. At the venue, many event attendees enjoyed the various performances such as rakugo (traditional Japanese storytelling) and taiko drumming, as well as booths offering Japanese food, crafts, and cultural experiences.

CLAIR Sydney promoted Japanese municipalities, including Sakai City, which is celebrating the 30th anniversary of its sister city relationship with Wellington, and other cities across Japan. Many visitors, some of whom were planning trips to Japan, eagerly stopped by the booth, happily taking tourism brochures. It was a great opportunity to witness the growing demand for travel to Japan in New Zealand.

Moving forward, we will continue to strengthen cultural exchange between Japan and New Zealand, using sister city relationships as a bridge, to increase interest in Japan.

Thank you very much to everyone who visited our booth!



Sister City Exchange through Sports: Support for Nagoya City Marathon Runners (15 & 16 Sep)

Nagoya City and Sydney City share a sister city relationship, and this bond extends to sports, with the Nagoya City Marathon and the Sydney Marathon being sister marathon events. Since 2012, the winning runners of both marathons have participated in the sister city's marathon, fostering mutual exchange. While the programme was temporarily paused due to COVID-19, this year marks the 10th exchange.

On 15 September, two runners selected from the Nagoya City Marathon participated in the Sydney Marathon, completing the full marathon course. The following day, they paid a courtesy visit to Sydney Town Hall. CLAIR Sydney supported the runners on the day, accompanied them during their courtesy visit, and handled various adjustments. CLAIR Sydney remains committed to supporting sister city exchanges between local governments.



Japan and Friends Day 2024 in Gold Coast (21 Sep)

On Saturday, 21 September, Japan and Friends Day 2024 was held in the City of Gold Coast, Queensland. This event, organised by the Japanese Society of Gold Coast, has been running for over 20 years, with the purpose of interacting and building friendships with the local community.

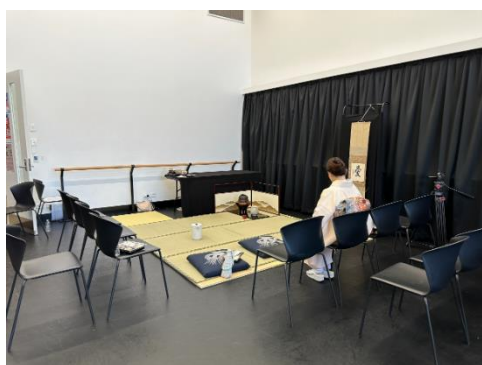
CLAIR Sydney promoted various regions of Japan by distributing tourism brochures and materials, alongside the Consulate-General of Japan in Brisbane, members of the Japan Community of Queensland and Gifu Kenjinkai. Many attendees, who are fans of Japan, visited our booth and enthusiastically asked questions about visiting Japan. In October this year, the State of Queensland and Saitama Prefecture will celebrate the 40th anniversary of their sister-state relationship, and Saitama Kenjinkai promoted Saitama by selling local mascot merchandise among other local items.



There were various stage performances, cultural experience booths, and a Mikoshi shrine-carrying performance, making the event lively and vibrant! Through this event and the recent Matsuri Brisbane, we realised how many active Japanese communities and associations are working to promote Japan in Queensland. We are grateful to be able to collaborate with them in promoting Japan.

We will continue to promote Japan in various places so that local fans will fall in love with Japan even more, and to welcome new fans of Japan.

Thank you to everyone who visited our booth!



2024 Australian Sake Festival: Support Activities for the Aomori Prefectural Government (28 & 29 Sep)



The 2024 Australian Sake Festival, an event where visitors can enjoy tasting various different types of Japanese alcoholic beverages, including sake, shochu, and fruit wine, and try local Japanese foods as well as initiate business negotiations, was held in Sydney over two days on 28 and 29 September 2024. CLAIR Sydney was invited by the Aomori Prefectural Government to provide support at the booth they ran at the event.

This event, now in its third year, attracted approximately 8,000 visitors over the two days,

highlighting the strong interest in Japanese sake and food products in Sydney. Aomori Prefecture participated for the first time, offering several types of sake, along with two varieties of Aomori-grown rice, and scallop tastings, which drew many visitors to the booth.



At the booth, the features of Aomori's sake and rice were carefully explained to the visitors, successfully promoting the appeal of the prefecture. The Aomori products provided were well received by many attendees, and the tasting area remained lively throughout the event.

CLAIR Sydney will continue to support the promotion of Japanese local governments in Australia.

Sakura Matsuri in Cowra (28 Sep)



On 28 September, Sakura Matsuri was held at the Cowra Japanese Garden. Many visitors were attracted to the event by the different Japanese foods and cultural booths and main stage events such as Wadaiko drum performance, choral singing and demonstrations of the traditional art of Japanese swordsmanship called Iaido.



CLAIR Sydney promoted Fukuoka Prefecture and Joetsu City in Niigata Prefecture, which participated in the commemorations for the 80th Anniversary of the Cowra Breakout, as well as various cherry blossom locations in different parts of Japan. Some visitors came to us with questions, such as

"I've been to Japan many times and would like to visit places I've never heard of" or "Are there any special places in Japan where few foreigners visit?"



The day after the Sakura Matsuri, we were invited by the Cowra Shire Council to participate in the Service of Respect at the Cowra War Cemeteries to pray for peace.

We will continue to strive to promote friendly exchanges between the municipalities wishing for peace and to strengthen the ties between Japan and Australia.



From the Executive Director

Special Thanks – Celebrating the 30th Anniversary

We would like to express our sincere appreciation for your continued support.

CLAIR Sydney is celebrating its 30th anniversary this October 2024. We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has contributed to our success and supported us in reaching this significant milestone. We take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation.

Established in October 1994, CLAIR Sydney serves as the overseas office of CLAIR, a government-affiliated general incorporated foundation dedicated to supporting the internationalisation efforts of local governments in Japan. For the past 30 years, CLAIR Sydney has actively supported international exchange between local governments, surveys and on-the-ground support, the JET Programme, multicultural awareness of Japan, economic exchange, and more.

Although social activities were recently restricted due to the COVID-19 pandemic, autonomy-based international interactions have now resumed with greater momentum. This year, many new JET participants have worked in Japan, and JET alumni have been actively contributing in Australia and New Zealand. Additionally, our booths at Japanese Festivals held in various cities have attracted many visitors seeking for information about Japanese destinations. We hope that more people will visit Japan and feel a stronger sense of familiarity with the country, which will lead to more concrete, grassroots-level relationships.

Looking ahead to the next 30 years, all of us at CLAIR Sydney are committed to further developing and strengthening the friendly relations between Japan and Australia/New Zealand, particularly between local governments and state authorities.

We sincerely appreciate your continued support and patronage.



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