



# Newsletter

Vol. 185 December 2024



Kawagoe's traditional warehouses (*kurazukuri*)

**DISCOVER  
JAPAN**

*Welcome to*  
**Saitama Pref.**



With the 5<sup>th</sup> largest population in Japan at approximately 7.3 million people, Saitama Prefecture is located 'just north of Tokyo'. Saitama is rich in nature with large rivers such as the Arakawa River and Tone River, the beautiful mountains of Chichibu, the Minuma rice fields, and the Musashino woodlands.

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## Welcome to Saitama Pref.

Saitama is also one of the most important transport hubs in Japan, with six highways and six bullet train lines connecting it to major cities in Eastern Japan. The prefecture attracts many businesses and people as it has both the convenience and liveliness of a large city.

In Saitama, you can enjoy the townscape of the Edo period in Kawagoe, which is nicknamed ‘Little Edo’, as well as the traditional culture of Japan, such as Omiya bonsai, Japanese washi paper, silk fabrics, Japanese sake and soy sauce. You can also experience contemporary culture at places such as Tokorozawa Sakura Town, one of the largest pop culture hubs in Japan. Why not step outside of Tokyo for a little bit and explore Saitama Prefecture?

In October 1984, Saitama Prefecture formed a sister state relationship with Queensland in Australia, fostering a strong friendship over many years through exchanges such as regular visits by delegations and mutual exchange programs for high school students and teachers.



2024 High school student delegation from Queensland



2024 High school student delegation from Saitama

To commemorate the 40th anniversary of the sister state relationship this year, the Consul-General of Japan to Brisbane kindly hosted an event - An Afternoon Tea Celebrating 40 Years of Sister-State Relations between Queensland and Saitama - when six Saitama high school students visited Queensland on the mutual exchange program. Through this event, the invitees, including the six students, Queensland state government staff and members of the Saitama Kenjinkai Queensland, had the opportunity to network and deepen the friendship between Queensland and Saitama.

Further information about the Saitama Kenjinkai can be found here:

[https://www.facebook.com/Saitama.Kenjinkai.inQLD/?locale=ja\\_JP](https://www.facebook.com/Saitama.Kenjinkai.inQLD/?locale=ja_JP)

Saitama Prefecture also promoted the Queensland-Saitama sister state relationship by organising a special booth for the 40th anniversary of the relationship at the soccer match between Japan and Australia for the World Cup qualifying round in Asia held at Saitama Stadium 2002 in October 2024.



40<sup>th</sup> sister state anniversary promotion booth





2024 Southern Cross University scholarship recipient

In addition, Saitama Prefecture has exchange programs with Southern Cross University, which has a campus on the Gold Coast in Queensland. The prefecture has been sending one scholarship student to the English school affiliated with the university every year.

This year, Saitama Prefecture launched a three day online international exchange program for high school students living in or attending school in Saitama. Through the 2024 program, about seventy students experienced studying at an overseas university online, where they attended a campus tour and mock lectures, and interacted with international students.

Saitama Prefecture hopes that the relationship with Queensland will be further strengthened through exchanges in various areas, and that this wonderful friendship will last for many years to come.



## 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 \(ilgc.org.au\)](https://ilgc.org.au)

## CLAIR Sydney November Activity Report

### Support Activities for Sannohe Town in Aomori Prefecture: Year 7-9 High School Students Visit CLAIR Sydney Office (1 Nov)

On 1 November, a group of ten junior high school students from Sannohe Town, Aomori Prefecture, accompanied by their teachers and staff from the town office, visited the CLAIR Sydney office as part of their overseas training programme. In response to their request for insights into working abroad and gaining international experience, we provided a tailored session that included an introduction to our office and presentations by two staff members, who shared their experiences of working internationally and in the public sector overseas.

The students actively engaged with the session, listening intently to the presentations and asking many thoughtful questions, creating a lively and meaningful exchange. Their visit was part of a broader programme that included opportunities to interact with local students at an Australian school and experience homestays, offering them a deeper understanding of life and culture in Australia.



We hope this valuable experience will serve as inspiration for the students as they consider their future careers and personal development.

CLAIR Sydney remains committed to supporting Japanese local governments in their efforts to cultivate a global perspective among students and foster meaningful international exchanges.



## Support Activities for Kanagawa Prefecture (6 Nov)



On Wednesday, 6 November 2024, a delegation from the Kanagawa Prefectural Assembly, led by Assembly Chair Mr Takeshi Yanagishita, visited the CLAIR Sydney office. The delegation travelled to Australia to promote exchanges and conduct research on advanced policies in celebration of the upcoming 35th anniversary of the Friendship Agreement between Kanagawa Prefecture and the City of Gold Coast next March.

At our office, we provided the delegation with a briefing on topics such as an overview of Australia's administration and economy, sister-city exchanges, tourism, and inbound visitors, followed by a Q&A session.

Kanagawa Prefecture and its municipalities have been actively engaging in various exchanges with the City of Gold Coast, particularly leveraging their shared coastal features. This visit is expected to further enhance the vibrant relationship between the two regions.

CLAIR Sydney will continue to support Japanese local governments as they work to foster international friendship and exchange.

## Participation in the National Symposium on Japanese Language Education (15-16 Nov)

The National Symposium on Japanese Language Education was held in Sydney from 15 to 16 November 2024. This nationwide symposium, co-hosted by the Japan Foundation and the Monash Japanese Language Education Centre every two years, aims to share research and practices in Japanese language education at all levels, from primary to higher education, and to foster information exchange, networking, and collaboration across states and educational stages.

Approximately 200 Japanese language educators from across Australia participated in this year's symposium, which featured more than 30 presentations and lectures over two days. The keynote address, "AI-



Enhanced Japanese: Personalising the Learning Journey,” delivered by UK-based language learning consultant Joe Dale, introduced AI tools applicable to Japanese language education and sparked discussions on the future of the field.

CLAIR Sydney also took part in the symposium, hosting a booth to promote our initiatives, such as school exchange programs, the JET Programme, and sister city relationships between Japan and Australia. Additionally, a survey on educational trips to Japan was conducted. Through networking at the booth, the event strengthened ties with Japanese language education professionals in Australia.

Moving forward, we will continue to support school exchange programs between Japan and Australia

## New South Wales Local Government Association (LGNSW) 2024 Annual Meeting (17-19 Nov)

The LGNSW 2024 Annual Conference was held in Tamworth from 17 to 19 November, with around 800 participants, including local government leaders and councillors from across NSW. The NSW Minister for Local Government, Hon. Ron Hoenig MP, emphasized the importance of financial transparency in local governance, while experts delivered presentations on topics such as achieving sustainable financial management and the critical role of cybersecurity.



The CLAIR Sydney office held a booth to introduce the activities of local governments in Japan as well as our initiatives and exchanged opinions on the most recent activities of local governments. Some of the mayors and councillors were already involved with CLAIR Sydney as a result of our support for sister city exchanges with local governments, and it was an opportunity for us to mutually confirm our continued collaboration.

## Support Activities for Okinawa Prefecture (26 Nov)

On Tuesday, 26 November 2024, an official from Okinawa Prefecture, accompanied by a representative from the Okinawa Industry Promotion Public Corporation stationed in Australia, visited the CLAIR Sydney office. This visit was part of a trip to New Zealand and Australia in late November to study advanced initiatives in sports conventions and sports tourism.



At our office, we provided a briefing on Australia’s administrative and economic landscape, sister city exchanges, tourism, and inbound visitors. During the Q&A session, numerous questions were raised regarding Okinawa’s future initiatives and Australia’s efforts in sports-related activities. We will continue to support Japanese local governments in their overseas activities, including research on Australian policies and advanced practices.



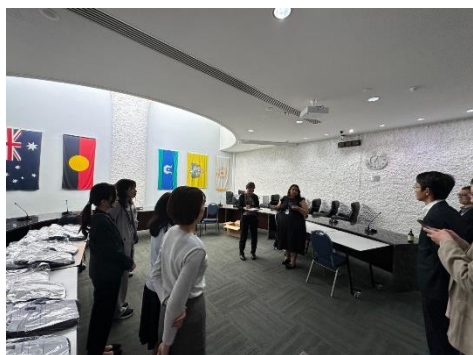
## The Multicultural Seminar in Melbourne (25-30 Nov)

From 25 to 30 November, CLAIR Sydney held its annual Australian Multicultural Seminar in Melbourne. This seminar provides an opportunity for staff from Japanese local governments and other relevant organisations to learn about Australia's leading multicultural policies and practices. The insights gained aim to support multiculturalism projects in Japan.

This year marked the fourth time the seminar has been held in Melbourne, and we were thrilled to welcome 17 delegates from across Japan—the largest group of attendees to date!



During the seminar, we visited nine organisations, including government agencies such as the Victorian Department of Multicultural Affairs and Monash City Council, as well as various NPOs supporting Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities. These visits provided valuable insights into initiatives grounded in multicultural policies across diverse areas, including education, community support, welfare and healthcare, employment and job support, and disaster prevention.



Many participants are actively involved in multicultural coexistence projects and directly support non-Japanese residents in their local communities. Their expertise enriched the Q&A sessions and discussions as they explored topics such as service delivery, cross-sector collaboration, and ways to engage with CALD communities. Participants gained invaluable first-hand information and were impressed by Australia's advanced multicultural services and policies.

CLAIR Sydney extends its sincere thanks to all the organisations that hosted us and supported this seminar. We also thank the attendees for their enthusiastic participation, which made the seminar so productive.

We remain committed to introducing Australia's diverse and inclusive multicultural policies to Japanese local governments. If your organisation is interested in participating or supporting future seminars, we warmly welcome your involvement!



# From the Executive Director

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## EXPO 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan Opens in April 2025

Did you know that one of the oldest and largest international events is happening in Japan next year? EXPO 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan will take place from 13 April to 13 October, 2025 in Yumeshima, Osaka City. The theme of the event is “Designing Future Society for Our Lives”. For more details, please visit the link below: [Japan Association for the 2025 World Exposition – Japan Association for the 2025 World Exposition \(expo2025.or.jp\)](https://www.expo2025.or.jp)

Japan National Tourism Organisation (JNTO) reported that the number of visitor arrivals to Japan in October 2024 reached 3,312,000, a record high for a single month. From January to October 2024, the total number of visitors was 30,192,600, surpassing the 30-million mark faster than ever since statistics began in 1964. Visitor arrivals from Australia during the same period totaled 727,500, an increase of 56.8% compared to last year and 45.3% compared to 2019. Japan is welcoming more and more visitors.

EXPO 2025 is sure to be one of the popular destinations in Japan next year. While attending the Expo, why not take the opportunity to explore other areas of Japan? You might discover new and unique charms in its diverse regions. Next year, CLAIR Sydney will once again host booths at Japanese festivals in major cities across Australia and New Zealand, showcasing the rich culture and attractions of various regions of Japan. We would like to extend our warm invitation for you to come and visit our booths.

Wishing you a happy and prosperous New Year!



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