



NEWSLETTER

C O N T E N T S

	(Page
Welcome to Minokamo City	1-2
JETAA Oceania Conference in Brisbane	2
Local Government NSW (LGNSW) Annual Conference 2022	3
The Inbound Tourism Promotion Webinar	3-4
From the Executive Director	4-5

Ceremonial Tea House were built on a 10ha area of land in Dubbo. Through the Minokamo International Exchange Association, citizen volunteers such as craftspersons and landscapers took part in designing the Japanese garden and the building of the garden was completed with the support of Dubbo Regional Council.

Minokamo City

Strengthening Sister City Ties through the Shoyoen Japanese Garden

Minokamo in Gifu and Dubbo in NSW began their sister city exchange after signing a sister city agreement in 1989. In November 2002, the Shoyoen Japanese Garden and Jurian



Just like the saying “As Spring arrives and the Cherry blossoms bloom, the friendship and understanding between us further”, the friendship between the two cities has grown over the past 30 years. Shoyoen is loved by the locals in Dubbo and is now an impressive garden that transmits Japanese culture and is a place of recreation for locals. With Dubbo’s desire that Shoyoen “is to not just be of Japanese style, but an authentic Japanese garden”, since 2008, Minokamo has been sending a landscaper to Dubbo every year to manage the garden and provide guidance on pruning.

However, since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, it had been two years that the student exchange program, as well as the landscaper dispatch program between the two cities, could not go ahead. The landscaper dispatch program resumed in September this year. With a two-year gap since the last landscaper was dispatched, this year's landscaper was anxious due to the long gap but was impressed by how extremely well-maintained Shoyoen is after arriving at the garden. According to the landscaper, "Our efforts in maintaining and managing the garden are minimal. The upkeep of this impressive Japanese garden is all because of the efforts of the staff at Dubbo Regional Council and the volunteers who continued pruning and managing the plants in the garden."



Currently, Shoyoen is a popular spot amongst Dubbo locals and is often used as a place for weddings, events, tea gatherings and other day-to-day social gatherings.

On 19 November, accepting Dubbo Regional Council's invitation to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the opening of Shoyoen, a delegation of approximately 20 from Minokamo City visited Dubbo to celebrate alongside Dubbo locals. Minokamo City is excited to see the resumption of people-to-people interactions between the two cities.

JETAA Oceania Conference in Brisbane

On 8 and 9 October, representatives from all JETAA chapters in the Oceania region assembled in Brisbane to attend the Oceania Conference, hosted by JETAA QLD this year. The conference is held annually for all JETAA chapters in Oceania to update one another on their chapter's recent activities and share ideas and discuss issues they may have.



This year's conference was the first in person event in three years since the outbreak of COVID-19. In addition to JETAA chapters in Australia and New Zealand, the conference was also attended by the Singapore Country Representative.

The representatives from each chapter presented their recent activities and plans for the future. Through the discussions during the conference, the Oceania JETAA chapters strengthened their ties and gained new insight and ideas to enrich their future activities. We believe JETAA will play an increasingly important role

as a bridge between Japan and the rest of the world on a grassroots level.

Local Government NSW (LGNSW) Annual Conference 2022



The Local Government NSW's Annual Conference was held from 23 to 25 October in Hunter Valley and was attended by mayors, councillors and relevant local government officials from all around the state.

The conference featured presentations and workshops delivered by prime ministers of the state government and experts. Disaster recovery was a topic of high interest as NSW has been suffering from natural disasters including flooding in recent years. The conference also had a booth area that provided participating organisations with

promotional opportunities and all conference attendees with networking opportunities. More than 900 participants gathered from all over Australia to attend this invaluable event.

CLAIR Sydney ran a booth to distribute information on our recent activities and promote various Japanese tourist destinations and upcoming notable sports events in Japan.

We are extremely pleased to meet many conference attendees who visited our booth to learn about CLAIR Sydney and Japanese local governments. Many mayors and councillors whose councils have sister city relationships with Japanese local governments also kindly visited our booth. Through the opportunities provided by the conference, CLAIR Sydney was able to network with many local governments in Australia.

We will continue to learn and research the current challenges and best practices of Australian local governments, strengthen our relationships with local governments in Australia and promote Japan to Australians.



The Inbound Tourism Promotion Webinar

On 24 October, CLAIR Sydney held the first session of the Inbound Tourism Promotion Webinar series for staff of Japanese local governments and other relevant organisations. This webinar aims to promote inbound tourism to Japan

after the lifting of border restrictions to Japan from 11 October. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of Australian travellers to Japan had been steadily increasing and many new direct flight routes between Australia and Japan were being launched. Moreover, Australians' average per-person tourist spending was the largest in Japan and the number of tourists from Australia to Japan ranked 7th out of all international tourists. Therefore, Australia is an important country for Japan's inbound tourism industry.



In the webinar session, Ms Yoko Tanaka, Executive Director of the Japan National Tourism Organization's Sydney office delivered a presentation on the past trends and future predictions in Australian travellers to Japan and effective inbound tourism promotion content for the Australian market. After that, Mr Manya Hiraki, Executive Director of CLAIR Sydney introduced our inbound tourism promotion activities and shared the

feedback we received from visitors to our booth at tourism promotion events we participate in in Australia.

CLAIR Sydney will continue to support Japanese local government organisations' inbound tourism promotion.

From the Executive Director

— School Exchange —

As I have written previously, there are many sister city relationships between Australia/New Zealand and Japan. There are many reasons for municipalities or states/prefectures to conclude sister city or state relationships, one of which is the result of school exchange between the schools in the two government areas. This being said, there are also some municipalities and states/prefectures in Australia/New Zealand and Japan that conduct school-to-school exchange even if they do not have a sister city/state relationship. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many schools changed their mode of exchange and conducted their exchange activities online.

Here is an interesting survey result. According to a survey we did at the end of last year, when compared to other sister city/state relationships around the world, there is a much larger percentage of student exchange through sister city/state activities between Australia and Japan.

Only 39% of Japan's overall sister city/state activities are student exchange-related activities with countries around the world. If we compare this to Japan's exchange activities with Australia, we can see a big jump to 55%.

I think there are several reasons for this high rate of student exchange between Australia and Japan. Firstly, Japanese is one of the most popular second languages in Australia and many students learn Japanese at school. On the other hand, there is a high demand amongst students in Japan to learn English. Also, there are minimal time differences between Australia and Japan, which allows students and teaching staff to easily take part in online exchange during regular school hours.

I believe school exchange is a great way to learn about the culture and other aspects of other countries. I wish I had experienced school exchange when I was a student.

Many schools in Japan wish to conduct school exchange with schools in Australia/New Zealand. If you are interested, please click on the link below.

<http://www.jlhc.org.au/ja/international-exchange-2/sister-school-exchange/>