

Japan Exchange and Co-operation Seminar: International snapshot



12 – 22 FEBRUARY 2017

SEMINAR THEME

Attracting international tourists to regional towns

Fostering cooperation with adjacent cities for tourism

HOST LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Masuda City

PURPOSE

Inspect local government tourism facilities

Build sector contacts

Discussion and opinion exchange

WEB ADDRESS

www.ilgc.org.au

Japanese local governments fostering tourism in regional areas was the focus of the Local Government Exchange and Co-operation Seminar in Tokyo and Masuda City in February 2017. LGNSW Policy Officer Elizabeth Robertson was selected to attend the seminar following a national application process. Here is a snapshot of the visit.

In focus

The seminar theme for 2017 was:

- Attracting international tourists to small provincial towns
- Fostering cooperation with adjacent cities for tourism



View over Tsuwano from the Shrine

The seminar

The 10-day Seminar allowed participants from Australia and New Zealand to visit Japan to meet with council officials, attend lectures, analyse local initiatives and undertake an opinion exchange with Japanese local government staff and officials.

Masuda City – host local government

This year's host local government was Masuda City which is working with nearby towns, Tsuwano and Hagi, to increase tourism by promoting the regions' history, vast nature areas and abundant variety of food. Masuda City organised an engaging and busy itinerary of information sessions and site visits.

Government tourism initiatives

The Japan Tourism Agency of the central government has a new strategy to encourage tourism particularly as a means of regional revitalisation. This includes:

- targeted marketing to specific countries
- promoting new routes to divert tourists from over-populated tourist destinations
- encouraging local governments to partner to promote as a region
- policies to make short domestic stays attractive to Japanese locals.

→ see over





Challenges and opportunities

The Shimane Prefecture, in which the city of Masuda is located, receives the lowest number of overnight foreign visitors compared to the other prefectures in Japan.

Masuda City is now prioritising tourism as a foundation for job creation and a means to attract domestic migration. The City has identified the following points of difference for marketing: (1) Abundant nature (2) Best practice 'Grand Toit' Shimane Arts Centre (3) Long history, including rich medieval history (4) Traditional culture (5) Agricultural gifts from the land and rivers (6) Soothing hot spas (7) Major sporting events – annual marathon and cycle races.



'Kagura' mythological performance, traditional to Shimane Prefecture

Japan Local Government Centre

The Seminar is hosted each year by the Japan Local Government Centre, Sydney, which is one of seven international offices of the Centre for Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR).

The 2017 Seminar was open to five senior staff or elected members from councils (or related organisations and research institutes) from Australia and NZ. CLAIR selected the five participants following an open application process.

Japan Centre for Local Government, Sydney

E mailbox@jlgc.org.au

P 9241 5033

W <http://www.jlgc.org.au/our-activities/the-local-government-exchange-cooperation-seminar/>

Recommendations by delegates

The Seminar culminated in an opinion exchange where the Australian delegation encouraged Masuda City, in particular, to:

- capitalise on the proximity of the regional airport (1.5 hours flight from Tokyo)
- expand on the success of the City's marathon and cycle events by offering year-round trails
- create draft itineraries and packages for tourists as it is a lesser known destination
- continue to promote the region as a food destination
- expand the use of digital media for both marketing the region and for creating interactive experiences particularly for non-Japanese speakers.

Masuda City is hoping to continue to cooperate with neighbouring towns to create packages which encourage tourists to stay longer in the region. The City is also in the process of encouraging existing facilities and attractions to enhance the tourism experience.



Australian delegates with CLAIR and Masuda City staff

MORE INFORMATION

Elizabeth Robertson

Policy Officer –

Local Government NSW

E elizabeth.robertson@lgnsw.org.au

P 9242 4028