

Consul-General of Japan in Sydney's Newsletter

No. 29 JET Programme: For experiences in Japan with a life-long impact

20 November 2020

Do you know about the JET Programme (Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme)? Every year, approximately 120 participants from Australia, and among them approximately 30 participants from NSW and NT, over which our Consulate has jurisdiction, are invited to Japan and placed in schools and local governments across the country to work as either Assistant Language Teachers of English or Coordinators for International Relations. Australia was one of the first participating countries in the JET Programme since its inception in 1987, and a total of 4,557 Australian participants have been dispatched up until 2019.

The next cohort of participants will be dispatched in September next year. Applications for it began at the end of September this year and are open until 11 December 2020. The participants who were scheduled to be dispatched in September 2020 are now leaving this month, as their departure was delayed due to COVID-19.

Recently, I attended and gave the opening remarks at an online JET Information Session for next year's Programme and the online Pre-Departure Orientation for the participants who are leaving this month. In this issue of my newsletter, through reporting about the JET information sessions and orientation, I would like to convey to everyone what kinds of experiences Australian youth gain of Japan through the JET Programme and how they can make use of them afterwards to contribute to the mutual understanding and exchange between Australia and Japan.

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WHAT IS THE AIM OF JET?

- To **enhance** foreign language education
- To **promote** international exchange at the local level
- To **foster** ties between Japanese youth and foreign youth

Tatsuya Akagawa
JETAANSW Committee
Iwashiko Kiya
Ashlie O'Neill

Presentation on JET at the online information session
(30 October 2020)

Following the opening of the application period at the end of September, four information sessions for the 2021 JET Programme were held between 22 October and 10 November. This year, the sessions were held in an online format due to COVID-19. Approximately 10 to 20 people attended each session, and their high level of interest was obvious.

For the information session on 30 October, I made the opening remarks and then Jessica, a local staff member from our Consulate, gave a presentation on the JET Programme, including comments about her own experience as a JET participant. (Presentation material can be found in the links at the end.)

The three aims of the JET Programme are: 1) to enhance foreign language education, 2) to promote internationalization at the local level, and 3) to foster ties between foreign youth and Japanese youth. With these aims in mind, the Programme is conducted in cooperation with the Japanese Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), local government

bodies and the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR).

On the Programme, there are three types of positions: Assistant Language Teacher (ALT), Coordinator for International Relations (CIR) and Sports Exchange Advisor (SEA). Over 90% of JET participants are ALTs. Nationwide in Japan, roughly 1,000 local government organisations participate as Contracting Organisations, and both urban-based JETs and rural-based JETs have their own merits. The contract is for one year with renewal possible for up to five years in total, and the annual remuneration steadily increases from 3.36 million yen (A\$44,038 at the current exchange rate) in the first year to 3.96 million yen (A\$44,830 at the current exchange rate) in a participant's fourth and fifth years.



**Ms Ashlie O'Neill, President of the JET Alumni Association in NSW,
presenting at the online information session
(Sunday, 30 October 2020)**

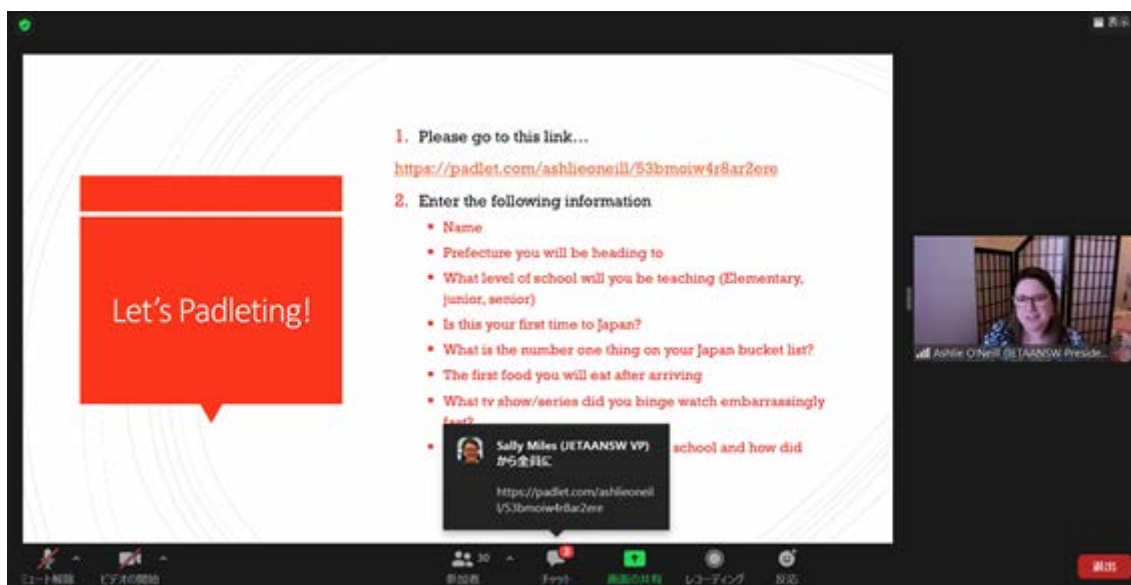
In the information session, the President of the JET Alumni Association in NSW (JETAA NSW), Ms Ashlie O'Neill and committee member Ms Tida Dhanommitrapap, talked about their various experiences on the JET Programme as Assistant Language Teachers based in Hyogo Prefecture and Shizuoka Prefecture, as well as their activities in JETAA NSW since finishing on the JET Programme.

From listening to their presentations, JET participants do not solely teach English at schools, but also participate in and interact with local events, grow to love their local areas, and create memories travelling across Japan. It was clear to see that it was an irreplaceable and valuable experience in the respective participants' lives.

Upon finishing their term on the JET Programme, some participants return to their home countries while others remain in Japan. The approximately 120 JET participants from Australia who are placed in Japan every year are also active in Australia and parts of Japan, making use of the various experiences they gained on the Programme.

For those who return to Australia, they can continue to keep their ties with Japan for many years to come through the JET Alumni Association. JETAA NSW especially is considerably active, and when the COVID-19 restrictions first started in March of this year, they moved their regular monthly social meet-up event to weekly on Zoom. Even now, they continue to hold this gathering every fortnight amongst other events and are one of the most active Japan-related organisations in Sydney. Last year, the President of JETAA NSW Ms Ashlie O'Neill was also the Chairman of JETAA International.

With the slogan "Once a JET, always a JET", I am incredibly glad that the JET alumni value their ties to each other.



Self-introductions using Padlet at the online Pre-Departure Orientation (15 November 2020)

On 15 November, an online Pre-Departure Orientation was held for the 19 JET participants from NSW and the NT who, after their departure was delayed due to COVID-19, are scheduled to leave this month. Twelve committee members from JETAA NSW also participated in the orientation.

In my opening remarks, I conveyed that JET Programme participants will not only gain invaluable experiences in Japan but are also an irreplaceable link in the cooperation and exchange between Australia and Japan, with full support from the Government of Japan. I also thanked JETAA NSW for their cooperation.

The orientation was held over half a day and included not only important information in relation to travel and daily life, but also shared know-how through breakout sessions on teaching methodologies in English class and extra-curricular activities, the current status of COVID-19, Japanese language studies and job hunting after returning home to Australia.



**JET booth at University of Sydney's autumn career fair
(4 March 2020)**

The placement of participants from Australia on the JET Programme has a history extending for 33 years. Although there have been some changes this year relating to COVID-19, the cycle of recruitment and dispatching has been well established.

Every year from February through March, our Consulate exhibits a JET booth at career fairs held by universities within NSW to provide information for graduating students. The application period then opens from September through to November (December this year), and after the written application and interview stages, applicants are notified of their results in March. In June or July (November this year), the Pre-Departure Orientation is held and departure occurs in July (November this year). Finally in March, upon completion of a participant's appointment period on the JET Programme, a Returnee Reception is held for those who return home.

In the future, with the cooperation of local Japanese companies and organisations, I hope to hold career seminars aimed at JET participants, as well as networking events with Japanese companies on a regular basis.



**Jessica Scott's JET experience – a staff member at the
Consulate-General of Japan in Sydney
(May 2019)**

In December last year, Jessica Scott joined our Consulate's Information and Culture Division as a member of local staff. From 2017, she worked on JET for two years as an English Assistant Language Teacher (ALT) in Akita Prefecture. Jessica also currently plays a role in JETAA NSW as the Secretary.

Aside from her duties relating to the JET Programme at our Consulate, she has also widely taken on work including writing articles on her JET experience in our Consulate's quarterly newsletter *Japan Reports*, manages the Consulate's Instagram account and J-Syd InstaLive series, and supports tasks relating to the management of the website and Facebook account. Her presence at the Consulate has already become indispensable.

The JET Programme has been a big success in the promotion of foreign language education and internationalisation within Japan and helps to provide exchange opportunities in Japan to young people around the world. The value of the Programme has already been seen for over 30 years and will increase even more. I will do my very best so that more Australians will take part in the JET Programme and will be able to make full use of the experience and network with a life-long impact.

The application period for next year's September cohort is open until 11 December 2020, so please share this information to anyone you happen to know who may be interested in the JET Programme.

JET Programme

<http://jetprogramme.org/en/>

2021 JET Programme Application Packs (Embassy of Japan in Australia)

https://www.au.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr_en/education_jet_en.html

2021 JET Programme Information Session presentation

https://www.sydney.au.emb-japan.go.jp/document/english/2021_JET_Presentation.pdf

JET Programme timeline from application to departure

https://www.sydney.au.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr_en/education_JET_current_status.html

JET Alumni Association NSW (JETAA NSW)

<http://www.jetaansw.org/>

Jessica's JET experience (staff member of the Consulate-General of Japan in Sydney)

https://www.instagram.com/p/CArIID_BfuS/

Japan Reports Quarterly Newsletter (articles of Jessica's JET experience)

https://www.sydney.au.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr_ja/culture_jr.html

(End)