

“Arigato” Host Town for the Supporting Reconstruction



Kamaishi City has been registered as a host town for Australia as part of the “Arigato” Host Town for the Supporting Reconstruction initiative. Since 2017, we have had opportunities to express our gratitude for the heartfelt support given to us throughout the tough times recovering from the damage caused by the Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami, and we have deepened our friendship through mutual exchanges. Due to COVID-19, the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games have been postponed, and we had to cancel exchanges and activities that we had planned with the people of Australia. However, we still would like to share what we have achieved so far hoping that will lead to continuous exchanges for many more years to come.

“Great hope for the young generation” Mr. Scott Fardy



Mr. Fardy, giving courage and hope to the citizens in Kamaishi through his rugby matches at Kamaishi Sports Ground, October 23, 2011 (table 1)

10 years ago, the town was not in a great state, but the people of Kamaishi were incredibly strong and inspiring. I stayed behind because of my teammates and friends in the town by hoping that I could help in some way. Kamaishi means a lot to me personally because I grew as a person so much for the 3 years I lived there. After attending the Rugby World Cup 2019 in Kamaishi, I was amazed with the amount of work that had taken place in the town and area. It was fantastic to see so many people enjoying the town and seeing that area of Japan. Australia and Japan have had a deep connection for many years. I hope we continue to be good friends as we are today for a long time. I'd love to see more Australian people traveling to this area of Japan. I have a great hope for the young generations from Kamaishi. In the future, I look forward to taking my own children to Kamaishi and seeing the progress made by the kids of today.

Mr. Scott Fardy, born in 1984, is an Australian rugby player who played for the Kamaishi Seawaves RFC from 2009 to 2011. After the Great East Japan Earthquake, he walked 8 km every day from the Seawaves Clubhouse to the relief supply collection point to help carry and distribute the supplies. He even carried the citizens up and down the stairs in the buildings where the elevators stopped working. He played for the national team of Australia in the Rugby World Cup 2015.



Mr. Fardy, playing tag rugby with elementary school kids at Kosano Elementary School, March 12, 2018

Kamaishi City is the host town of Australia

Mr. Scott Fardy, an Australian rugby player who was playing for Kamaishi Seawaves RFC at that time, remained in Kamaishi when the Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami hit. Even though the Australian government asked him to return home, he stayed in Kamaishi and helped humanitarian aids, and he gave courage and hope to a lot of citizens. They showed their gratitude by organizing fund-raising activities and donation work when the large-scale forest fire occurred in Australia around September 2019. The Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games will be held 10 years after the disaster, and it will be a great opportunity to make our mutual bonds and friendship stronger and deeper. May our friendship with Australia last forever!

Introducing Japanese culture through videos between the students

“This is how Ninjas hide themselves.” It would look like this if I write your name in kanji (Chinese characters).” Since September this year, 8 junior high schoolers have started exchanges with the students learning Japanese language at Para Hills High school in Australia to better understand each other’s cultures. They were supposed to visit Australia in March, but the trip was canceled due to the COVID-19. Instead, they started exchanging some video messages as a new way of communication. While exchanging video messages, the Kamaishi group found out that some Australian students love Japanese anime. When introducing Ninjas and Japanese anime, they decided to add some comic books in which ninjas appear. They took the video showing “Kakuremi no Jutsu (how to hide on the wall)” by hiding behind a big towel and suddenly appearing. They put in lots of work in creating those video messages. They also wrote the names of Australian students in kanji, and they chose characters with good meaning. Mr. Kaito Sasa, 8th grader from Kasshi Junior High, said, “We chose less-complicated characters, so it would be easier for them to write and use.” This project is organized by the Australian Olympic Committee, and they are planning to exchange video messages once in two weeks until the end of October. On November 3, they will talk live online in hopes of deepening their friendship.



Junior high school students introducing Japanese culture through video, October 2020 (table 9)



Kamaishi is my “home”

Ms. Emily Hallams, Secretary General
Australian and New Zealand Chamber of Commerce in Japan



Ms. Emily Hallams, at Kamaishi Unosumai Memorial Stadium, September 25, 2019

I worked in Kamaishi for 3 and a half years as a Coordinator for International Relations (CIR) until this January, and I met so many people while I lived there. I'm currently working in Tokyo for the Australian and New Zealand Chamber of Commerce in Japan, but I will never forget that we successfully hosted the Rugby World Cup 2019 in Kamaishi. On that day, a big smile was shining upon everyone's face. It was great to see hospitality given by many volunteers, polite and thorough service by staff at restaurants and hotels, and students presenting their

activities on tsunami prevention in the stadium. We were truly “ONE TEAM.” Many visitors from overseas told me that Kamaishi was awesome and it had a beautiful landscape I was very happy that the world has finally seen Kamaishi and understood its greatness. Kamaishi is my home in Japan. I'm so grateful for my home in Japan to support Australia through the fund-raising campaign when we had a big forest fire in 2019. I will do my best to become a bridge between Australia and Kamaishi, and make more Australian people feel close to our host town.



Supporting each other

Kamaishi Kizuna Conference
Kaiho Masaki, Chairperson

Kamaishi Kizuna Conference
Reika Konno, Vice Chairperson

Kamaishi Kizuna (means “bonds”) Conference is a group consisting of all the 14 elementary and junior high schools in Kamaishi. When we heard of the news about the large-scale forest fire in Australia, we began a fund-raising campaign and raised about AUS\$4,000 in a week. We were so grateful for the support, and we realized that we could do something for people even though we are only elementary or junior high school students, in the times of crisis and disaster.

Students discussing the fund-raising campaign in the joint meeting of Kamaishi Kizuna Conference with Odate Children Summit at Kamaishi Citizen Hall TETTO, February 7, 2020

Our fund-raising campaign took place in each school. At Kamaishi Junior High, for example, we asked for donations by putting up some posters and handing out flyers to all the students. Every morning for that week, we put boxes for donation in front of the faculty's room and collected funds from each class. We received a lot of support from all over the world after the disaster. In recent years, natural disasters occur frequently in Japan. Through our fund-raising campaign, we came to know how important it is to help each other. It would be great if we could deepen our bonds and friendship with Australia even more by helping and caring each other.

Chronological table of exchanges between Kamaishi and Australia	
March 11, 2011	The Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami hit Kamaishi and the coastal area of Iwate. Mr. Scott Fardy, who was playing for the Kamaishi Seawaves RFC at that time, stayed behind in Kamaishi and helped in humanitarian aids. He gave courage and hope to the citizens also through his rugby matches. ❶
March 2015	Started the junior high school student delegation program to Macedon Ranges, Victoria, Australia (jointly organized with Tokai City, a sister city of Kamaishi in Japan)
March 2016 August 2016	The 2nd junior high school student delegation program Ms. Emily Hallams from Australia became the first coordinator for international relations in Kamaishi
March 2017 October 2017	The 3rd junior high school student delegation program Special gathering through rugby for supporting reconstruction (with former Australian national team members, students from Kamaishi Higashi Junior High school and Unosumai Elementary school) Kamaishi City was registered as the “Arigato” Host Town for Supporting Reconstruction
November 2017	Fun meeting with Mr. Scott Fardy at Kosano Elementary school. Special rugby coaching session for local high school students ❷ “Welcome home, Mr. Fardy!” special fun meeting with Kamaishi citizens
March 2018	The 4th junior high school student delegation program Elementary school students were invited to Kamaishi and visited Kamaishi Elementary school ❸ Kamaishi Kids Rugby International Exchange Program (“Kamaishi Kids Try”) ❹
September 2018	Deputy Mayor and city officials of Kamaishi visited Australia
November 2018 March 2019 May 2019	The 5th junior high school student delegation program Mr. Matt Giteau and other members of Australian rugby national team visited Kamaishi
July 2019	Exchange program between Kamaishi and Australia was put on display at MOS Burger restaurant in Kamaishi
September 2019	Mr. Scott Fardy was invited to Rugby World Cup 2019 in Kamaishi. Exchange program with high school students from Australia ❺ Australian elementary school students were invited to Kamaishi and had an exchange with Futaba Elementary school ❻ Exchange program with elementary school students from Odawara City (another host town of Australia)
November 2019	Tag rugby matches for elementary school kids with students from Australia and Odawara City
January 24~ March 31, 2020 February 2020	Fun-raising campaign for disaster support for the forest fire in Australia, which raised JPY1,355,469 (= AUS17,620) ❻ Members of Federal and State Parliament of Australia visited Kamaishi to see reconstruction Commemorative stamps for the host town were on sale (limited to 200 sheets) ❽ Special video message from the citizens was created
March 2020	“Tomodachi 2020” Pilot Program (educational exchange program through the Internet) began between the schools in Australia and Kamaishi ❾
July 2020 September 2020	



Commemorative stamp sheet for the host town (table 8)



Mr. Fardy, coaching local high school students at Kamaishi Sports Ground, March 12, 2018 (table 2)



Making rice balls with Aussie beef and seafood from Kamaishi after the rugby matches at Kamaishi Sports Ground Clubhouse, September 24, 2019 (table 5)



Australian elementary school students watching Tori mai, or Tiger Dance, a local traditional performing art in Kamaishi at Kamaishi Elementary school, September 14, 2018 (table 3)



Learning how to play the Japanese drums at Futaba Elementary school, November 15, 2019 (table 6)



Kids playing rugby in the Kamaishi Kids Rugby International Exchange Program at Kamaishi Unosumai Memorial Stadium, September 15, 2018 (table 4)



“We know how tough it is to lose houses or someone you love”, a citizen cooperating in the fund-raising campaign for the forest fire in Australia, January 27, 2020 (table 7)



Learning from Kamaishi

Redfield College
Joseph Assaf (13)

Redfield College
Jordan Hatcher (13)



Students from Australia enjoying a rugby match of Kamaishi Seawaves RFC at Kamaishi Unosumai Memorial Stadium, November 16, 2019

We thought that Kamaishi was a beautiful city that demonstrates how after a terrible disaster people can work together to build a place that is even more colourful and welcoming than it has ever been. During our trip, we immersed ourselves in their welcoming culture and we learned all about how even at the toughest of times if we work as one unit, we can get through our burdens and struggles and heal our wounds even stronger than they were.

We learned a lot about culture and community of each other through our exchange between Australia and Kamaishi. We think that this would be educationally beneficial for both countries as it allows many students to learn about other's way of life. We feel that the Tokyo Olympics will be a great opportunity to show the world about the way of life in Japan. We are very excited for it, as we got a glimpse at the thriving community of Japan, and we feel that it will be an amazing event to behold. We feel that it will be a highlight of 2021. We can't wait to see all of the people gather together after the COVID-19 crisis has subsided.



My experience in Australia

Hiroto Sasaki,
Student, Tohoku Gakuin University, majoring in architecture



Hiroto Sasaki, then a junior high school student at Kasshi Junior High school, with students in Australia, March 2015

I visited Australia when I was in the 8th grade, and I learned that it's important to actively work on everything in life. I wanted to know how much I could communicate with people with my English skills, and I applied for the international exchange program. I was really nervous at the beginning, but everyone I met was so welcoming and friendly. I will never forget the moment that I realized I could communicate with my host family and the local students.

I was interested in architecture at that time, so I was impressed with all the buildings I saw in Australia, including the Sydney Opera House. I'm currently majoring in architecture at a university in Japan, and I sometimes collect information or talk to people overseas in English. It's a lot of fun to interact with people beyond borders and create something together. I will return home to Kamaishi in the future, and hopefully I can help develop the city as an architect. I also want to host children from Australia. I think we can see a great opportunity for the city through exchange and communication with people from all generations.