

Sister Cities

Japanese Day draws massive crowd

Latrobe City's seventh Japanese Day, held at Kernot Hall on Sunday 17 October, was arguably the most successful and well attended Japanese Day to date, with approximately 3,500 people in attendance throughout the day.

Kernot Hall once again came alive with the sights, sounds and smells of Japanese culture, with the program designed to ensure that visitors were provided with numerous opportunities to experience Japan's way of life. There was something for everyone, musical performances, cuisine to taste, crafts and produce to buy, along with martial arts demonstrations.

This year, Latrobe City was privileged to have a delegation from our sister city, Takasago City, Japan attend the festivities and commemorate the tenth anniversary of the Latrobe and Takasago sister city

relationship. The mayor of Takasago, Mr Yukihiro Norbori responded to Latrobe City mayor, Cr Kellie O'Callaghan's welcome, by highlighting the importance of our relationships, the strength of the relationship, the friendships generated, and the ongoing nature of those friendships. A highlight was the reaffirmation of our Sister Cities agreement with both mayors reaffirming our Sister Cities agreement.

Mr Yasufumi Kotake, Acting Consul-General from the Japanese Consulate (Melbourne) was once again in attendance, demonstrating the commitment the Japanese Consulate has towards the event and Latrobe City's international relations program; while as part of the delegation from Takasago, two very talented artists demonstrated their skills to captivate audiences throughout the day.

Mr Jisuit Kataoka, displayed his talents with the traditional Japanese Biwa, a Japanese short-necked fretted lute, often used in narrative storytelling. The biwa is the chosen instrument of Benten, goddess of music, eloquence, poetry, and education in Japan; while Mr Takeo Fujita mesmerized the audience all day with his Japanese calligraphy.

Latrobe City's manager Cultural Liveability, David Elder, said as always, Melbourne-based Japanese drum ensemble 'Wadaiko Rindo', renowned for its energetic and dynamic drumming performances won accolades from the crowd, conducting a number of workshops with people of all ages performing on stage including Cr Lisa Price and Latrobe City Council's CEO Paul Buckley.

"An added feature at this year's Japanese Day was Sale Primary School's student performances of Japanese drumming and a mixture of traditional folk songs and popular children's songs from today; while martial arts demonstrations by the Traralgon Kyokushin Karate Club and Traralgon Judo Club attracted overwhelming patronage and applause from the audience.

"Japanese food stalls were also very popular. The stalls provided many people



Visitors and presenters at this year's impressive Japanese Day

with the opportunity to sample Japanese cuisine. Okonomiyaki was again a crowd favorite, with a constant queue throughout the day. The Japanese confectionery stall was very popular too especially amongst the children," David said.

"There were also many stalls and workshops featuring Japanese art and

craft, intrinsic to the Japanese lifestyle for everyone to enjoy; and for children, there were plenty of activities including a Japanese model railway, games, sumo suits and Japanese toys and art activities to try their hand at."

Japanese Day was sponsored by Latrobe City Council, TEPCO, Loy Yang Power and Nippon Paper Group.

International friendship celebrated through art

Throughout 2010 Latrobe City and Takasago City Japan have been celebrating the ten-year anniversary of their Sister City relationship.

In March 2010 four emerging artists: Ronald Edwards, Michael Gallop, Maria-Luisa Marino and Louis Patterson from Latrobe City visited Takasago City; while in June, four artists from Takasago City: Takeo Fujita, Mai Furuno, Masami Okada and Atsuko Yamada visited Latrobe City.

Each of the artists was invited to make artwork that explored their sense of identity, place and connection with the history, people, built and natural environment of their home city. They were also invited to make an artwork that was a response to their observations and experience in their sister city.

Latrobe City's general manager Recreational and Cultural Liveability, Grantley Switzer, explained that the artworks produced by the Latrobe City artists were on display to the public at the Latrobe Regional Gallery in

October; while the artworks by the Takasago City artists continue to be displayed at the gallery during November.

"All of the works were displayed together on Japanese Day, and in celebration and in recognition of the ten-year sister city relationship, the artworks produced were exchanged and gifted between each city in a special ceremony held on the day.

"Celebrating the special relationship between the two cities through the medium of art has been a valuable experience for both groups of artists and the wider community has had a chance to see the artworks, reflect on the experiences of the artists and their interpretation of their visits, and see tangible evidence of the benefits of this cultural and artistic exchange," Grantley concluded.

Latrobe's emerging artist visit was sponsored by Nippon Paper, Monash University, Gippsland Campus, Gippsland Dental Group, Braiakaulung Advisory Committee and Latrobe City Council.



Artist Ronald Edwards with his work

Ten years of friendship with Taizhou celebrated



Reaffirmation of the sister cities agreement in Taizhou, China

Special ceremonies held during the visit of a mayoral led delegation to Latrobe's sister city of Taizhou in October, commemorated the ten-year anniversary of the sister city relationship between the Australian and Chinese cities, further strengthening the relationship.

Part of the formal ceremonies, included the reaffirmation of the sister cities agreement.

Latrobe City mayor Cr Kellie O'Callaghan led the delegation from Latrobe City and said she was pleased that former Latrobe mayor, Lorraine Bartling OAM, who as mayor at the time, signed the sister city agreement with Taizhou on behalf of our municipality ten years ago, was able to be part of the delegation.

"The sister city relationship with Taizhou is important to Latrobe City. It provides opportunities for cultural, educational and economic exchanges between our two cities and highlights the friendship and trust that has developed between the two cities over the last decade. It also helps to make Latrobe City a more culturally aware municipality," Cr O'Callaghan said.

The delegation met with key government and educational officials whilst in China including Shanghai Municipal Education Commission/International Education Association Shanghai; Australian Education International (AEI), Austrade; Commissioner - Greater China State Government of Victoria, Victorian Government Business Office; Xian Hi-Tech International School; Middle School Number 1 and 2 in Taizhou; Taizhou Teachers Colleges; and Taizhou Minxing Experimental Middle School

"Outcomes of these meeting were positive with discussions around the future exchange of students, teachers and technologies between educational institutions in China and Latrobe City and ways to capitalise on 'education as an export'," Cr O'Callaghan said.

"Our education exchanges during this time have been very successful. Since 1999 education exchange, particularly between Traralgon Secondary College and Taizhou Middle School No 1, has been strong and fruitful for both cities. During this time, around 50 teachers from Traralgon Secondary College have spent three months at Taizhou Middle

School No 1 teaching English language skills. During the same period, over 75 students and 21 teachers from the City of Taizhou have been on exchange to Latrobe City.

"In 2004 and again in January 2008, the Latrobe City Youth Band visited Taizhou and performed at Taizhou Middle School number 1 and Minxing Experimental Middle School.

"Since 1998, delegations from the City of Taizhou have shown interest in Latrobe City's business, healthcare, sport and education systems. Future delegations and exchanges will continue and advance our strong sister city relationship.

"Latrobe City and the City of Taizhou are committed to the sister city program and a priority will be focusing on activities that create an atmosphere which enhances significant economic and community opportunities that are sustainable and advantageous for our regions, Cr O'Callaghan added