

# Newcastle, Australia

For my First Iwaki Vision I would like to take this opportunity to introduce my hometown of Newcastle in Australia.

Newcastle is a town roughly the same size in population as Iwaki (although smaller in area) of over 308,000 people, making it the sixth largest city in Australia and the second largest in New South Wales. It is located about 160 kilometres north-east of Sydney which is accessible in about 2 hours by car and 2.5 to 3 hours by train



Newcastle, like Iwaki, was and still is famous for its coal and is known as the largest exporter of coal in the Australia with its harbour exporting 150 million tonnes of coal to countries around the world including Japan in the 2012 fiscal year.

Although we cannot claim to be the 'Hawaii of Australia', Newcastle can at least take pride in its beautiful beaches that stretch all along the coastline. The City of Newcastle has 8 beaches as well as Oceanside baths such as the Newcastle Ocean Baths and sand dunes for 4WD recreation.

Another popular attraction is Nobbys Lighthouse which is occasionally open to the public on Sundays. Those who prefer to get away from the beach can enjoy the Blackbutt wildlife reserve, the Femleigh track forest cycleway and Lake Macquarie, Australia's largest saltwater lake where you can enjoy all sorts of marine activities or scenic dining.

Newcastle also unfortunately experienced a rare earthquake in 1989 measuring 5.6 on the Richter Magnitude Scale and claimed several lives. Other disasters recently include the 2007 storm that became famous nationwide when the bulk carrier: the *Pasha Bulker* became stranded on Nobbys Beach.

Newcastle has a Sister City relationship with the Japanese city of Ube in Yamaguchi prefecture and the University of Newcastle conducts exchanges between institutions such as Shohoku College, Seijo University and Nagoya University of Foreign Studies among others.

I hope you will consider visiting Newcastle as part of your Australia trip one day!

# Greetings from the new CIR

G'day Iwakians! My name is Benjamin McMullen and I took over from Sebastian as the new CIR (Coordinator of International Relations) of Iwaki City government as of late July. I have only been in Iwaki for two months and yet I have already experienced so many wonderful events and met so many kind and friendly locals as well as some of our international community.

I came to Iwaki from Australia, like many of Iwaki's predecessors, however I am from a small city called Newcastle (introduced on previous page) which is just a few hours' drive north of Sydney. This is my third time in Japan and my first real job. As such it has been quite a learning curve for me, not just in regards to Japanese office vocabulary but also Japanese office culture as well.

I was first introduced to Japan through Japanese anime and samurai movies as a child and grew an interest in anime and manga during my high school years. I gradually picked up some Japanese words along the way, and so when I entered University I decided to major in Japanese language and Japanese studies.

As with learning any foreign language, you cannot learn the language without learning some of the culture and history behind it as well. And so I too gradually learnt aspects of Japanese history, society and culture through studying Japanese and became even more interested in Japan.

That is why I was elated when I finally came to Japan for the first time three years ago for a two and a half week cultural exchange and homestay. After finally experiencing Japan itself for the first time, I was eager for more, and so I applied and was successful for a yearlong exchange at Seijo University from September 2013 to July 2014.

Now I begin my third and most challenging adventure in Japan as a CIR, but I look forward to increasing exchange between Iwaki and Australia as well as the rest of the world, and I also look forward to seeing many more interesting events and festivals and meeting many more people while I'm here.

