

**Q4 Would you like to positively admit an exchange student, if you have an opportunity?**

- If we have another opportunity, we would like to accept an exchange student again.
- We had a great experience as a host family. Honestly, we felt accomplished and satisfied with a sense of fulfillment. However, two-week stay program seemed to be too long for us, so we would like to refrain from this program for the time being. Thank you so much.
- We hope to have another chance in a few years: while my parents are still in good health. This time, she stayed at my parents' house within walking distance, not at our apartment. We shared the household chores (cooking, picking up and dropping off by car, doing the laundry, interpreting) and helped each other. That's why all went well, and we didn't feel too busy.

- Yes, we will.
- I was in a bit of a rush to balance work of my own, so unfortunately I couldn't spend much more time doing a lot of things with her. Time passed so quickly that I felt like there were so many other things I had wanted to do together with her. We could have such a great experience through working as a host family that we would like to accept an exchange student someday if we had another chance. We are very grateful for having been given such a good opportunity. Thank you so much.



**Sale of "lamington", Australian sweet**

At the Yamato Takada Industrial festival and Genki-fest helped on November 19<sup>th</sup>, the exchange students who had visited Lismore introduced the city of Lismore and sold lamingtons, Australian traditional sweet.

Yamato Takada and Lismore, Australia, Sister City Association held the special exhibition in commemoration of its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year.



**Bamboo English**

＼ The exchange students of both cities participated in Bamboo English class ／



'Bamboo English class' is practiced twice a month for 5 to 12 year-old children in Yamato Takada city. They enjoy learning English with Ms. Kristina, English teacher (ALT). It originally started as one of the International Exchange Projects, and it has been running on its way for 8 years.

〈 Halloween 〉

〈 Christmas 〉



**The Bamboo Shoots**

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We do hope The Bamboo Shoots born out of the soil of Yamato-Takada will grow up and act as a go-between for the citizens in Lismore and in Yamato-Takada



**Lismore Exchange Students visit Yamato Takada**

From September 27<sup>th</sup> to October 8<sup>th</sup>

Lismore council sent the six exchange students and a chaperone, their group leader, to Yamato Takada for the first time in 4 years. They visited some of the schools in Yamato Takada and traveled to Hiroshima for peace learning. They experienced a lot of Japanese cultures. During their stay in Japan, they stayed with their host families. After they finished the program in Japan for 12 days, they returned to Australia safely.



**Questionnaires to Lismore Students 2023**

**Q1 What were your first impressions of Yamato Takada?**

- My first impression of Yamato Takada surprised me with how large the town was. I had pictured it to be quite small. I also found it is quite lively. For example, a lot of students walking either home or to school. And also many people riding bikes to either the shops or work. I was also surprised on how compact it is. (Streets, and buildings also very narrow)
- I felt excited and happy as we got to Yamato Takada. I felt so loved and welcome every day.
- Originally I imagined Yamato Takada as your average busy packed, Japanese town with cramped streets, but after visiting other parts of Japan, I realised how unique Yamato Takada was with its cultural beauty, and kind people.
- Being in Japan felt so surreal. When I first arrived in Yamato Takada, I was a bit overwhelmed and tired from the plane trip. But I found that the people of Yamato Takada made me feel so at home.
- Yamato Takada is a very big city, very friendly place and really kind people.







## Q2 What differences were you surprised at in terms of culture, manners and customs?

- Arriving in Japan was a lot of culture shock, everything different to Australia. But after 2 weeks with everyone, I became accustomed to the unique ways of living and can see the importance and beauty in Japanese culture and customs. For example: Shoes inside, ceremonies, festivals, temples, and shrines.
- Remembering to take off my shoes was a struggle at first, I loved Japanese food and the people I met were all very friendly and I found it easy to make friends.
- The narrow roads were a surprise, having to take off my shoes before entering the house or changing into gym shoes before entering the gym.
- I was verity surprised by their differences in eating. Staying in a Japanese house makes you realise how different their food is.
- I originally knew about the shoe customs but I was surprised to find it in some toilets, bathrooms, restaurants, and in clothes changing rooms in stores. I was also surprised about the mannerisms for eating. Such as saying a phrase before eating 'Itadakimasu' then another for thanking for the meal afterwards.

## Q3 What impressed you most with regard to your host family?

- Each family member was very friendly and welcoming even if they don't admit it. Their English was very good. Their meals were very good and the families were all very organised.
- How loving and kind my host family was to accept me into their family.
- My host family was really kind and would buy me lots of gifts and food. They made me feel like I was their family.
- When meeting my host family, I was unsure what to expect, as everyone's family nature is different, but I was surprised to find out that they could speak and understand enough English so there wasn't any language barrier.
- How attached we got to each other like family.



## Q4 Did you enjoy yourself in Hiroshima? What were your impressions of Hiroshima?

- Yes, I did enjoy myself in Hiroshima. Hiroshima was very advanced and recovered well after the war. The people there looked very happy and the city was large.
- Yes, Hiroshima was the highlight of our trip to Japan. Whilst it was treated as a place for remembering the tragic past, it also highlighted the hope and beauty of Japanese culture and history.
- Yes, Hiroshima was an eye opening experience as we went to the A-bomb museum. Learning about the history and getting to know all about Hiroshima was very interesting.
- Yes, Hiroshima is really beautiful with lots of greenery and friendly people.
- Yes, I found the Atomic bomb museum to be incredibly powerful message, and our day trip to Miyajima was truly amazing.



# Questionnaires to Host Families 2023

## Q1 Some puzzlements while welcoming students from Australia:

- To be honest, there was nothing special. That's because she was a wonderful and charming girl. Her lovely smile made us a good first impression. She was polite, tried her best to speak Japanese, and spoke simple English slowly.
- He would often climb on the stair railings or stand on the garden fence, so we were quite anxious about his dangerous behaviour that we sometimes had to let him cool down to keep him from getting hurt. Despite our concerns, he didn't listen to us, just saying "daijyobu" (he only knows this Japanese word for okay).
- When she came to stay with us, she ate very little. We thought it was probably because she must have been tired from her long flight. She was a small eater at first, so we were worried if she would be okay.
- He loves Japanese anime, which he wanted to buy a lot. He said that it was because the yen was weak, I often warned him about how he was spending money. In spite of our worries and concerns, he refused to listen to us, insisting that he would like to buy Japanese anime even if he had to pay so much money for extra baggage fees.
- Though we accepted a male exchange student, we had no choice but to let him use our daughter's room, which made him feel somewhat inconvenient.
- As I'm unable to speak English, it was difficult for me to tell her what I wanted to say, so she often took time to understand me. When I used the Google's Translation function, I was able to convey what I should tell her smoothly. I did want to learn to speak English as well as the Google function. As the daughter of the family my son had stayed with at Lismore in Australia became an exchange student at our home this time, my son told me a lot about her, which helped me do my best for her.

## Q2 What you realized about differences in culture, manners and customs:

- On his first day with us, we laughed at him when we saw him putting his shoes on outside the front gate. Surprisingly, we found it somehow strange and interesting that he took a shower in the morning and also took a bath at night on the same day. We never saw him sitting or lying on the floor. He would always sit on a sofa or a chair trying to fit in with our custom at home. He showed us an aspect of his kindness and consideration.
- She told us that in Australia she usually goes to bed around 9 o'clock, so we all tried to stay calm and quiet after 9.
- She told us that it was impossible in Australia to say "sumimasen" or "I'm sorry" when calling to servers at eateries or restaurants.
- She went to bed early and woke up early, which I heard was her usual habit.
- She was just curious about vending machines. One of the things she had been looking forward to seeing in Japan was a vending machine. We were wondering why. We didn't know they are not common in Australia. She told us there were no vending machines for drinks except for snacks.
- She said cars were smaller and people drove slowly and politely in Japan, which we hadn't realized. We were surprised to hear that there were no traffic lights in Lismore.
- The thermometer she used was a different kind to the one used in Japan, so I had some trouble measuring her body temperature.

- I usually do the laundry every day, so when I said to her, "Take out your clothes today," she was surprised to hear that, and said that she had never heard about that. She added to say, "Is it true you do the washing every day?"
- I don't know why, but she drank a lot of water.

## Q3 Delights and troubles during his or her stay with you:

- We spent every day having a lot of fun with him and he really inspired us in many respects.
- It was everything. The time we spent with her was like a dream, and we all have missed her since she left. She never hesitated to try traditional Japanese food: umeboshi, natto, and sukiyaki with raw eggs. To our surprise, she got to like them. Before she ate them for the first time, we didn't expect and even she did not believe she would like them, though. Especially, she liked my mother's umeboshi, pickled plums, and ate many every day, which made my mother very happy. My father was also happy to hear that his okonomiyaki was better than the okonomiyaki she had in Hiroshima. My younger daughter made some pairs of paper crane earrings for her, and she was happy that she liked them and that she was wearing them at the farewell party. It was also a good memory to have dinner with our big family of 10, including my little nephew and to play with fireworks together in the garden. We took a bath together at a spa with open-air baths, saunas, and Jacuzzies. She made a magatama, an ancient Japanese comma-shaped bead, by skillfully sanding a stone. We enjoyed singing English songs together at karaoke. She tried to absorb as much of Japanese culture as possible. There are more things we wanted to do together.
- Although he looked like a young adult, he was so childlike still then that he became very attached to us and he was willing to show us what he had bought of his own will.
- On his last night with us, he took time to write us a heartfelt letter.
- On the day he took a trip for Hiroshima, our car was stuck in a traffic jam due to a car accident. I was very worried about his trip, and we wouldn't be able to understand each other due to what is called a language barrier. But we were mutually pleased that we had managed to make it in time for departure. As a host family I will never forget about this. All through his stay with us we felt that words were very important to understand each other after all. Now we really feel very happy to see our daughter learning the important language of English and she is gradually progressing in it day by day. We also take pride in my daughter.
- We talked with her a lot about the differences between Australian and Japanese culture, such as daily life, school events, road conditions, hourly wage of a part-time job and so forth. These talks turned out to be very useful and helpful for us Japanese.
- When we found that she was getting better at making 'rice balls' and 'gyoza', we were honestly delighted with her progress, crying How yummy! These taste good." (As she missed Japanese food like rice balls and miso soup after returning to Lismore, she tried to make them and sent us the photos of them.)
- We were deeply moved by her big reaction she showed us when she enjoyed eating some ingredients she had never had before, such as pickled plums, Japanese yams, okura, raw eggs for sukiyaki, persimmons, pears and so forth.