

GEELONG DAYS'18

People, Nature and Future linked by Tidal Flats

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Introduction

Let's spring into action! For the future of tidal flats.

In March 2018, 18 junior high school students from Nagoya visited Geelong City in Australia to learn about environmental protection organizations.



Cultivating the youth who will tackle environmental protection themselves

~Dispatching 104 junior high school students over 10 years~

Every two years, Nagoya City sends over some of its junior high school students to Geelong City to learn about its environmental protection organizations, and for the students to also interact with locals so both sides can learn from each other. The aim of dispatching these students is to help them cultivate the skills they can use to tackle environmental protection themselves. 2017 marked the 10th anniversary since the program started in 2007, and during that decade 104 students were sent over from Nagoya to Geelong, including the group in 2017, to deepen the ties between the two cities.

These reports were written by many of the students, who decided and wrote about topics and selected

pictures that would tell the people of Nagoya what they learnt during their time in Geelong. We hope these student reports will motivate Nagoya's citizens to become more involved in environmental protection activities.



Migratory Birds that connect Nagoya and Geelong

~Deepening ties between the cities through the Wetland Affiliation Agreement~



The Fujimae Tidal Flat in Nagoya City is an important relay point where many migratory birds land while they travel between the northern and southern hemispheres. After resting their wings and enjoying the abundance of rich food in this area, these birds then depart for Australia, Siberia and other destinations.

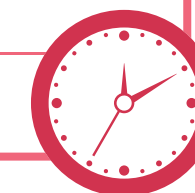
Geelong City is located in the state of Victoria,

which is situated in the southeastern part of Australia. It is home to the wetlands included the route of the migratory birds that land in the Fujimae Tidal Flat. Nagoya and Geelong concluded a Wetland Affiliation Agreement on May 22, 2007, and since then, the two cities have been working together to promote the conservation and utilization of wetlands.



Itinerary

Sunday March 25th	Depart from Chubu Centrair International Airport → Singapore Changi Airport
Monday March 26th	→ Arrive at Melbourne Airport → Fitzroy Gardens → St Patrick's Cathedral → Federation Square → State Library of Victoria → Serendip Sanctuary
Tuesday March 27th	→ Geelong Town Hall → National Wool Museum → Breamlea Beach → Jirrahlinga Koala & Wildlife Sanctuary
Wednesday March 28th	→ Marin and Freshwater Discovery Centre, The Swan Bay Tidal Flats → Queenscliff Primary School → Around the Queenscliff area → Queenscliff Harbour
Thursday March 29th	→ Queen Victoria Market → Melbourne Museum, etc. → Depart from Melbourne Airport
Friday March 30th	→ Singapore Changi Airport → Arrive at Chubu Centrair International Airport



Everything I saw was so fresh and new

These are reports by the junior high school students about what they saw and learnt while in Geelong.



A clean town with almost no trash littering the streets

~Townscape of Geelong~



Geelong City is located about 70km from Melbourne in Australia. Around 200,000 people live in this city blessed with a lush natural environment including over 100 wetlands, where every year 60,000 migratory birds land – some from as far as Siberia.

Trash cans are placed at even intervals along the main streets of Geelong, so I hardly saw any trash littering the streets when I was there.

Actually, Nagoya also had trash cans placed on the city streets, but they were removed in 2004 with the intention of getting people to take their trash home to dispose of; now the city and its residents are making efforts to sort garbage for recycling. Realizing how Geelong and Nagoya have this different way of dealing with trash in the city was a fresh discovery for me.



Efforts by locals to protect the Hooded Plover

~Activities I saw around Geelong~

Even around the Queenscliff area and Breamlea Beach, there wasn't any trash littering the streets; and the ocean water was so clear and beautiful.

One of the things we learnt while at Geelong was about the Hooded Plover. There are 520 of them in Victoria, and even Geelong has only 20 of these extremely precious and endangered

birds. The Hooded Plover lays its eggs on the beach, and the local primary school students and volunteers have written DON'T TOUCH signs and placed them on the beach to prevent people breaking the eggs. Anyone who finds an egg is asked to contact the Geelong Town Hall so they can protect it. These are some of the efforts by locals to protect the Hooded Plover.

Moved by seeing wild animals up close

~Serendip Sanctuary and Jirrahlinga Koala & Wildlife Sanctuary~

There are no fences at the open-style Serendip Sanctuary, so we could see the kangaroos and many other animals up close. Apparently, the Sanctuary is also artificially breeding some wild animals that are facing extinction.

The Jirrahlinga Koala & Wildlife Sanctuary

protects animals that have strayed from their parents and herd, and look after them until they are ready to be released back into the wild. I felt this is a really important thing to do, as it is protecting the area's native animals. I was able to pet a koala and some other animals Australia is famous for.



Learning by connecting with living creatures

So many living creatures on the beach ~Breamlea Beach and the Swan Bay Tidal Flats~



We saw some Hooded Plover described in Report 1 on the shores of Breamlea Beach. The English name literally means a plover born with a hood. In Japanese though, the birds are called zuguro-chidori, with zugoro written in the Kanji characters for head and black. It's interesting how the same bird is called a different name in Japanese and English because of the diverse ways people think about things like names. When the tide was low, we could also see some small crabs and seagulls on the beach.

At the Swan Bay Tidal Flats we saw pelicans and black swans, and we learnt that these swans are a vital part of the Swan Bay food chain.

There are some farms around the Swan Bay Tidal Flats. When it rains, the rainwater from the farms flows into the ocean and the organic matter in the water affects the marine environment; it's one of the factors disrupting the ocean's biodiversity. So the locals had the clever idea to plant some trees near the ocean's edge to absorb the rainwater and stop it from flowing into the ocean.



These are reports by the junior high school students on what they learnt about the living creatures found around Geelong.



Learning together with local primary school students ~Marine and Freshwater Discovery Centre~



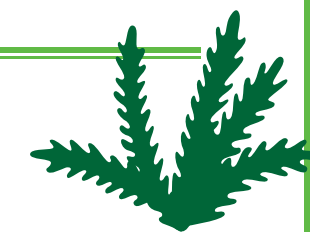
We paired up with students from the Queenscliff Primary School and visited the Marine and Freshwater Discovery Centre, where we could touch and learn about marine creatures.

We saw so many different living creatures from the Queenscliff foreshore, including lots of seagulls, squid eggs, a kind of seaweed called sea lettuce that looks like the wakame edible brown seaweed we have in Japan, sea sponges that look like an actual sponge, and sea apples from the sea cucumber family. The squid eggs felt squishy to

touch, and they looked like eyes you can see through, while the sea lettuce tasted like a hard type of wakame with a slightly salty tang from the seawater. We also learnt something new: the deep blue sections of the ocean is where you'll find lots of seaweed growing.

There is a lot of seaweed and many broken-off pieces of tree-like plants scattered around the foreshore, and this vegetation provides a kind of hideaway for the living creatures there and a feeding ground for the birds. That's why we observed the area carefully, so we wouldn't disrupt it.

The importance of doing what you can as soon as you can ~What we learnt at Geelong~



While seeing and touching the marine creatures at the Centre, we also learnt there are several rules for taking good care of the precious environment where many of these creatures live.

For example, each state in Australia has restrictions on the size and number of fish that you can catch and take home with you. The Centre has rulers for measuring the size of the fish and printed stickers showing the types of fish you can catch. And in order to protect the country's unique animals and plants, the Australian

Government also has extremely strict rules on what you can bring into the country. This also includes dairy products, vegetables, fruits and other items we use everyday. So we really need to be careful about what we bring with us when entering Australia.

I think we should learn from Australia's example and its exhaustive rules to protect the natural environment, and do what we can to protect the valuable nature and living creatures in Nagoya.

Impressed by the strong interest in environmental issues

These are reports by the junior high school students about their interactions with the local people of Geelong.



Realizing the importance of connecting with nature from a very young age

~Interacting with the students of Queenscliff Primary School~



The people of Geelong are so friendly! The locals at the hotel we were staying at very kindly helped us with our pronunciation, and the students of Queenscliff Primary School enthusiastically greeted and started talking to us very nervous students from Nagoya. When I met the students, I was really surprised by how extremely interested in the environment they are. For example, when we were walking along the beach, one of the students found a living creature they had never seen before. He quickly went to the teacher and asked her about it, and the other students also looked on with great interest.

Why do the students have such a strong interest in the environment? I think it's because they've been in close contact with nature since they were very young, and so they've naturally developed a high level of awareness and interest in the environment. It doesn't matter how strict the rules are, if people aren't eco-conscious enough then environmental protection efforts won't last very

long. In Geelong though, even the young kids are really environmentally aware.

Nagoya also has places where you can learn how fun it is to be in nature; so I want to tell many people about my experiences in Geelong, so they can know how enjoyable and fascinating nature is - there is so much we can learn about and from it! I hope I can help make Nagoya's citizens even more interested in the environment.



Summary

We learnt so much on this trip to Geelong, and we really recognized how all of the countries in the world need to work together to improve the natural environment we live in. We are now inspired to be more environmentally aware in our daily life by doing even small things, like picking up trash on the ground and making a conscious effort to save water. If everyone tries to live a more eco-friendly life, then little by little we can start to solve the environmental issues we are facing. We hope we can live in a world where people and nature can respect and coexist with each other.

We would also be so happy if everyone who reads this report is also inspired to become even more interested in the environment, and do what they can in their daily life to help protect it.

Presentation at
Geelong Town Hall

Introducing the Fujimae Tidal Flat and Nagoya's culture



Meeting the Mayor who has
visited Nagoya

~Courtesy visit to Geelong Town Hall~

The Mayor of Geelong and many other staff from the town hall warmly welcomed us when we visited there.

Geelong's current mayor, Bruce Harwood, also happens to be the same mayor who visited Nagoya ten years ago to conclude the Wetland Affiliation Agreement between the cities of Geelong and Nagoya. So Mayor Harwood has also been to Nagoya to attend the signing ceremony for the



agreement. The room where we made the presentation had photos of the signing ceremony and along with the signed Wetland Affiliation Agreement arranged together in a frame.



Comments from the students

- The staff at Geelong Town Hall were dressed quite casually, and everyone was very friendly to us.
- Everybody laughed when we introduced hachō miso as being similar to Australia's Vegemite.*
- Geelong Town Hall had a casual and relaxed atmosphere, like the IT companies shown on TV.
- The town hall staff were smiling while we made our presentation, which helped us relax.
- We reviewed the presentation we made at the town hall, and practiced it for our presentation at the primary school the next day.

*Vegemite: A famous condiment of Australia, made from a variety of yeast-fermented vegetables

On the second day of their trip to Geelong City, the junior high school students made a courtesy visit to the Geelong Town Hall.



a b c

Presenting our hand-made
posters in front of many people

d e

We gave a presentation at Geelong Town Hall using the posters we made about Nagoya City and the Fujimae Tidal Flat.

Presentation①

[Scenery of the Fujimae Tidal Flat]

We described how the scenery at the Fujimae Tidal Flat changes over time and with the seasons. We also explained about the eco-friendly activities and programs of the facilities and factories in the surrounding areas.



Presentation②

[Biodiversity of the Fujimae Tidal Flat]

We talked about the biodiversity of the Fujimae Tidal Flat, including the many migratory birds that land there as a stopover point on their journey, and to feed on its plankton, crabs and other living creatures.



Presentation③

[Miso food culture of Nagoya]

We focused on the fermented soybean paste miso and introduced Nagoya-meshi food; specifically, we talked about how hachō miso, which originates from Okazaki City in Aichi Prefecture, where Nagoya is located, is made and the typical dishes it is used in, such as miso soup, miso outlets, miso oden (various vegetables and egg, etc., stewed in soy-flavored dashi fish stock), and miso nikomi udon noodle stew.



What we learnt about the Fujimae Tidal Flat

The junior high school students visited the Fujimae Tidal Flat in Nagoya City and learnt about its features and history, and realized what a valuable place it is.



The Fujimae Tidal Flat



The Fujimae Tidal Flat is a 323-hectares wide area that expands in the estuary of the Shonai River, Shinkawa River and Nikko River, which all flow into Nagoya Port. Apparently, it is home to about 172 species of birds and roughly 174 types of bottom-feeders, such as crabs, sandworms and other shellfish. Because of these features, the tidal flat has also been registered in the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as a habitat for waterfowls.

Right in front of the Fujimae Tidal Flat is the Nagoya City Nanyo Waste Disposal Plant, which is where the city incinerates its trash. (Blue building in the photo on page 11)

When we actually entered the tidal flat, we enjoyed that special feeling of wading in mud while observing many

kinds of living creatures such as crabs, sandworms, hermit crabs, and Japanese mud shrimp. We also saw lots of different birds, including those that may have come from Australia where we just visited. Spending time exploring the tidal flat reminded us of what an oasis it is for birds.

We also understood the importance of the tidal flat food chain, in which the living creatures there either eat food or are eaten as food.

The Fujimae Tidal Flat is a precious place that we must protect, and also somewhere we can have fun discovering various creatures and other things. We hope that lots of people will visit the Fujimae Tidal Flat and enjoy the valuable experience of seeing and touching the many living creatures there.



History of the Fujimae Tidal Flat

About 20 years ago, Nagoya's annual amount of trash weighed in at around one million tons. Consequently, most of the waste landfill and disposal site at Tajimi City in Gifu Prefecture was filled with the city's trash; Nagoya was facing the problem of eventually running out of space to bury its waste, which would cause the streets and towns to overflow with trash. So the city came up with a plan to turn the Fujimae Tidal Flat into a waste landfill and disposal site.

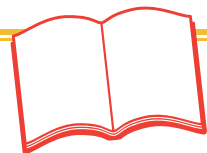
This motivated many of Nagoya's citizens to take action to protect the Fujimae Tidal Flat, which is a precious natural resource for both living creatures and people. As a result of their concerted efforts, the plan to build a waste landfill and disposal site was suspended in January 1999, and the following month the city announced the Waste Emergency Declaration aimed at

reducing the amount of garbage it generates.

Thanks to the dedicated efforts of many citizens in recycling resources and sorting garbage, Nagoya City was able to achieve the Declaration's target of a 20% (200,000 ton) reduction in garbage over two years. Even today, the people of Nagoya are still sorting their garbage and making efforts to reduce the amount of trash.



Looking back on the precious days we spent at Geelong



A very memorable six days of learning and growing

~Individual reports on visiting Geelong City by Junior High School students~

For the 18 students who visited Geelong City this time, the days spent there were filled with new things to see, touch and experience.

Every day the students were able to enjoy priceless experiences they could never have in Nagoya, and they learnt many things on this trip.

So what exactly did the students learn and experience during their time in Geelong? The next few pages feature reports by individual students on their own learning experiences in and impressions of Geelong.



Growth and gratitude

Hibino Junior High School
Megumi Asano



This was the second time for me to travel overseas with my peers rather than my family. Although I was a little nervous and anxious before the trip, looking back on it now, I can see how much I grew as a person during those six days.

I learnt many things while I was there, but it was Australia's scenery that left the strongest impression on me. The towns with no trash littering the streets, the wide and open blue sea and sky, the harsh sunlight, and the living creatures growing in the tidal flat and on the roadside ... everything I saw was so astonishing and exciting. The clean streets with no trash and the environment that can nurture life - these things are possible because of the efforts of many people there. After seeing and experiencing for myself the beautiful nature of Australia, which is thanks to its citizens being very environmentally aware, I felt strongly that Japanese people also have to be more eco-conscious, and take action to improve environmental pollution.

It was the time I spent in the vast and spectacular nature of Australia that helped me to realize this. I am so grateful to all of the people who organized this trip, and I am so glad that I took part in it.

Australia and its nature

Tokai Junior High School
Koki Okabayashi



Why has Geelong City placed urban development as its second priority after environmental protection? I decided to join this trip because I wanted to visit Geelong and find out the reason for this.

While Japan and Australia both view wild birds and other wildlife as valuable animals that should be able to live forever, there are also some differences in each country's approach to protecting these animals. For example, in Japan we put wild birds in cages to protect and observe them, but in places like the Serendip Sanctuary in Australia, humans are hardly involved as the wildlife are watched over while they live and grow in an environment that is almost identical to their natural habitat. I felt there is a major difference between Japan and Australia in how people are involved in protecting wildlife.

The local primary school students seem to spend a lot of time outside observing the living creatures on the beach and in other places, and they also pick up any trash they find along the way. This is how they learn about the importance of nature from a very young age, and I think this way of thinking about the environment is extremely important to Australians. Thanks to this trip, I was able to understand a little more about why it is Geelong City places such importance on environmental protection.

Feelings are more important than words in communication

Sawakami Junior High School
Aki Kato



Finally on the third day of our trip, we visited the much-anticipated Geelong Town Hall to make our presentation. I was more nervous than I thought I would be, but I did my best to present what we had prepared in Japan, while also expressing my enthusiasm for environmental protection in Japan and the other impressions I have. I think I was able to energetically express myself in the presentation. I did falter once though, but I confidently kept going with the presentation, knowing that any mistakes I made can be improved for the presentation at the local primary school.

The next day at Queenscliff Primary School, we were able to fix all parts of the Geelong Town Hall presentation that we realized needed to be improved, and presented in a way we felt happy with. This was thanks to the many times we practiced the presentation in groups at the hotel during our free time. Later we went for a walk along the beach with the local primary students, and we all took off our shoes and socks and walked on the sand. I really felt the language difference between myself and the local students every time I opened my mouth to speak, but somehow I managed to communicate with them in English. I realized that if I just know clearly what I want to say and speak it with confidence, then I can connect with the people I'm talking to. I am so glad that I took part in this trip to Geelong.

New discoveries at Geelong

Arimatsu Junior High School
Yuna Kaneta



Visiting the Marine and Freshwater Discovery Centre with the Queenscliff Primary School students was the most memorable parts of this trip for me. I didn't know much about the Queenscliff area, so I kept asking "What's that?" and the students would explain things to me in an easy-to-understand way. All of the students were so lively and cheerful, and there was an interesting boy who named one of the fish he liked Jimmy. One of the girls who saw him do that shrugged her shoulders and sighed "Not again!"; I smiled and thought that was really cute!

The Marine and Freshwater Discovery Centre had displays of trash collected in the sea by fishing nets and lines, and also some glass case displays of fish that were damaged by the trash. Seeing those displays made me realize the harmful effect human activities can have on living creatures.

I was really surprised by how picturesque the Swan Bay Tidal Flat was. Unlike the Fujimae Tidal Flat, the water was clear and there was hardly any trash littering the beach. I thought Nagoya and Geelong were similar because they both have a tidal flat, but I discovered there are many differences in the environment, living creatures and people of the two cities.

The five things that impressed me

Nagoya International Junior High School
Kotaro Kimura



There were five things that left an impression on me during the six days I spent in Melbourne and Geelong. The first was Serendip Sanctuary. It didn't have any fences, so there were large birds walking around right near us; I was surprised by how different it was to the zoos in Japan. The second was our courtesy visit to Geelong Town Hall, where many of the staff were so friendly; I took a picture there with the Mayor of Geelong.

Third was meeting and talking to the Queenscliff Primary School students. James, Limua and Jasmine chatted freely with me, and we hung out and played together like brothers and sisters do; it was really fun and memorable. Fourth was visiting the National Wool Museum, where the people who actually make the cloth used a lot of body and hand gestures to skillfully explain what they do.

And fifth was the Queen Victoria Market in Melbourne, where we saw street performers playing the guitar and enjoyed shopping at the many stalls selling various things. There were many other memorable moments and experiences on this trip other than the five I've listed. I hope I can share my experiences with my friends at school and others who have never been to Australia.

Changing my perceptions

Inokoishi Junior High School
Nodoka Kudo



Visiting the Marine and Freshwater Discovery Centre, Breamlea Beach and other places where we learnt about wild birds and other creatures made me realize humans and creatures can coexist in a world that is connected. So rather than one country making an effort to preserve the environment, all countries in the world can cooperate and protect even more living creatures.

The other thing I noticed was the people of Geelong are quite environmentally aware. The local Queenscliff Primary School students whom we met picked up trash on the beach like it was a natural thing to do, and they really value and take care of the wild birds and other creatures there. I was very impressed by their approach to people's lives and environmental issues.

I experienced so many exciting things on this trip, and I realized I can learn things by meeting and talking to other people, and I can do something small every day to help resolve the environmental issues we are facing. My trip to Geelong will remain a valuable experience for the rest of my life, and now I feel like I want to do more to preserve the environment. I hope one day we can live in a world where humans and creatures treat each other with respect...

Australia's efforts to preserve nature and the environment

Kanare Junior High School
Hidemi Kuwata



There were two things about Australian people that surprised me on this trip. The first was their dedicated efforts to protect the endangered Hooded Plover. There was a sign at the beach entrance that explained how to approach the Hooded Plover there, but then interestingly dogs are allowed on the beach as long as they are on a leash.

I thought it wasn't good to let other animals into a protected area, but I guess Geelong is able to let the local people live freely while also protecting the animals there. We also saw Hooded Plover nests with roofs on them to protect the eggs from being attacked by other birds. I was impressed by these and other efforts of the locals to protect this endangered bird.

The other surprising thing was how environmentally aware the local residents are. The tourists to Japan are unanimous in saying "Japan has no trash on its streets", and so I believed Japan is the cleanest country in the world; but Australia is even cleaner than Japan. I think it's really wonderful how eco-conscious Australians are!! I plan to do something in Japan that will make good use of my valuable experiences in Australia.

Impressed with the clean towns and tidal flat with no trash

Tsukata Junior High School
Miku Kobayashi



There are four things that impressed me on this trip. First, the animals in Australia can relax and roam freely in the great outdoors. The Higashiyama Zoo in Nagoya only has one narrow area where it keeps many animals, but in the vast area of Serendip Sanctuary, kangaroos, emus and other animals can move around as they please.

Second, the towns and tidal flat we visited were clean and free of trash. Several times a year, local people pick up trash littering the Fujimae Tidal Flat in Nagoya, and even then there is still some garbage visible. In contrast, there is hardly any trash on the streets of Geelong or in the Swan Bay Tidal Flat; I was surprised to learn the tidal flat is still so clean even though there are no clean-up activities held there like in Nagoya. I think it's because the local residents are so eco-conscious and really make an effort to keep the environment and streets clean.

Third, the people there are very motivated to protect living creatures. I really felt this when I saw for myself at the Marine and Freshwater Discovery Centre how the local primary school students respected the marine creatures and treated them carefully. Finally, I realized the importance of people connecting with each other. I had fun talking with the local people about how it's important to take care of animals. Even though Japan and Australia are far apart, it would be great if we can be linked like the migratory birds that fly between the two countries, and work together to preserve the environment.

What I learnt on this trip

Nanzan Junior High School
Yuki Sawai



There was virtually no trash on the beaches that we visited in Australia, but the beaches in Japan are littered with plastic bags and other garbage; I think this is because Australian and Japanese people have a different level of interest in keeping the ocean and beaches clean. Even the primary school students in Australia know the names and features of many living creatures, probably because they are taught by their school teachers and families about the importance of the ocean and tidal flat.

On the other hand, I only studied a little bit about the Fujimae Tidal Flat when I was in primary school; and even when I went on a school excursion to Nagoya Port, I didn't learn about the tidal flat. I think this is because the beaches in Japan and Australia are different. I now feel like I want to take part in activities to protect the Fujimae Tidal Flat, so I can tell many people about how valuable it is.

I was really happy when I could communicate with the local primary school students using the English I've studied at junior high school. I still remember the heart-warming kindness of the students who tried so hard to communicate with me, even though I cannot speak English very well. And even if I couldn't speak in full sentences, I used words and gestures to express myself. Anyway, I learnt it's important to just have a go.

A step closer to my goal

Tenpaku Junior High School
Yuzuka Sawada



One of the goals I set for myself during the advance study for this trip was to meet and interact with many people through visiting and talking about the tidal flat. I feel meeting and communicating with the Queenscliff Primary School students has brought me closer to this goal. I'm not very good at English, so I couldn't really understand what they were saying; but I felt their enthusiasm to try and communicate with me.

That's not all though; meeting the 17 students, who have become my treasured friends, was another step closer to my goal. We attend different schools so it was the first time to meet each other, but we bonded over our common desire to protect the environment. However, I haven't achieved my goal yet, as there are still things I need to do. Specifically, I want to be involved in activities to protect the tidal flat, and I'd like to individually take part in such programs at Fujimae.

I'll be elated if whoever reads my report becomes even a bit more interested in and aware of the tidal flat, because it means I'm another step closer to achieving my goal.

What I learnt in Australia

Hirabari Junior High School
Haru Tanaka



There were two things that left a strong impression on me during my time in Australia. First, it's essential that many countries cooperate to protect migratory birds, because these birds don't just remain in one country. All of the countries the migratory birds fly to must create a comfortable environment for them to live in. If the migratory birds stop flying to these countries, then the biodiversity of the places the birds stop over at will collapse. So countries partnering to care for these birds is the first step to protecting the environment.

Second is the importance of knowing and awareness. I think actually studying about the tidal flat and its living creatures is also a way of becoming more aware of environmental conservation. Although the Queenscliff Primary School students were younger than me, they tried so hard to explain about Geelong's living creatures. Watching them made me keenly aware that my knowledge about the tidal flat and environment is only a fraction of theirs. I learnt so many things while in Australia that I cannot learn at my school in Japan. I want to share what I learnt here with many people, and try to make Nagoya and its citizens even more environmentally aware.

Enjoy nature!

Takasugi Junior High School
Riko Tahira



I joined this trip to Australia because I wanted more people to become interested in environmental issues. I'm a Tidal Flat Ranger Jr. that helps protect the Fujimae Tidal Flat. When I compared it to the Swan Bay Tidal Flat in Geelong, I felt like I want more people to know about the wonders of the Fujimae Tidal Flat, which I love so much. Unlike the Fujimae Tidal Flat, which is surrounded by factories and other buildings, there were no large buildings around the Swan Bay Tidal Flat. I was also impressed by how there was absolutely no trash in it. I want the Fujimae Tidal Flat, which has a lot of trash scattered around it, to also be clean and free of garbage.

During my time in Geelong, I realized that people's interest in the environment helps to maintain beautiful natural surroundings. So how can we become interested in the environment? I believe it starts with knowing how fun spending time in nature can be. I feel this way because I started becoming interested in the environment when I visited the tidal flat at a young age, and experienced how good and fun it felt to wade in the mud there. The children in Geelong also seem to experience nature with their five senses. I hope many people will enjoy being in nature.

Broadening my perspective of things

Itaka Junior High School
Aoki Hori



This was my first overseas trip, and it made me realize how expansive the world is. I think Japan is extremely small and crowded compared to other countries, and my thoughts and concerns are so trivial in this big, wide world. My time in Australia was very enriching – I saw beautiful scenery and enjoyed experiences I cannot have in Japan. One of the more memorable experiences was meeting and communicating with the local primary school students. At first I was a little nervous to meet them, but we got along well and had fun together. Although talking with the students reminded me that my English isn't so great...

Our group presentation at the Geelong Town Hall wasn't perfect, but I think I was able to describe the attractions of Nagoya in my own way. And the staff there listened kindly with warmth in their eyes, so I felt at ease and could talk without being too nervous.

I think I achieved the goal I set for this trip, which was to broaden my perspective of things. I was able to do this by meeting and talking to various people, and realizing there are so many different people in the world. So now when I express my opinion, I want to consider things more objectively before asserting my views.

What I want many people to know

Nagoya University
Affiliated LowerSecondary School
Momoko Matsunaga



I met many people on this trip, and all of those encounters were precious to me. But among everyone I met, the first people I remember are the two students from Queenscliff Primary School who I hung out with.

I cannot speak English fluently, but I enjoyed communicating with them using gestures and other ways. Although the two students were younger than me, I was surprised how they knew the names of many living creatures and were so interested in nature. I also treasured my time spent with the other five students in our group. Everyone had a unique and vibrant personality, and they knew things that I don't. It was really interesting spending time with them; they made my week there fun and fulfilling.

At Breamlea Beach, we were able to see the rare Hooded Plover. The locals have made roofs that cover their nests to protect the eggs and chicks from being attacked by other birds and creatures. Thanks to this and other efforts, the number of Hooded Plover in the area is slowly increasing. After seeing the people there working together to protect the tidal flat and birds, I felt we also need to tell many more people about how important the Fujimae Tidal Flat is. If lots of people cooperate to preserve the tidal flat, then we can create a society where all kinds of living creatures can live comfortably.

Australian crows (magpies)

Nagoya Junior High School
Attached to Aichi University of Education
Nonoka Mizuguchi



I saw koalas, kangaroos and many other animals while I was in Australia, but what stood out the most for me were the magpies. We saw the Hooded Plover in Geelong, which only has 20 of them left; but the black and white crows there were much more interesting to me.

I saw these birds while walking around the Jirrahlinga Koala & Wildlife Sanctuary. They had white on the back of their neck and tips of their wings, and they looked very mysterious to me as they roamed among the trees; or perhaps it was the atmosphere of being in a foreign country as I had always wanted to be that made the birds look so striking to me. Those black and white magpies stood out to me with their dazzling beauty. Actually, I've only ever seen crows walking around towns and cities in Japan. It's probably because originally these birds live in forests, and are seen by people who go there for bird watching.

I think this mystical magpie I saw in Australia signifies the type of natural environment we should be aiming for. Of course we need to protect nature and do all we can to prevent the extinction of plants and animals in order to stop the destruction of our environment; but that isn't the final goal. We should be striving to create a world where people and nature can coexist at an adequate distance from each other, and all living creatures can thrive in their natural environment just like the enigmatic Australian magpies.

Realizing I still have so much to learn about the environment.

Hagiyama Junior High School
Yuki Minato



During my six days in Melbourne and Geelong, I was particularly impressed by how much the Queenscliff Primary School students knew about animals and nature – much more than I did; they would keep telling me about the living creatures we saw at the Marine and Freshwater Discovery Centre. All of the creatures I saw were new to me, but thanks to the students I was able to know a lot about them.

Also, when we were walking together along the beach, the local primary school students would quickly ask the teacher about anything they didn't know. Watching them taught me it's important to not hesitate to ask or find out yourself about something you don't understand and want to know more about. I was also really surprised by how much the students knew about the food chain. Even though they were younger than me, these students were really knowledgeable about the environment; it made me realize there is still so much I have to learn about the environment.

The streets of Melbourne were very clean with no trash littering the streets. Seeing the grassy areas and trees planted here and there, I could feel the harmony between the city and nature. I think the cityscape is so beautiful because not only the adults, but also the children there are environmentally aware.

Differences between Japan and Australia

Shiga Junior High School
Ryotaro Minami



The most memorable parts of the trip for me were our visits to the Jirrahlinga Koala & Wildlife Sanctuary and Queenscliff Primary School.

There were many kangaroos and koalas at the Jirrahlinga Koala & Wildlife Sanctuary, but unlike the Higashiyama Zoo in Nagoya, the animals weren't enclosed in a fence. This sense of openness creates a stress-free environment for the animals to live in, and maybe that's why they were comfortable enough to come near us so we could see them up close; it was really fun! We can pet the animals at Jirrahlinga, which is something we cannot do in Japan.

Queenscliff Primary School also had an open atmosphere, and all of the students from grades zero to six were friendly with each other. And this primary school also offers Japanese as a subject! Also, unlike Japan, some schools in Australia let students wear earrings and other jewellery, as well as use nail polish.

I wanted to see for myself some of the differences between Japan and Australia, and I was able to do so on this trip.

Rediscovering the good points of Japan

Mita Junior High School
Takamasa Monnai



The cultural and scenic differences between Japan and Australia are what really left an impression on me during this six-day trip to Australia.

The first thing that struck me when I landed in Australia was how completely different the city and towns of Japan and Australia look. Even though Melbourne had lots of buildings like in Japan, it had many more buildings with interesting designs using gold, purple and other colors. The residential areas had plenty of greenery, with flowers and trees planted here and there.

I saw some birds I've never seen in Japan flying around the towns in Australia. In Japan we usually only see birds such as crows, tree sparrows and pigeons, so seeing these new birds made me realize how vast Australia's nature is.

On this trip, I learnt the importance of protecting the environment and discovered some of the good points of Australia. On the other hand, things like needing to look out for pickpockets, being careful when going out at night because it can be dangerous, and other inconveniences also made me rediscover the good points of Japan. I want to use this valuable experience in my life from hereon, and also share what I saw and learnt with many people.



NPOs

The Fujimae Ramsar Society: Koji Kamei

Nagoya City Wild Birds Observation Center: Tomoko Nomura

(Designated Manager: Tokai Inae Network)

Nagoya City

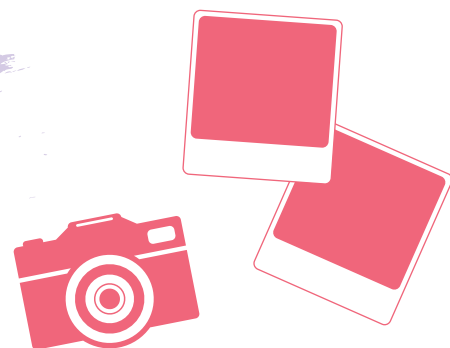
Environment Bureau, Environment Planning Department Manager: Hidetaka Nishio

Environment Bureau, Environment Planning Department, Environmental Activities Promotion Section Manager: Seiichi Toda)

The many living creatures we encountered on this trip



Our Best 3 Travel Memories



The junior high school students came up with the idea for a page that looks back on their time in Geelong by ranking the top travel memories.



Q1 What was the most memorable (nature) place you visited on this trip?

- 1 **Serendip Sanctuary**
- 2 **Walking around the Queenscliff area**
- 3 **Jirrahlinga Koala & Wildlife Sanctuary**

The top-ranking place was where the students could see and pet various animals they have never seen before in Japan.



Miku Kobayashi

It was really fun walking around the beautiful Queenscliff area with the local primary students.

Q2 What was the most memorable (sightseeing or other) place you visited on this trip?

- 1 **Queen Victoria Market**
- 2 **St Patrick's Cathedral**
- 3 **Queenscliff Primary School**

The first and second ranking places were visited by the students on the first and last day of the trip, respectively. So clearly the first and last impressions of Victoria were the strongest.



Yuki Minato

The stained glass windows at St Patrick's Cathedral were so pretty!♥

Q5 What was a good (food) souvenir from this trip?

- 1 **Various chocolates**
- 2 **Selection of cookies and biscuits**
- 3 **Black tea**

The students seemed to really like the confectionary that can only be found in Australia. Some students even dared to buy candy with insects in them.



Megumi Asano

I bought some cookies for my family and friends, which they thought were delicious.

Q6 What was a good (non-food) souvenir from this trip?

- 1 **Soft toys & figurines**
- 2 **Various body creams**
- 3 **Key holders & cell phone straps**

Soft toys and figurines of koalas and kangaroos were the overwhelming winners, followed by body creams which were popular with the girls.



Koki Okabayashi

I bought a cute soft toy of a kangaroo with a joey in its pocket, and I've put it in my room as a decoration.

Q3 What was the most memorable animal you encountered on this trip?

- 1 **Hooded Plover**
- 2 **Koala**
- 3 **Wombat**

The Hooded Plover the students saw at Breamlea Beach left a very strong impression on them, and the koalas were also quite popular.



Takamasa Monnai

There are only 20 Hooded Plover remaining in Geelong, so it was great to be able to see such a precious and endangered bird.

Q4 What was the most memorable food you ate on this trip?

- 1 **Large steak**
- 2 **Chinese food**
- 3 **Breakfast buffet at the hotel**

As expected, the students have a healthy appetite! The boys seemed to really enjoy eating Aussie beef and other meat, although there were some students who were craving Japanese food...



Aoki Hori

The meat we ate for dinner on the second day was so soft and delicious.

Q7 What was the most shocking incident that happened to you on this trip?

- 1 **Oversleeping**
- 2 **Forgetting or losing something**
- 3 **Mishearing what others said**

On the morning of the fourth day, some of the girls weren't at the meeting place even though it was time to leave. Naturally (?), this huge incident came in at number one.



Anonymous

I'm really sorry...I'm so remorseful about it. I promise not to stay up so late again.

Q8 Please describe your experience at the Fujimae Tidal Flat in one phrase!

- 1 **There are so many living creatures!**
- 2 **The water was deep!**
- 3 **It felt good to walk in so much mud!**

Most of the junior high school students had never been to a tidal flat before, so they learnt many things at Fujimae.



Yuna Kaneta

I was surprised by how many living creatures there were – more than I thought!