



MIA news

Miyakonojo International Association

Miyakonojo International Association
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Our Town, Our People

This corner introduces foreign nationals living in Miyakonojo and Mimata, as well as residents engaged in international projects.



Ganaa, after first setting foot in Miyazaki Prefecture, near Nichinan

Hello everyone! My name is Gantsetseg, but my nickname is Ganaa. I'm 25 years old, and come from a family of seven with 2 older brothers, a younger sister, and 2 younger brothers.

I specialise in Gastronomy and Nutritional Management. When I think back to how I made food as a child, and how it connected me to my current profession, I remember it fondly.

After graduating middle school in Mongolia, I enrolled in a specialist school, graduating as a chef. The first thing I learned to make was Mongolian cuisine. When talking about Mongolian cuisine, the most representative meals are feasts centred around our brilliantly white dairy products, or deep red meats. As I continued to garner interest in the aspects of cooking I had learned about in school, I began my Food Technology & Nutritional Management studies at university. Whilst studying at university, I worked in the kitchen galley of a local hotel as a cook. Being able to put into practice the things I was learning about in university made them all the more enjoyable.



Posing in front of the Kirishima Shrine Giant Cedar

In my free time, I often watch anime, study Japanese, and engage in sports. All of this is in order to open the "Ganaa-style" restaurant of my dreams.

In order to realise this dream, as a first step, I headed to Japan, learnt about Japanese culture, and while experience various cuisines and other parts of life in Japan, began accumulating savings.

It has been around a year and a half since I started living in Miyazaki Prefecture's Miyakonojo City. Since coming to Miyakonojo, I have learnt a lot from Japan's various organisations, as well as the people's everyday lives. I have also been conducted by own personal investigative study on Japanese cuisine.

What surprised me most



The view from Takachiho-no-mine

about Japan when I came here was the climate. Though it has 4 seasons, it rarely snows, and instead, as the seasons go by, there is a significant amount of rainfall.

Since coming to Japan, I primarily spend my free time studying Japanese. As a hobby, I want to be able to play guitar, so I have started practicing.

I also like the Korean language, so I have been watching Korean dramas and studying Korean as well. I also enjoy mountain climbing, and have scaled Takachiho-no-mine. I've also been to Kagoshima's Sakurajima. Just as it appears in the anime 'Tenki no Ko', the deeply moving feeling of witnessing the surrounding beauty from the peak of a mountain is what got me into mountain climbing. From a young age, I watched 'My Neighbour Totoro' a number of times. As my number 1 favourite anime, I could watch it countless times and not get tired of it. This led me to head to Miyazaki Prefecture's Takaharu-cho, to witness the Totoro there for myself. Seeing it first-hand reminded me once more of the passion and diligence of the Japanese people.

There is a saying that I like: 'Dreamers have goals, and those with goals have ambition. Look at things from a different perspective, and continue to strive onwards.'



The Totoro 'object' at Takaharu-cho



A family photo from many years ago, featuring Ganaa's mother (left), her younger sister (center right) and one of her younger brothers (center left).



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In this article, we'll be talking to our Australian CIR George Goonan's parents, Jeanette & Patrick, about their experience with the Novel Coronavirus in Australia, as well as learning a little about the current situation throughout the country. Firstly, a brief introduction:



From left to right: Jeanette, Patrick, and eldest son Daniel

Jeanette Elizabeth Goonan: born 1960, grew up in the small country town of Colac (pop. ~10,000) after her parents emigrated from England to Australia. Previously worked as a Swim Teacher and Administrations Officer for the Werribee Open Range Zoo, is now happily retired. Avid book reader and puzzle solver.

Patrick James Goonan: born 1957, grew up on a dairy farm in the Colac region. Began work as a farmer before a short period as a mechanic's apprentice, before working in the rail yards for 13 years and the Werribee Open Range Zoo as a senior grounds person for 27 years. Retired at the age of 58, rebuilds cars as a hobby, as well as the odd home renovation here and there!

What is the current coronavirus situation?

As there has been another recent outbreak of the Coronavirus, residents are restricted to travelling within a 5km radius of their house, unless they are essential services. In fact, fans at the tennis were kicked out early in order to get home before the lockdown started! Before the most recent case, Australia was almost back to pre-corona lifestyles, with masks and disinfectant only required in the larger stores or for large gatherings of people.

How did Australia as a country prepare for the coronavirus?

Border passes used to be required for travel. During Melbourne's lockdown, there was little effect out in the countryside until cases began appearing. When Nana passed away, Edward & Kristy (son and daughter) needed a letter to say that they were heading out of their restricted zones in order to attend.

What did you do personally to prepare?

Given that we are in the countryside, in addition to generally being homebodies, there wasn't a lot of preparation that was needed. While there wasn't a lot of food in the house when it started, never felt the need to panic buy; we still don't understand what the rush with toilet paper was all about! Had hand wash and sanitizer on hand, just needed to make some home-made

masks. While coronavirus was spreading, contact with neighbours and the elderly changed. Consistently checked in with our parents and others to make sure they were getting along alright.

What has changed about your daily life?

As a relatively realistic and down-to-earth bunch, we just took stock of the situation, and waited. We had relatives that needed to change jobs and make more serious adjustments to their lifestyles, but personally didn't have to make too many changes. Had to cancel our own plans to go to Japan though! Sanitisation, hand washing, social distancing, and even walking the street has a slightly different feel to it now though.

Is there anything from your personal experience that you would like to mention?

Initially, masks were a little resisted across the community, but they quickly came to be socially accepted. Following the first outbreak, went from one or two people one day, to almost everyone the next. You still feel almost guilty just for having a runny nose or slight cough when out and about. When we started having consecutive days of zero cases and returned to normal lifestyles, masks were about 50/50 outside, even though they were no longer required. When family members were hospitalized, visitation was difficult, initially requiring full PPE for any visits.

One last question, where would you recommend people visit in Australia?

The whole of the east coast! Along the west coast, many of the major landmarks and towns are spread very far apart. The north, being a tropical climate, is also very humid, which is why we recommend the east coast. We have some really ancient history in our aboriginal paintings and artefacts, and most of what you'll see around the country will be new and fresh, which keeps things interesting. Personally, we steer clear of the big cities, and enjoy more of the nature and countryside. That being said, having been to a few major cities internationally, Japan and Tokyo definitely felt safer than most, which is a big plus!

Of course, feel free to visit us, and we'll happily take you around some of the best places!



The trusty caravan, towed along for every trip!

Any parting words for the people of Mimata & Miyakonojo?

Stay safe, take care, and we hope to be able to visit again soon!

Additional Information:

Current situation as of March 1st:

17 in hospital, 1 in ICU. 14.3m tests conducted, 0.2% positivity rate. Total of 28,978 cases to date, 74 'active cases' (no local community transmission), with an average of 7 cases reported per day over the last week.

Australia has decided to extend its travel ban until June 17th, 2021, as 'the rest of the world continues to pose an unacceptable health risk' according to experts. 39,000 Australians are registered as wanting to return home but remain stuck abroad due to regulations.



The view from Gantheaume Point near Broome, Western Australia, as taken on their most recent trip.

Events

◇ Miyazaki International Foundation (MIF) Online Japanese Course for Beginners

The Miyazaki International Foundation will be holding online courses for beginner-level Japanese, commencing mid-April. The available courses are as follows:

① Shokyu 1 (Maximum 8 Participants)

Date & Time: Apr. 15th (Thu) ~ July 22nd (Thu)
10:00 ~ 11:50, Mondays & Thursdays

Aimed At: For those learning Japanese for the very first time.

Textbook: Ippo Nihongo Sanpo, Shokyu 1
*1 Orientation Class, followed by 25 lessons.

②&③ Shokyu 2 (Maximum 10 Participants per group)

Date & Time: 2) Apr. 14th (Wed) ~ July 14th (Wed)
10:00 ~ 11:50, Wed. & Fridays

3) Apr. 15th (Thu) ~ July 20th (Tue)
18:30 ~ 20:20, Tuesdays & Thursdays

Aimed At: Those who can read Hiragana & Katakana.

Textbook: Ippo Nihongo Sanpo, Shokyu 2
*1 Orientation Class, followed by 25 lessons.

④ Shokyu 3 (Maximum 10 Participants)

Date & Time: 4) Apr. 13th (Tue) ~ August 20th (Fri)
10:00 ~ 11:50, Tuesdays & Fridays

Aimed At: Those who can read & write Hiragana & Katakana, and can hold a simple conversation.

Textbook: Ippo Nihongo Sanpo, Shokyu 3
Kanji Tamago, Shokyu

*1 Orientation Class, followed by 35 lessons.

For further information, check the MIF Homepage:

<https://www.mif.or.jp/english/news-and-topics/1573/>

You can apply directly through their Google Form:

<https://forms.gle/2D5t7xwz64pYVK6S7>

◇ The Miyakonojo Randoseru Service (ランドセル便)

On the first floor of Miyakonojo City Hall, you may have seen a number of *Randoseru* on display. These are a part of the *Randoseru Service* run by the Welfare Division, in an aim to provide *Randoseru* no longer needed to families of students transferring in to or just beginning elementary school, as well as current students whose *Randoseru* have become unusable due to wear and tear.

Currently, the Welfare Division have approximately 80 *Randoseru* on hand, ready to give out to anyone who may need one. No need to worry about your *Inkan* or any other documents when applying for a *Randoseru* - After filling in their form, you're good to go!

Details are as follows:

Randoseru Service Exchange Window

City Hall 1F, Window 6 (Blue)

Availability: Monday to Friday, 9AM - 5PM
(Not Including Public Holidays)

Address: Miyakonojo City, Himegi-cho 6-21

*Please note that due to the current surplus of *Randoseru* on hand, Miyakonojo City Hall is not currently accepting donations.



◇ Articles For MIA News

Are you interested in writing a short article about international exchange or cooperation for MIA News? Possible topics include travel journals, study abroad experiences, experiences staying with a host family, and activities with an international exchange or cooperation group. Articles should be about a page long and include a couple of relevant pictures. If you'd like to write more than that, please consult with MIA. If you'd like to write anonymously, that can be taken into consideration.

Please contact MIA if you are interested!



Movies info

C-Plaza Cine-port (Tel: 0986-24-2571)

17-9 Nakamachi, Miyakonojo, Miyazaki Map-Code (GPS): 117 488 540*55



- Kimetsu no Yaiba the Movie: Infinity Train (Japanese)
- The Sun Does Not Move (Japanese)
- Gintama THE FINAL (Japanese)
- Raya and the Last Dragon (Japanese Dub)
- Kokoro no Kizu o Iyasu Toiukoto, the Movie (Japanese)

- *The 1st of every month is ¥1,100 for everyone.
- *Every Wednesday is 'Ladies' Day', all ladies ¥1,100.
- *The cinema is closed every Tuesday.
- *For session times visit: <http://movie.walkerplus.com/th286/schedule.html> (Japanese)