



Media Release  
Friday 28 March 2014

## Discover Japan

Selwyn residents have the chance to experience Japan as applications to travel to Selwyn's Japanese Sister Cities are now open.

Every second year, the Malvern Community Board, along with the Selwyn District Council, organise a trip for Selwyn residents or people who work in the district to its Sister Cities Yubetsu and Akitakata in Japan.

Participants need to pay for their own travel expenses, travel insurance and spending money, but free accommodation is provided through home stays and accommodation organised by Sister Cities.

The adult group will also spend time with the Darfield High School student group who will be travelling in Japan at the same time.

Chairperson of Selwyn District Council Sister City Committee Allison Rosanowski is encouraging people to join the adult group heading over to Japan later this year.

"The group will be visiting a number of cities for tourist activities which will help strengthen the relationship between the two districts. By staying with local families they will be fully immersed in Japanese culture and create lifelong friendships," says Mrs Rosanowski.

Kirsty Peel from Darfield went on the 2012 trip and says it was an amazing opportunity to experience great food and meet friendly people.

"Highlights included visiting Hiroshima Peace Park, staying with Japanese families and eating traditional food. We also visited Japanese gardens and enjoyed an art exchange exhibition in Yubetsu organised by Malvern Community Arts Council," says Ms Peel.

Kirsty says it was exciting to learn about the Japanese culture. "It is important to have an awareness of other cultures and having Sister Cities is a great way for students and adults to build friendships and an understanding of how each other live."

### Akitakata/Yubetsu 2014 Trip Information

- Both the adult and school group leave New Zealand in late September and spend 5 to 6 days in Akitakata in home stays and Council accommodation.

- Visits include Hiroshima Peace Park, Akitakata Council and local farms producing rice, soya beans and nassi pears. There will also be a visit to local schools including Takamiya Junior High School, which sends students to visit Selwyn.
- Travel to Tokyo on the bullet train and fly to Yubetsu. Visitors will spend 4 nights in Yubetsu in homestays and visit scallop farms, dairy farms, the ice museum, council headquarters and other tourist sites.
- Afterwards, fly back to Tokyo where the adult group may join the Darfield High School group to explore Tokyo - including Disneyland. Participants will need to find their own accommodation in Tokyo. Others may choose to return to New Zealand or travel elsewhere before returning home.

Applicants should ideally work or live in Selwyn, be fit to travel and be at least 18 years of age at the time of travel. An information evening is likely to be held after Easter. Expressions of interest should be sent to Bernadette Ryan on [Bernadette.ryan@selwyn.govt.nz](mailto:Bernadette.ryan@selwyn.govt.nz).

Ends

*Photos attached:*

*Image 1 – Peace and tranquillity at the Shukkei-en Gardens in Hiroshima, known for its carp-filled lake and stone bridge.*

*Image 2 – The Koishikawa Korakuen in Tokyo is more than 400 years old and is built around a large lake with an island in the centre which run off to small ponds.*

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