

The Australian and New Zealand JET Programme Alumni Testimonials



www.jetprogramme.org



Japan Local Government Centre
(CLAIR, Sydney)



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Ms Samantha Annetts	The Australian National University, Canberra	former ALT in Yuni Town, Hokkaido
Ms Natalia Manidis	Microsoft, Melbourne	former ALT in Aomori City, Aomori Prefecture
Mr Matthew Wood	Air New Zealand, Auckland	former ALT in Kumagaya City, Saitama Prefecture
Mr Tin-Lok Shea	H & H Lawyers, Sydney	former CIR in Kurobe City, Toyama Prefecture
Mr Blair Milne	Axis Investment Centre, Brisbane	former ALT in Kashihara City, Nara Prefecture
Ms Angela Chan	Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, Auckland	former ALT in Yuasa Town, Wakayama Prefecture
Mr David Pennycook	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Wellington	former CIR in Amagase Town, Oita Prefecture
Ms Natalie Garmony	INPEX, Perth	former ALT in Kagoshima City, Kagoshima Prefecture

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Cover photo (top to bottom, L to R):
 Ms Samantha Annetts, Ms Natalia Manidis, Mr Matthew Wood, Mr Tin-Lok Shea
 Mr Blair Milne, Ms Angela Chan, Mr David Pennycook and Ms Natalie Garmony

What is the JET Programme?

The Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme began in 1987 and is one of the largest international exchange programs in the world. In its inaugural year, the Programme had 848 participants from Australia, New Zealand, the UK and US. As of July 2019, over 70,000 people from 75 countries have participated in the JET Programme (see image on next page).

The Programme has a purpose of deepening cross-cultural understanding between the people of Japan and the world. It aims to promote internationalisation in Japan's local communities through foreign language and culture education, and foster cultural exchange at a community level.

ALT

Assistant Language Teacher

- Making up over 90% of all JET participants, ALTs are mainly placed to work at boards of education and public schools across Japan.
- ALTs assist with classes taught by Japanese Teachers of English/Language (JTEs/JTLs) and are thus involved in the preparation of teaching materials, implementation of classes, and participation in extracurricular activities like English clubs or sports teams.

CIR

Coordinator for International Relations

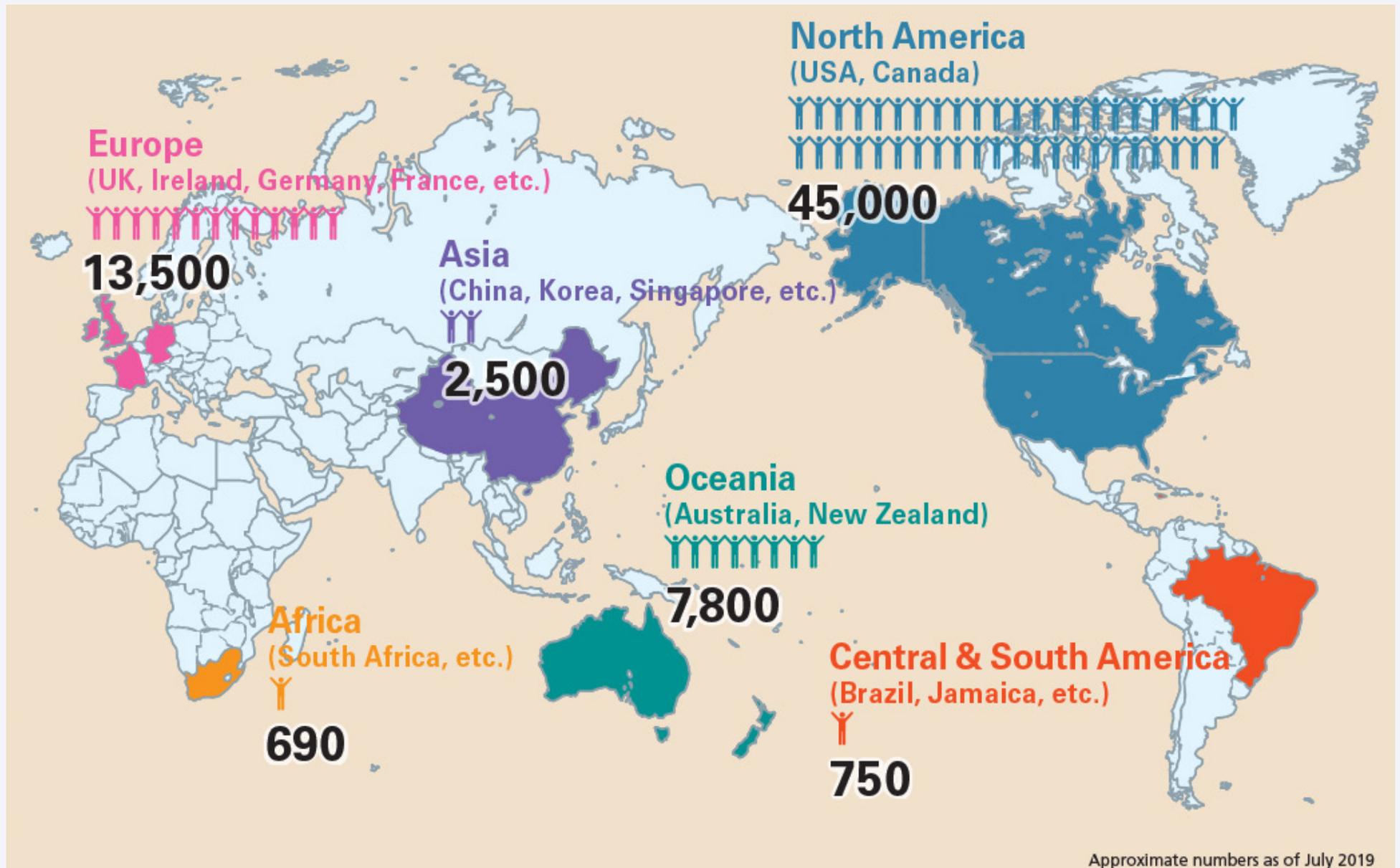
- With a functional command of the Japanese language, CIRs are mainly placed to work in prefectural or municipal government offices or agencies to facilitate international exchange activities at the local level.
- Just under 10% of JET participants are CIRs. Major duties often include translation/interpretation, teaching language and culture classes at schools or in the community, supporting sister city relationships, and planning and implementing international exchange events.

SEA

Sports Exchange Advisor

- SEAs work in local governments to promote internationalisation in local regions through the universal language of sports.
- SEAs are sports professionals whose role is to assist with sports training and the planning of sports-related projects.

Over 70,000 participants from 75 countries



Who are the participants?

JET Programme participants are university graduates with **strong academic or career backgrounds, exceptional cross-cultural awareness and understanding skills, and extensive personal engagements with Japan.**

- **Assistant Language Teachers:** motivated individuals from diverse academic and/or career backgrounds who have an interest in the Japanese education system and are keen to work with children.

- **Coordinators for International Relations:** driven individuals with a working level of Japanese proficiency who are interested in bridging the gaps between Japan and the rest of the world in an international setting.
- **Sports Exchange Advisors:** skilled, athletic individuals with excellent sports coaching skills who are interested in supporting cross-cultural understanding through sports.

What experiences do participants get as a JET?

Every JET participant's experience is unique to him/herself. The following are some general examples of the experiences JET participants can gain on the Programme.

- Unique opportunities to live and work in an urban, rural or even remote area in Japan, and experience the country like a local
- Develop and further personal and professional skills through living and working in Japan

- Be involved with international exchange activities or projects to foster cross-cultural understanding in a global setting
- Build lifelong friendships with people from Japan and around the world
- Enjoy all the festivals, traditions, gourmet and sights that Japan has to offer

What skills do participants gain as a JET?

Because of the unique environments JETs work in, the following are examples of professional and personal skills and knowledge that JET participants can develop or strengthen during their time working as a JET.

- Cross-cultural understanding and communication
- Creativity
- Japanese (and even English!) language skills
- Open-mindedness
- Global vision
- Confidence
- Self-discipline
- Time management
- On-the-spot decision making
- Critical thinking and problem solving
- Adaptability
- Exercise initiative
- Public speaking
- Teamwork

What skills can JETs offer to workplaces?

Having unique experiences of living and working abroad for a minimum of one year, our alumni can offer exceptional cross-cultural understanding and communication skills to Australian and New Zealand workplaces, and are highly adaptable to fast-paced, changing environments. They have the necessary skills and knowledge to **positively contribute to the diverse workplaces in Australia and New Zealand.**

What industries are our past Programme participants in?

With a history spanning over three decades, our 70,000 strong alumni can be found working across different sectors and industries globally, harnessing the personal and professional skills and knowledge they developed whilst they were on the Programme.

Post JET Programme Support

What is JETAA?

The JET Alumni Association (JETAA) is a self-supporting alumni association which was founded in 1989 to strengthen and maintain the friendships developed between former JET Programme participants. With over 50 chapters and sub-chapters spread across the world, JETAA members draw on their experiences in Japan to assist with promotional activities and recruitment for the JET Programme in their home countries, collaborate to build support networks in their jurisdiction areas for former JET participants, and provide assistance for new JET participants. The main goal of JETAA is to preserve and deepen the friendship between former participants and Japan.

Main activities of JETAA

Promote the JET Programme

- Distribute information on the Programme at university info sessions, career fairs and Japan-related events

Support for new JET Programme participants

- Share tips and information from their experience in Japan as a JET
- Run or co-run pre-departure orientations

Provide career support for JET alumni

- Run career workshops and networking events for JET returnees
- **Share employment opportunities**

Advocate for Japan in their home country

- Participate in and assist with the running of Japan-related or cultural events
- Assist with sister city relationships or student exchange

JET Stories and Career Paths of Eight Former Participants from Australia and New Zealand

Blair Milne

FORMER ALT

Kashihara City, Nara
2011-2013

Angela Chan

FORMER ALT

Yuasa Town, Wakayama
2014-2017

David Pennycook

FORMER CIR

Amagase Town, Oita
2000-2003

Natalie Garmony

FORMER ALT

Kagoshima City, Kagoshima
2001-2003



Samantha Annetts

FORMER ALT

Yuni Town, Hokkaido
2008-2011

Natalia Manidis

FORMER ALT

Aomori City, Aomori
2005-2007

Matthew Wood

FORMER ALT

Kumagaya City, Saitama
2016-2018

Tin-Lok Shea

FORMER CIR

Kurobe City, Toyama
2011-2012

Samantha Annetts



Profile

- Executive Assistant to the Vice-Chancellor, Australian National University (ANU) - Canberra, Australia
- Current President of JETAA Canberra
- From Sydney, Australia
- Majored in Asian Studies at the University of Sydney, Sydney
- Assistant Language Teacher in Yuni Town, Hokkaido, Jul 2008 - Jul 2011

Samantha developed interest in Japan as a child through interactions with Japanese exchange students that her family regularly hosted when she was growing up.

At 15, Samantha went on a two-week exchange program to her hometown's Japanese sister city, Koshigaya, and met a JET at the City Hall. It sparked her interest in joining the Programme.

Prior to JET, Samantha worked at an accounting firm as a receptionist.

Samantha's JET Experience

From July 2008, Samantha worked as an ALT in Yuni Town, a town of about 5,000 people, and taught English at two kindergartens, three primary schools and two junior high schools. She also assisted with some light translation work at the town's Board of Education.

Samantha also actively engaged with her students outside of the classroom. She initiated an English club at some of her schools and connected with students in English through letter exchanges and displays of English phrases, cultural photos and international articles on a communal noticeboard.

Outside of work, Samantha instated an all ages English conversation group in the community and joined the local taiko drum and calligraphy groups. Through these interactions, Samantha created a circle of internationalisation where the locals learnt about Australian culture, and she learnt about Japanese culture at the same time.



"Even though I have had experience and exposure to Japan and Japanese culture, it was still quite an eye-opening experience for me. It was also something that ended up being the more that I gave, the more that I got back."

Post JET Life and Current Role

After completing the maximum three years (at the time) on the Programme, Samantha moved to Tokyo and worked as a Lead Teacher at Yoyogi International School for four years.

Following her time in Tokyo, Samantha moved to Canada and lived there for a year on a working holiday visa.

After returning to Australia, Samantha worked at the Embassy of Japan in Canberra initially as an Administrative Assistant, which required her to handle secretarial tasks for the Embassy, and later as an Executive Assistant to the Deputy Chief of Mission/Economic Minister and Political Minister. In this role, she engaged in the diary management of two senior-level officials and liaised with representatives from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and was involved with large scale event planning.

Samantha is currently the Executive Assistant to the Vice-Chancellor at The Australian National University (ANU) and engages in high-level diary management for the Vice-Chancellor.

To give back to the Programme "that gave so much to her", Samantha is the current President of JETAA Canberra.



How has the JET Programme Influenced Samantha's Life

Samantha summed up her JET experience as "the most influential encounter in my adult life" as it was overall an eye-opening and life-changing experience for her which dictated the career and life choices that followed.

Professional skills that Samantha developed on JET included on-the-spot decision making, innovative thinking, and creativity skills. Personal skills that Samantha developed included open-mindedness, patience, confidence and the development of a well-rounded worldview. These were all skills that have guided Samantha in her career since her time on the Programme.

Samantha relished her exposure to other countries through the JET Programme - meeting JETs from around the globe changed her worldview and moulded her decision to move to Canada on a working holiday visa.

Samantha's decision to work in the education sector flowed on from her experience of working in education as a JET, and seeing the immediate effects of the influence that one could have on life-long learning.



Natalia Manidis



"The understanding of Japan and Japanese culture that I gained from that experience, and even Japanese language, have definitely changed my life in many respects."

Profile

- Customer Success Manager, Microsoft - Melbourne, Australia
- From Sydney, Australia
- Majored in Economics and Japanese at the University of Technology, Sydney
- Assistant Language Teacher in Aomori City, Aomori Prefecture Jul 2005 - Jul 2007

Natalia first started learning Japanese from year 7 and visited Japan for six weeks on the Labo International Exchange Program towards the end of high school.

In her second year of university, Natalia completed a one-year exchange to Japan at the Hokkaido University of Education Hakodate Campus. She was keen to return to Japan and decided the JET Programme was the best option for her.

Natalia's JET Experience

Natalia worked as an ALT in Aomori City, Aomori Prefecture. She was mostly based at a senior high school, and also taught classes at a commercial high school and the Prefectural School for the Blind. All of the teachers at the schools that Natalia worked at were very open to trial new things and allowed Natalia a high degree of autonomy and control in the planning and running of classes.



During her time in Aomori, Natalia took part in a volunteer group started by a group of Aomori JET ALTs called 'Everest of Apple' which runs fundraising events and supports the education of children in developing nations. Natalia was a committee member and became the president in her second year of JET.

Outside of work, Natalia made the most of the location and climate she was in and spent a lot of time snowboarding on Mount Hakkoda every winter.

Post JET Life and Current Role

After two years in Aomori, Natalia felt that she was ready to return to Australia and returned to Sydney. Her first role back in Australia was at the Consulate-General of Japan in Sydney, where she worked as an Assistant for Economic Affairs for one year.

Following her role at the Consulate-General, Natalia worked at Oxfam Australia and held two roles that involved administration and communication, and the coordination of a capacity building program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.

Natalia then moved to Tokyo to work for Gengo, a translation service company, which later sent her to work in their San Francisco office. Natalia worked at Gengo for a total of two-and-a-half years.

After her time in San Francisco, Natalia then moved to Melbourne to work at Envato, a company that runs an online marketplace community for people to buy and sell digital products. At Envato, Natalia was mainly involved in external stakeholder engagement and process improvement.

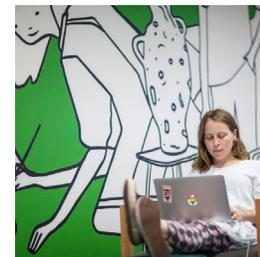
At the end of 2019, Natalia took up her current position of Customer Success Manager at Microsoft in Melbourne where she works amongst people from diverse backgrounds to support customers.



How has the JET Programme Influenced Natalia's Life

Natalia met her husband while she was on the Programme, which further cemented her relationship with Japan. She now has a life that is split between Australia and Japan.

Professional skills that Natalia developed while on the Programme included cross-cultural communication and awareness, teaching and public speaking skills, and networking skills. Natalia lists independence, flexibility, adaptability and resilience skills as personal skills she developed while on the Programme. All of the skills she had developed or furthered while on the JET Programme were essential skills that have helped her along the way in her career, especially in roles at global companies such as Oxfam and Microsoft.



The experience Natalia had being involved with the 'Everest of Apple' embedded her interest in international development and drove her to work at the Consulate-General of Japan in Sydney and Oxfam.

Natalia credits the JET Programme and its support system for eliminating the fear she had about relocating overseas, which helped tremendously with her move to San Francisco.

To this day, Natalia still cherishes the enduring friendships and international network she developed during the Programme.

Matthew Wood



Profile

- Senior Systems Analyst, Air New Zealand - Auckland, New Zealand
- Current Webmaster of JETAA Auckland
- From Auckland, New Zealand
- Majored in Biology at the University of Auckland, New Zealand
- Assistant Language Teacher in Kumagaya City, Saitama Prefecture Jul 2016 - Jul 2018

Matthew completed an exchange to Brazil, home to the largest Japanese diaspora overseas, and had an insight into Japanese culture when he was in high school.

Prior to JET, Matthew worked as a data analyst and IT tech support in New Zealand. He wanted to recreate the experience he had in Brazil in another country and decided to participate in the JET Programme.

Matthew's JET Experience

Matthew worked as an ALT for two years in Kumagaya, Saitama Prefecture from July 2016. Matthew predominantly worked at two schools in the city of about 200,000 people and visited a special needs school twice a year in an adjacent city. At the schools, Matthew was solid support for many of the Japanese-Brazilian students as he utilised his Portuguese language skills when teaching these students.

At one of the schools, Matthew volunteered to train with the students of the rugby club and was a mentor figure for the students.



Matthew was also involved with English conversational events ran by the City Government and the Kumagaya International Friendship Association. He also participated in some Kumagaya-Invercargill sister city events and assisted with the preparation for the student exchange between the two cities. Outside of work, Matthew made himself available for social interactions with the locals and got involved with community events.

"My overall experience in Japan was phenomenal. I absolutely love where I was, the people I was with. I spent a lot more time with the teachers I worked with and the locals than with anyone else, and it was phenomenal. I loved it."

Post JET Life and Current Role

After completing two years on the Programme, Matthew decided to return to New Zealand to continue his career in technology.

After returning to New Zealand, Matthew continued his career in tech and worked as a data analyst at two different organisations.

Matthew is currently a Senior Systems Analyst at Air New Zealand, where he is the technical expert for the airline on several internal applications. If an opportunity arises, Matthew would love to move back to Japan while continuing his tech career.

To give back to the Programme, Matthew is the current Webmaster of JETAA Auckland and is constantly thinking of ways to attract people who may be interested in joining the Programme.



How has the JET Programme Influenced Matthew's Life



Matthew believes that the JET Programme has had a positive impact on all areas of his life. An example is that the Programme has opened up his willingness to learn and recognise his objectives and what he wants to achieve in life. His time on the Programme also helped Matthew in solidifying his desire to help others.

Although his experience on the Programme didn't have direct contributions to his career in I.T., it did increase his ability to adapt to his current situation and surroundings and reinforced his ability to learn.

Matthew credits the JET Programme for providing him with the opportunity to take time away from New Zealand to work in a completely different field while reflecting on his I.T. career and subsequent steps in life.

Skills that Matthew developed while on the JET Programme include communication, attention to details and punctuality skills. In his current role which heavily involves problem-solving, the attention to details skill Matthew gained while on the JET Programme is often put into use.

Matthew had also improved his Japanese language skills and his ability to introduce himself to a new culture.

Tin-Lok Shea



Profile

- Senior Associate, H&H Lawyers - Sydney, Australia
- From Sydney, Australia
- Completed Bachelor of Laws/Bachelor of Arts at the University of New South Wales, Sydney
- Coordinator for International Relations in Kurobe City, Toyama Prefecture Jul 2011 - Jul 2012

Tin-Lok lived in Japan as a child and even after moving away from Japan, he kept a strong interest in Japan and remained in contact with his friends from Japan.

After graduating from university, Tin-Lok worked at KPMG which offered its employees sabbatical leave. He was considering overseas opportunities and decided to apply to the JET Programme as it aligned with his professional developments and personal interest at the time.

Tin-Lok's JET Experience



From July 2011, Tin-Lok worked as a CIR in Kurobe City, a city of approximately 40,000 people, for one year.

Taking over from his predecessor, Tin-Lok's initial duties were heavily focused on English teaching. However, after having conversations with his office, he started getting opportunities to work on projects and tasks beyond English teaching, such as having his own television program on the local cable television network, and organising an outdoor cinema cultural event where he showed an Australian movie to the locals.

Tin-Lok also visited kindergartens and preschools weekly to make presentations on Australia, and

socialised with the locals both at work and in private to give the locals a glimpse of Australian culture.

Outside of work, Tin-Lok immersed himself into the Japanese countryside lifestyle and enjoyed the good rice, water and hot springs readily available to him in his area.

"If my experience is something to go by, it's just a great experience for professional and personal development. It really opens your eye to a different world in terms of culture and language. You get to meet a variety of people whilst working there, making those connections some of which hopefully lasts. I look back on that period with a lot of fondness."

Post JET Life and Current Role

Due to the time limit of his sabbatical leave, despite wanting to extend his time in Japan, Tin-Lok returned to Sydney after a year on the Programme.

After returning to Sydney, Tin-Lok returned to his post at KPMG. A year later, he started working at Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu in Sydney where he worked with a particular focus on providing advisory services to Japanese corporate clients.

Tin-Lok is currently a Senior Associate at H&H Lawyers, a law firm that focuses on providing services to Asian and Asian-Australian clients. Tin-Lok's clients are mainly Japanese organisations including government, multinational corporates and local SMEs.



How has the JET Programme Influenced Tin-Lok's Life

For Tin-Lok, his JET experience was a positive one not only because it cemented his interest in Japan and Japanese culture, but also it provided him with opportunities to understand his family roots, as a great part of his family's identity is tied to Japan.

The JET Programme was also a learning process for Tin-Lok as his experience challenged his existing views and ideas about not only Japan and Japanese people, but also people and other cultures he came across while he was on the Programme.

Professional and personal skills that Tin-Lok developed when he was on the JET Programme included public speaking, leadership in taking initiative and independence.

Tin-Lok is currently in a role where he predominantly provides services to Asian clients, particularly clients from Japan. Therefore, the language skills and knowledge about Japanese business culture and hospitality he learnt while on the JET Programme are extremely beneficial to his performance in his current role.



His experience of living and working in Japan provided him with an opportunity to discover how he can draw on different experiences from his life in Japan and Australia and adapt it to a professional environment.

Tin-Lok also believes having experience of living and working in Japan on the JET Programme gives him credibility and confidence in his communication and how he approaches his Japanese clients.

Blair Milne



"It was incredibly exciting and rewarding because everyday was a new experience and a new adventure."

Profile

- Financial Planner, Axis Investment Centre - Brisbane, Australia
- From Edinburgh, Scotland
- Majored in Economics at the University of Glasgow, Scotland
- Assistant Language Teacher in Kashihara City, Nara Prefecture Jul 2011 - Jul 2013

Blair developed an interest in Japan's rapid economic development while studying economics in Scotland.

During university, Blair worked as a summer camp counsellor, youth worker and performing arts teacher in Scotland and the US, and developed an interest in working with students.

Prior to joining the JET Programme, Blair also worked at The Royal Bank of Scotland.

Blair's JET Experience



From July 2011, Blair worked in Kashihara City in Nara Prefecture, a city with approx. 120,000 people, as an Assistant Language Teacher.

Blair was mainly based in an academic senior high school in the city and had many opportunities to share his culture and conduct engaging discussions and lessons.

Highlights of Blair's time in the city include the time he coached his students and prepared them for the prefectural speech

contest, and the volunteer work he did at a children's home where he shared his culture and taught English to the children there.

Blair keeps in touch with the locals he met in Kashihara and continues to be a bridge between the locals there and the English speaking world.

Blair met, proposed to and married his wife, a fellow ALT from Australia, while he was on the JET Programme.

Post JET Life and Current Role

Blair knew that ultimately he wanted to work in an English speaking country in the long-run so after two years on the Programme, he moved to his wife's hometown of Sydney.

Blair has been working as a financial planner since 2016. To date, he has worked at two banks, ANZ and Citibank; and a wealth management firm, Yellow Brick Road.

In late 2019, with the desire of a change of lifestyle, Blair moved to Brisbane with his family and continued to work at ANZ.

In mid-2020, Blair took up his current role of Financial Planner at Axis Investment Centre, a Queensland based independent financial advisory company. The career move allows him to have autonomy and freedom in developing his skills and career.

As a means to transition to his life in Australia, and reminisce about his time in Japan, Blair actively took part in activities run by JETAA NSW when he was living in Sydney. He is looking forward to joining the activities run by JETAA QLD once COVID restrictions are lifted.

Blair also takes time out of his busy work schedule to volunteer at Parkrun Australia and Surf Life Saving Australia.



How has the JET Programme Influenced Blair's Life



The biggest change that the JET Programme has brought on to Blair's life is his relocation to Australia. Blair intended to move back to the UK after his time on the Programme and is now living in Australia with his wife and newborn daughter.

Professionally, Blair gained presentation skills, skills of reading social cues, and developed initiative to take opportunities when they arise, which are indispensable skills for his financial planning career. Personal skills he developed on the Programme were communication, organisational and Japanese language skills.

Blair constantly receives positive feedback on the way he communicates with his colleagues and clients, which he attributes to the skills he developed and experience he gained from teaching students in Japan.

Angela Chan



"I would definitely say my experience on the JET Programme did change my life."

Profile

- Senior Immigration Officer, Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment - Auckland, New Zealand
- Former Vice President of JETAA Auckland
- From Auckland, New Zealand
- Majored in Japanese, and Linguistics and Language Teaching at the University of Auckland
- Assistant Language Teacher in Yuasa Town, Wakayama Prefecture Aug 2014 - Aug 2017

Angela started learning Japanese when she was in high school. In university, she completed a six-month exchange to Sophia University in Tokyo.

Angela heard about the JET Programme and had been interested in it since before university.

Prior to joining the JET Programme, Angela worked in customer service for over a year.

Angela's JET Experience



Angela was an ALT in Yuasa Town, Wakayama Prefecture for three years between Aug 2014 and Aug 2017.

In the town of approximately 11,000 people, Angela taught approximately 750 students across three primary schools, and was involved with developing and creating curriculums, lesson plans and teaching materials. She also occasionally assisted with translating, editing and proofreading of official documents and publications at the Yuasa Town Office.

Outside of the classroom, Angela joined the local taiko team and practising taiko was something she did for most of her time in Japan. Taiko is a hobby that she continues to this day even after returning to New Zealand. In addition, she also utilised her spare time and holidays to travel to different regions around the country.

In the year prior to Angela's return to New Zealand, she took up an opportunity to complete a short internship at a foreign resident support service company in Osaka under the JET Internship Programme offered by CLAIR. During her one-week internship, Angela was assigned translation tasks and accompanied the company's staff to meetings with universities.

Post JET Life and Current Role

After completing three years on the Programme, and deliberating the experience she gained on the JET Internship Programme, Angela ultimately decided to return to New Zealand to start her career.

Three months after returning to New Zealand, Angela started working at the Ministry of Justice as a Court Registry Officer, where she processed documents and liaised with relevant parties, lawyers and government agencies to progress court files. She also was in charge of managing the operations of a courtroom during hearings.

Angela is currently a Senior Immigration Officer at the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment. In this role, Angela is responsible for the processing and decision of visa applications to contribute to the immigration outcomes in New Zealand.

After returning from Japan, Angela joined JETAA Auckland and was initially the Webmaster for the first year, and then became the Vice President between 2019-2020. She is currently a general member who actively assists with the organisation of meetings and events.



How has the JET Programme Influenced Angela's Life

Angela believes that if she had not participated in the JET Programme, she would have had a completely different career of becoming a teacher in New Zealand. However, having experience life as a teacher on the Programme, she realised that teaching was not a career for her. Instead, she developed an interest in working in government which led to her current career path.

Despite ultimately choosing to return to New Zealand, Angela was grateful that she was able to participate in the JET Internship Programme as it provided her with tangible reasons that shaped her decision to return to New Zealand.

Angela lists communication, time management, adaptability and confidence as skills she gained while on the Programme, all of which are essential skills required for her two roles after her time on the Programme.

Angela also believes that her experience of living and working in Japan on the Programme gave her the experience and skills of understanding other cultures, which is the cornerstone of how she communicates with clients in her current role as an Immigration Officer.



David Pennycook



"I think the JET Programme has had a big influence into how my career had worked out."

Profile

- Policy Officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade - Wellington, New Zealand
- From Auckland, New Zealand
- Majored in Japanese and International Business at the University of Auckland
- Coordinator for International Relations in Amagase Town, Oita Prefecture
Jul 2000 - Jun 2003

David developed an interest in Japan after his family hosted some exchange students from his high school's Japanese sister school in his home. It was through a teacher of the sister school that David first learnt about the JET Programme.

David spent a year on exchange at Hiroshima University during university and wanted to return to Japan after he graduated from university.

Prior to joining the JET Programme, David spent approximately four months in Taiwan teaching English to children.

Post JET Life and Current Role

After completing the maximum time of three years (at the time) on the Programme, David decided that he wanted to remain in Japan to have a different experience and took up a role as a Visa Officer at the New Zealand Embassy in Tokyo. In this role and his subsequent role as Senior Visa Officer, David was in charge of processing visa applications for New Zealand and represented New Zealand at immigration meetings and events.

After five-and-a-half years in Tokyo, David moved back to New Zealand and took up a role for Immigration New Zealand at Auckland International Airport as a Border Immigration Officer. In this role, he was in charge of profiling passengers prior to their flight to New Zealand, and supported the repatriation of New Zealanders in emergency situations.

After the birth of his first daughter, David needed a role with stable work hours and started working at Fonterra Cooperative Group, New Zealand's largest company and a large player in the global dairy market. In the four years he was at Fonterra, David held six roles and worked mostly with the Japan market in the North Asia team.

After four years at Fonterra, David took a role at the Embassy of Japan in New Zealand and managed scholarship programs and cultural events.

David is currently a Policy officer at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of New Zealand, where to date he has managed New Zealand's diplomatic relationships with Japan, Nauru, Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste.



David's JET Experience



From July 2000, David was the CIR for Amagase Town in Oita Prefecture, a small town of approximately 7,000 people at the time.

Despite the initial low workload he had, David spent a lot of time engaging with the locals and took up as many work opportunities as he could.

Eventually, David's tasks consisted of visits to preschools, schools and elderly homes to increase the locals' international awareness, managing the former sister city relationship

between Amagase Town and Buller District in New Zealand, managing tourism and event content on the town's website, and assisting in the preparation for the town's festivals.

After work, David immersed himself into the community and played for the town's sports teams and continued acting as a cultural ambassador for New Zealand outside of his work hours.

David lists the travelling he did and the friends he made, both fellow JET participants in the area and locals in the town, as his greatest memories of the Programme. It was during his time on the JET Programme that David met his wife who was a local in Amagase.

How has the JET Programme Influenced David's Life



Prior to going on the JET Programme, David envisioned a future career as a pilot. After experiencing the Programme, David realised that his true passion was in international relations and credits the Programme for influencing his career decisions which led to his current career trajectory.

David lists Japanese language, cross-cultural communication, adaptability, pressure management and resilience as skills he gained from the Programme. On a personal level, David said

while on the Programme, he became more openminded and the Programme gave him the opportunity to reflect on himself and the career path he wanted.

The cultural understanding skills he gained on the Programme have contributed significantly to his career path as all the roles he has held have an international element to them and requires him to collaborate with people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Natalie Garmony



"Being a JET Programme participant was a unique and privileged experience and catalytic to where I am today."

Profile

- Corporate Social Responsibility Advisor, INPEX - Perth, Australia
- Former Secretary of JETAA WA
- From Perth, Western Australia, Australia
- Majored in Accounting and Asian Studies (Japanese) at Curtin University, Perth
- Assistant Language Teacher in Kagoshima City, Kagoshima Prefecture Aug 2001 - Aug 2003

Natalie started learning Japanese in the final year of primary school and continued to study the language in high school and throughout university.

Natalie heard about the JET Programme in the last years of university and decided to apply.

Prior to the joining the Programme, Natalie has experience of working at a property consulting company and global accounting firm.

Natalie's JET Experience



Natalie worked as an ALT in Kagoshima City, Kagoshima Prefecture. With the other nine ALTs employed by the City, Natalie rotated between four junior and senior high schools in the city and worked with the Japanese Teachers of English at each school to deliver interesting classes for the students, some of whom she only saw once a month.

Natalie also taught at a summer school for primary-aged students over the summer periods. In addition to the classes at her assigned schools, Natalie also taught some community classes and was invited to speak at a forum held in the city's international centre where she presented on Australian culture.

During her time in Kagoshima, Natalie was invited to attend functions and engagements that were related to the Australia and Japan relationship. These included a dinner reception for the Ambassador of Australia in Japan when he visited the city.

Outside of work, Natalie enjoyed travelling and travelled to remote places that are difficult to travel to from Australia such as Amami Oshima, Yakushima and Tanegashima.

Post JET Life and Current Role

Natalie returned to Perth after two years on the Programme.

After returning to Australia, Natalie worked at various organisations in temporary roles until she started her role as Executive Secretary to the Consul-General at the Consulate-General of Japan in Perth. In the role, Natalie managed the Consul-General's appointments and correspondence, and liaised with various Australian federal and state government departments. She was also heavily involved with the organisation of large scale events, especially events tied to the Australia-Japan Year of Exchange.

In 2007, Natalie started working for INPEX, Japan's largest oil and gas exploration and production company. Natalie is now a Corporate Social Responsibility Advisor for INPEX and is involved with the company's community engagement and investment activities in Australia, and supports the Tokyo headquarters' sustainability, social and environmental reporting requirements.

Since her return from JET, Natalie has been a long-standing committee member of JETAA WA, and was the chapter's Secretary for several years. She was amongst the committee members when JETAA WA became the first JETAA chapter in the world to receive a commendation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan in 2017.

How has the JET Programme Influenced Natalie's Life

Natalie believes that her JET experience opened her up to other job opportunities and areas of interest, such as international relations, and solidified her desire to continue to work in a field that is related to Japan. Natalie also credits her JET experience for helping her with her transition into adulthood and provided her with opportunities to develop her confidence and independence to prepare her for having a full-time career.

Professional skills that Natalie developed included teaching, relationship building, and presentation skills. Personally, she developed independence, self-discipline and self-confidence, skills that were important for her transition into adulthood.

Natalie's JET experience provided her with the knowledge and understanding of Japanese work culture, customs and business process, which were integral to her role at the Consulate-General of Japan in Perth and at INPEX.



Messages to Aspiring Participants from Former JETs

Essentially, there is nothing to lose and everything to gain. If you are looking for a life and or career-defining opportunity, this is your ticket. In a world saturated with information about our global neighbours, the experience JET gives is unparalleled in that it places you at the very forefront of cultural exchange.

– Ms Samantha Annetts



Go for it! If you are interested in work around multiculturalism, and in Japanese culture, the JET (CIR) Program is a great place to learn and gain valuable experience. The types of experiences you will have are not likely to be found anywhere else, and will give you a platform from which to launch the next stage of your career.

– Mr Tin-Lok Shea



If you are interested in Japan, keen to experience life in a different culture, excited about meeting people from all over the world, and open to teaching others about your own language, country and culture, then I think the JET Programme is a fantastic opportunity... and I would wholeheartedly encourage you to apply! – Ms Natalia Manidis



Keep an open mind on what to expect. Although many participants share their experiences online, your experience may be vastly different depending on your placement. Do some research on your placement area, explore and experience what it has to offer! – Ms Angela Chan

This is an experience that is extremely beneficial to opening your mind more to the world. You only have one chance at life and the JET programme and the experience it provides is one that is so unique I would always recommend it to anyone and everyone. You have the opportunity to be placed into a culture vastly different from your own but with the support of the JET organisation to ensure you get the most out of every moment.

– Mr Matthew Wood



I think the JET Programme is an amazing opportunity to learn about another culture, other views of the world and also about yourself. It will challenge you in one way or another, but with a positive attitude, you will enjoy your very different life in Japan and make lifelong friends, both Japanese and other nationalities.

– Mr David Pennycook



The JET Programme is a well structured programme that will provide you with opportunities to work and experience a new culture. The established network within Japan of school systems, participant networks, as well as the wider community, means there are numerous opportunities to develop and foster skills; as with most things, what you put in is what you can receive to a large extent. Having now returned from the JET Programme some years ago, I am grateful for the opportunities I had to contribute both to school life, as well as in the wider community. – Mr Blair Milne



The JET Programme is a unique and formative life experience. It gives young graduates the opportunity to live and work abroad in a well-respected and well-paid job with the freedom to travel and immerse themselves in a rich and diverse culture.

At the same time, as unofficial national ambassadors and armed with their individual life experiences, they can participate in a broader cultural exchange with their students and the community in which they live.

Participants make lifelong friends, both Japanese and amongst fellow JETs from around the world, and can continue their relationship with Japan and the program after completion wherever they are in the world by way of the JET Alumni Association.. – Ms Natalie Garmony

Australian & New Zealand JETAA Chapters

JETAA Chapters in Australia and New Zealand

The following are the contact details of the eight JETAA chapters in Australia and New Zealand. Each chapter has a working relationship with the CLAIR Sydney office and the Embassy or Consulate-General of Japan located in their jurisdiction, and collaborates with CLAIR Sydney and its local Embassy/Consulate-General to provide career and after-JET support for JET alumni. Please contact your local JETAA chapter if you have any enquiries.

Australian and New Zealand JETAA Chapter's Contact for Career Support

JETAA NSW Email: president@jetaansw.org Web: www.jetaansw.org	JETAA QLD Email: president@jetaaql.org
JETAA VIC/TAS/SA Email: jetaavictassa123@gmail.com Web: www.victassa.jetaa.org.au	JETAA Wellington Email: jetaawellington@gmail.com Web: www.jetaawgtn.org.nz
JETAA WA Email: president@jetaawa.com Web: www.jetaawa.com	JETAA SI Email: southisland@jetaa.nz
JETAA Canberra Email: president@jetaacanberra.org Web: www.jetaacanberra.org	JETAA Auckland Email: aucklandjetaa@gmail.com Web: www.aucklandjetaa.com

General Enquiries Contact

<p>Embassy of Japan in Australia</p> <p>Web: www.au.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr_en/education_jet_en.html Tel: +61 2 6273 3244 Email: jet@cb.mofa.go.jp</p>	<p>Embassy of Japan in New Zealand</p> <p>Web: www.nz.emb-japan.go.jp/culture_education/JET.html Tel: +64 4 495 8333 Email: jicc@wl.mofa.go.jp</p>
<p>Consulate-General of Japan in Sydney</p> <p>Web: www.sydney.au.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr_en/education_JET_current_status.html Tel: +61 2 9250 1000 Email: cginfo@sy.mofa.go.jp</p>	<p>Consulate-General of Japan in Auckland</p> <p>Web: www.auckland.nz.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr_en/jet_programme.html Tel: +64 9 303 4106 Email: info-cul@ac.mofa.go.jp</p>
<p>Consulate-General of Japan in Brisbane</p> <p>Web: www.brisbane.au.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr_en/jicc_jet.html Tel: +61 7 3221 5188 Email: culture@bb.mofa.go.jp</p>	<p>Consular Office of Japan in Christchurch</p> <p>Tel: +64 3 366 5680 Email: cultural.chc@wl.mofa.go.jp</p>
<p>Consulate-General of Japan in Perth</p> <p>Web: www.perth.au.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr_en/JET_Programme.html Tel: +61 8 9480 1800 Email: info@pt.mofa.go.jp</p>	<p>Japan Local Government Centre (CLAIR, Sydney)</p> <p>Web: www.jlgc.org.au/our-activities/jet-programme/ Tel: +61 2 9241 5033 Email: mailbox@jlgc.org.au</p>
<p>Consulate-General of Japan in Melbourne</p> <p>Web: www.melbourne.au.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr_en/jetprogramme.html Tel: +61 3 9679 4510 Email: meljapan@mb.mofa.go.jp</p>	<p>The recruitment and selection of JET Programme participants are conducted at Japanese embassies and consulates around the world. Please contact the embassy or a consulate of Japan in your country for more detailed information about the recruitment and selection process.</p>

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