



# MUROTO EXCHANGE 2020

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## I N F O R M A T I O N S H E E T

***Please read this important document along with your parents; feel free to add any notes/questions to it. Please bring it with you to the Information Night (7pm Thursday May 16<sup>th</sup> in the Port Lincoln City Council Chambers).***

### **EXCHANGE PARTNERS**

- The Port Lincoln Muroto Friendship Group Incorporated (*the Friendship Group*) is run by community volunteers
- The Friendship Group conducts the bi-annual exchange program in the spirit of the original Friendship Agreement that our Council signed with the City of Muroto in March, 1991
- The Friendship Group is a legacy of the original City of Port Lincoln Muroto Friendship Committee; the City of Port Lincoln provides a budget for incoming delegations, and allows the use of Council areas for meetings and events
- Japanese Language Teachers volunteer from the three local secondary schools, but do not represent the schools

### **MUROTO / JAPAN**

- Muroto is a regional city with a similar population to Port Lincoln, with fishing as one of its main industries
- It also sits at the southern end of a triangular peninsula, but is set in a much more mountainous landscape
- Whilst in Muroto, delegates will “homestay” with Japanese families
- The homes (including bathrooms/toilets), food, language and traditions are all new experiences for delegates to encounter

- Shoes off inside all homes, schools and some public buildings is one example of a cultural difference that the delegates will encounter
- Japan is a very safe country, with a very respectful community; delegates will quickly notice both of these aspects
- Delegates will visit numerous Muroto schools; “lessons” may include Japanese cooking, flower arranging, large brush calligraphy and sports
- Other likely activities include excursions to various local industries, assisting with rice planting (at a field designated for the Port Lincoln crop each year), dressing in kimonos and attending a traditional tea ceremony – participation in these last two items is a real privilege and very ceremonial
- Muroto’s Exchange Committee works hard to prepare the April schedule, selecting the host families and arranging welcome/farewell functions

### **SUPERVISION / CHAPERONING**

- Students are normally accompanied by at least three adults (*adult chaperones*)
- Ideally, these will include a Friendship Group member and a teacher (but not always), plus others (e.g. parents, interested community members)
- Parents of the selected students must be comfortable with the composition of the adult chaperones
- Chaperoning includes long plane flights and travel within a foreign country
- Adult chaperones are volunteers who are also there for the cultural experience; please do not rely on them for close supervision and discipline of your child

### **TRAVEL PLANS**

- The 2020 Muroto Exchange is planned for the April school holidays (as per usual); approximately Saturday April 11<sup>th</sup> to Saturday April 25<sup>th</sup>
- Direct flights to/from Japan are normally the most convenient option; however, many trips have successfully included a stopover in Asia; flights or rail trips to/from Muroto are then arranged to suit the itinerary
- Previous trips to Muroto have included 3-4 days of extended touring in Japan, featuring extensive train travel and visits to Kyoto, Nara, Osaka, Hiroshima, Himeji and other places; this is an amazing and relatively cost effective experience
- Extended touring can only be arranged if families are willing to pay for the services of Japanese tour guides
- Once the adult chaperones have been chosen, travel arrangements can be discussed and finalised

- We may plan to arrive/depart Japan from Tokyo, which may include a guided tour and night's accommodation; serious research and consideration is given to the safety of Tokyo (since the Fukushima disaster) with other ports of entry and departure to be used if Tokyo is considered unsafe
- These independent travel components offer an incredible opportunity for the delegation to experience a variety of other aspects of the amazing nation of Japan; all adults, students and parents involved however, must acknowledge and accept the added responsibility of such a venture

### **OUTGOING DELEGATION**

- Student numbers need to be capped at a manageable figure of ten (due to homestays, logistics etc.); adult numbers will be capped at five
- Due to the limited number of delegation positions available, our selection process will be rigorous
- It would be ideal to send all students with a genuine desire to be part of the Muroto Cultural Exchange; however, due to the high level of interest, unfortunately, this is not possible
- The Friendship Group goes to a great deal of effort (and heartache) to ensure that the right students are given the opportunity to go
- Sometimes, students miss out through no real fault of their own; sorry!

### **EXPECTATIONS**

- It is vital to understand that this is not a holiday, nor is it a school excursion
- Students must take responsibility for themselves (from this moment onwards)
- Some of the characteristics that the Friendship Group are looking for in potential delegates include a commitment to:
  - embrace the Japanese culture in every way
  - contribute to a group/team environment
  - represent themselves, their school and their city in a culturally sensitive manner
- Delegates are also expected to:
  - display utmost respect towards the Japanese and their customs at all times
  - attend all preparation sessions; topics covered include traditional Japanese customs & cultural differences, language skills, food/cooking, international plane travel/border security, packing/luggage, gifts, phones, money and the travel and Muroto itineraries

- arrange and participate in 3-4 of their own team-bonding/preparation activities (e.g. barbecue, movie night, hike, Tunarama, grape-picking etc.)
- introduce themselves (in Japanese) and perform a musical item at selected events in Muroto
- look forward to enjoying a traditional Japanese diet for every meal
- manage their own behaviour, language, money, safety, belongings etc.
- follow the directions of the adult chaperones
- not engage in any sexual activity, public displays of affection, consumption of alcohol or drugs (including smoking) or driving
- Once selected, delegates are still assessed on their eagerness to learn, their ability to interact, communicate and follow instructions, and their willingness to be a thoroughly suitable ambassador for the City of Port Lincoln
- As stated in the "Applicant Contract" (part of the 2020 Application Pack):  
*"I understand that if I do not comply with these conditions, I will be unable to travel as part of the exchange and may forfeit any financial deposit that has been made on my behalf."*
- Media: in order to celebrate and promote each exchange, all delegates are required to participate in various forms of media coverage, both in Australia and Japan; the resulting content becomes free for distribution in both countries as described in the Applicant Contract
- Parents of the student delegates are expected to:
  - be fully engaged with their student throughout this entire process
  - attend (approximately) three important preparation meetings
  - attend, if possible, the last fifteen minutes of the other one-hour preparation meetings; there are approximately twelve in total
  - if you haven't already spoken to any parents of past students, please do so before the Information Night. All past delegates names are listed on our website, click on the delegation photos for lists. Or ask the committee.

***This document is due for redrafting in March 2020. It is to be read in conjunction with other documents provided by The Port Lincoln Muroto Friendship Group Inc.***