

Paul Murray  
(Profiled by Naomi Ishihara)

Paul Murray was born and grew up in Australia. As Japan was a significant economic partner of Australia, he was taught basic knowledge of Japanese culture and its economic background at school.

In 1992, he was travelling around the world and chose Japan as the last destination of his trip. The next year he arrived in Japan with a Working Holiday visa which allowed him to work and travel in the country for a year. Working as an English teacher supported him financially. During this time, he started to learn Japanese language seriously through private tutoring and community courses.

By living in Japan, he was embraced in the richness of the Japanese culture. Its difference from his own background fascinated him and helped open his eyes to the wider world. The experience gave him the sense of being who he was and enabled him to accept others being who they were.

Being employed as a copy editor in the English department of Yomiuri Shinbun-sha, one of the biggest newspaper companies, enabled him to extend his stay in Japan. Initially, his work was to write headlines and to check articles, which were translated from Japanese to English, for accuracy in spelling and grammar. Later on, he became a staff writer, and started to interview people and write articles for *The Daily Yomiuri* (English version). After a few years of studying Japanese, his listening and speaking ability was good enough to carry out interviews with Japanese people without an interpreter. He worked in this company for ten years.

In 2004, Paul left Japan for New Zealand to start a new journey in his life. He bought an accommodation business in Karamea, a small town on the West Coast of the South Island, and now he is running a motel and a backpacker there.



Paul married a Japanese woman, and with her help, is starting an English language programme which brings Japanese English learners to Karamea and helps them learn English while they are working as WWOOFers on his properties. WWOOFer stands for Willing Worker On Organic Farm. They are people who often travel around staying and working at organic farms (usually in exchange for food and accommodation).

Paul's place is on the list of organic farms where WWOOFers can work and he has several WWOOFers at a time.

He is very excited about meeting more Japanese people through this programme and being able to help them speak English with confidence.

He passionately talks about his love of Japanese culture and all the interesting people whom he met in Japan. He still maintains good relationships with friends over there and, as a consequence of their marriage, he now has his wife's family to visit every year.