

Japan REPORTS

The Consulate-General of Japan in Sydney's
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From the Desk of the Consul-General in Sydney

Dear Readers,

Since my arrival in May, I have been able to meet with so many people and I've participated in numerous events. Through this day-to-day work, I have come to appreciate just how well developed and how close the ties are between Australia and Japan. Over the past half century, our relationship has grown from the strong base of our complementary trade relationship into an extremely broad relationship.

I have received many business delegations and have been involved in economic interactions between our two countries. In July, I paid my first official visit to the Northern Territory and met with key people in the Territory including the Administrator and the Chief Minister. I have been lending my support to business groups and organisations such as JETRO (Japan External Trade Organisation) to further strengthen Australia-Japan economic ties.

As we look forward to the future of our ever strengthening relationship, it is equally important to look back at our countries' shared history. Days of remembrance and memorial services recall major events of the Second World War, the Cowra Breakout (5 August), the midgeet submarine attack in Sydney Harbour (1 June) and the bombing of Darwin (19 February). As the Japanese Consul-General whose jurisdiction covers NSW and the NT, I laid a wreath at the commemorative service of HMAS Kuttabul on 1 June and I have already visited both Cowra and Darwin. I believe that attending

commemorative services and paying my respects at memorials as well as speaking with former servicemen and women are important duties that should not be overlooked, because this helps to foster ongoing mutual understanding and friendship.

Recently, the then Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications Kazuhiro Haraguchi visited Australia. The Minister had fruitful discussions with local groups regarding telecommunications, the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme, and strengthening sister-city relationships. JET and sister-city relationships are bonds that really help to support the Japan-Australia relationship. This year, the City of Sydney and Nagoya City are celebrating the 30th anniversary of their sister-city relationship and various events are being held. Supporting grassroots exchange such as these is another important

part of the Consulate's work. I have already held workshops and discussions at my official residence to do with the promotion of tourism and the development of Japanese language education and the JET Programme.

Meeting with key people across various fields, I have been struck by the level of goodwill and affection that people have for Japan, often gained through visits to Japan or through cultural exchange. Needless to say, it gives me great pleasure as the consul-general to see this. I have been made newly aware of the value of people-to-people exchange and the rich resource that Japanese culture can be. As such, I will do all I can to help take the

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Dr Masahiro Kohara

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