

Japan REPORTS

The Consulate-General of Japan in Sydney's
Quarterly Newsletter

Volume 46 No.1
Autumn 2011

Tohoku-Pacific Ocean Earthquake A Message from the Consul-General of Japan in Sydney

Dear Readers, I am sure you have seen many images and videos showing the incredible devastation that the earthquake and tsunami have wrought on the lives of tens of thousands of people in Northern Japan. It is a sad and difficult time for Japan. We are very grateful for the support we have received from friends around the world. The Australian Federal Government was one of the first to send a rescue team with two sniffer dogs to help with the rescue effort.

My office has received many enquiries and expressions of sympathy, and I myself have received many calls and emails from people passing on their sympathy and best wishes. The Governor of New South Wales, Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir, the Attorney-General of NSW, the Hon. John Hatsiztergos, representing Premier Kristina Keneally, and the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Barry O'Farrell are among those who signed the book of condolences expressing their sympathy and compassion – as did many heads of organisations and members of the consular corps.

At such times, words of support and encouragement give great strength. Australians and Japanese, and people from other countries living in New South Wales, have offered to contribute money and goods to assist those affected. Charity events are being organised by Japanese

residents and Australian friends to raise funds to donate to Japan.



Dr Masahiro Kohara

Japan is extremely grateful for the messages of support and offers of assistance that have been extended to us by so many people.

I would like to say that Japan is a very resilient nation and Japan will overcome this crisis as we have done before, 60 years ago when we had to rebuild after the devastation of World War 2. I have strong confidence that out of this current adversity, we will endure and emerge stronger than before. The worse the crisis, the

stronger the resilience – this is so often the case.

I think it is true to say that there is a great sense of solidarity in Japan. There is a social infrastructure – a type of Japanese social software if you will – that stands Japan in good stead in times of crisis. It has been widely reported in the foreign media that the people in the affected areas are showing great patience and are acting in an orderly manner when they are queuing for water or food. To Japanese people and those who know Japan this is a matter of course – *atarimae* as we say in Japanese. This social software is one of Japan's great strengths and it will be sorely needed as we work our way through the immediate aftermath and the recovery ahead.

The courageous people who have been working at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant are another example of solidarity combined with a heroism that has captured imaginations and inspired admiration in Japan and around the world. These brave people are fighting to stabilise the conditions at the power plant. I am praying that their brave efforts will be successful cooling the reactors. As a CNN news caster put it "nature has challenged man's best efforts". And now we must combine our best efforts. I am confident that Japan will continue to do so.

Masahiro Kohara

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