

Icebreaker *Shirase* visits Sydney

Carrying the 55th Japanese Antarctic Research Expedition (JARE), the Japanese icebreaker *Shirase* docked at Sydney on her way home to Tokyo.

On Saturday 15 March around 200 guests attended a reception on board the icebreaker *Shirase* at White Bay Cruise Terminal, Rozelle (Sydney). Captain Koji Hidaka, Commanding Officer of the *JS Shirase*, and Dr Hiroshi Miyaoka, Leader of the 55th JARE team, hosted the event which was attended by people involved in Japan-Australia relations.



Consul-General Masato Takaoka with Captain Koji Hidaka of *JS Shirase*

A traditional *kagami-biraki* ceremony—breaking open a sake barrel—was held at the reception on board *JS Shirase*



Captain Hidaka's schedule included a visit to HMAS Kuttabul and afternoon tea with the Mayor of Woollahra, Cr Toni Zeltzer. Woollahra council covers Parsley Bay, a secluded and pretty bay where Lieutenant Nobu Shirase,

overwintered with his Antarctic expedition team more than a century ago. The leader of Japan's first Antarctic expedition gave his name to a large glacier in Antarctica which in turn is the origin of the name of the *Shirase* icebreaker.

Since 1957, the icebreaker *Shirase* has been visiting the Antarctic annually taking JARE members and material there and back to Japan. The JARE teams conduct research on biodiversity and environmental



Captain Hidaka laid a wreath at the HMAS Kuttabul memorial; Captain Hidaka with Cr Toni Zeltzer, Mayor of Woollahra.



conservation, mainly at the Japanese base called Showa Station. The current *Shirase* 5003 is the fourth generation icebreaker.

The *Shirase* arrived in Sydney on 15 March and departed on 21 March. *Shirase's* call at Sydney was its final stop on its way back to Tokyo.

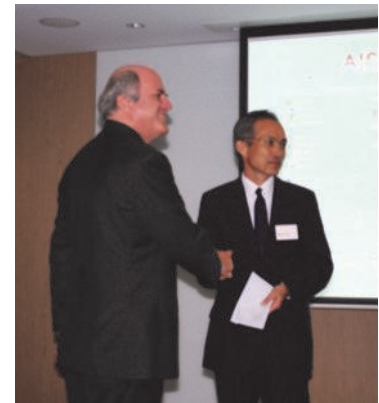
To learn more about Lt Shirase's expedition to the Antarctic and his time in Sydney see 'A History of Friendship' in *Japan Reports* Volume 48 No.1 Autumn (2) 2013, available online at www.sydney.au.emb-japan.go.jp/english/culture.htm

AJS event remembers Tohoku

On the third anniversary of the 11 March disaster, the Australia-Japan Society of New South Wales organised an event to commemorate the Great East Japan Earthquake.



Consul-General Takaoka speaking at the AJS NSW event on 11 March.



Mr Philip Mitchell presenting the donation from AJS members to the Consul-General.

Mr Peter Gibson was the main speaker on the night. He gave an account of his 300-kilometre charity walk that he did in Tohoku last year. Mr Gibson, a member of AJS NSW, has visited Japan 48 times since he played professional tennis there in 1985. His charity walk took him from Fukushima to O-funato.

Consul-General Masato Takaoka gave an update on 'The Great East Japan Earthquake Three Years On—The Current State of the Reconstruction Efforts'.

After the speeches, Mr Philip Mitchell, President of AJS NSW, presented Consul-General Takaoka with funds raised by AJS NSW members to be donated to the people of Tohoku. The donation will be passed on to the Japanese Red Cross by the Consulate.