

Telling the story of Japanese civilian internees- Interpretative board unveiled at Cowra War Cemetery

On 7 and 8 March 2014, Cowra played host to an international symposium on civilian internment in Australia during WWII. It was held during Cowra's annual Festival of International Understanding (6-16 March 2014). Symposium speakers included academics and former civilian internees. Among the speakers was the Honorary Consul of Japan in New Caledonia, Ms Marie-José Michel, who spoke about her family's experience of the internment of Japanese civilians.

Japanese civilian internees in Australia during WWII publicly recognized for the first time

On 9 March, the day after the symposium, the Mayor of Cowra Shire Council, Cr Bill West, led a ceremony to unveil an interpretative board at the entrance of the path to the Japanese War Cemetery. Former Japanese civilian internees and their families also gathered to witness the unveiling and to commemorate those who died during internment.

The interpretative board tells the story of how Japanese civilians were interned in camps in Australia during the Second World War and how the cemetery in Cowra came to be the resting place for those who died while in the internment camps.

After the unveiling ceremony, services of respect were held at both the Australian and Japanese War Cemeteries in memory of those who died during the war, including the civilian internees. His Excellency the Ambassador of Japan, Mr Yoshitaka Akimoto was among the attendees and spoke at the service. Deputy Consul-General Toshiaki Kobayashi attended on behalf of the Consulate-General of Japan in Sydney; he laid a wreath and paid his respects to the memory of the fallen.



Mayor Bill West and former internee Ms Evelyn Suzuki
unveil the new interpretative board



More information about the Japanese diaspora in Australia can be found on the Nikkei Australia homepage: <http://nikkeiaustralia.com>
Nikkei Australia promotes research, study, arts & cultural practices and community information exchange about the Nikkei diaspora in Australia.
It was created in 2013 by a group of interested researchers who came together to facilitate the Civilian Internee Project.

Sydney Japanese Community Helping to Clean Up Australia

Sydney's beautiful natural environment attracts many Japanese people to visit Sydney and may be part of the reason so many choose to call Sydney home.

Members of the Japanese community in Sydney did their bit on Clean Up Australia Day (2 March) at a clean-up and BBQ event organised by the Japanese Society of Sydney Inc. (JSSI) and the Japan Club of Sydney (JCS).

Consul-General Masato Takaoka and Deputy Consul-General Toshiaki Kobayashi were among the approximately 120 volunteers who took part. It was the Japanese community's largest Clean Up Australia Day event so far.

Well done and thank you to all those involved!

Japan Society of Sydney <http://jssi.org.au> (Japanese only)
Japan Club of Sydney www.japanclubofsydney.org



PHOTOS: Courtesy JCS