

## A message from Consul-General Keizo Takewaka

*Dear Readers,*

My name is Keizo Takewaka. On 30 October 2016, I arrived to assume the post of Consul-General of Japan in Sydney.

Since my arrival in Sydney, we have witnessed a wide range of exchanges between Australia and Japan, and this was highlighted by the visit of Japan's Prime Minister Abe to Australia last month.

The Prime Minister's visit was epoch-making and deepened the Japan-Australia relationship. The two leaders confirmed our special strategic partnership and there were good results covering political, security, economic and tourist issues, which you can see in the following columns.

Even in the final months of last year, we were encouraged by many activities and the support of Australian communities.

The National Day Reception (6 December) on the occasion of His Majesty the Emperor's birthday was a wonderful way to say thank you to many friends of the Japan-Australia relationship. In the previous month I joined the celebrations of the Higashiyama-Taronga sister-zoo relationship, which grew out of the Nagoya-Sydney sister-city relationship. I also observed the strong interest in Japanese martial arts when the Nippon Budokan visited Sydney.

Beyond Sydney, I visited Darwin in the NT and Cowra in NSW. In both places, I was able to feel first-hand the strength of Japan-Australia ties and the friendship towards Japan among Australians. I believe this is the result of many people's efforts.

In the same week as the Emperor's Birthday Reception, I met possible future contributors to our relationship at the awards ceremony for the Australia-Japan Relations Essay Contest for Secondary Students. That weekend, the Matsuri-Japan Festival in December attracted some 30,000 people there to enjoy a fun day out, and I could see much fun was had. If you missed it, it will be held this year. Please come along.

Finally, the Consulate wishes to ask for your continued support to enhance exchange between Japan and Australia and to promote strong ties between us.



*Keizo Takewaka*

## Visit to Sydney by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe visited Sydney on 13-15 January as part of his four nation tour (12-17 January).

Sydney was the third leg of the tour which also included the Philippines, Indonesia and Vietnam.

In Australia, Mr Abe participated in the annual summit meeting with his Australian counterpart, the Hon. Malcolm Turnbull MP, on Saturday 14 January 2017.



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At the Joint Press Conference, Kirribilli House, Sydney

Prime Ministers Abe and Turnbull met early in the morning for a relaxed morning walk on the beautiful South Head.

For Prime Minister Abe, the day's business started at the **Japan-Australia Tourism Seminar** organised by the Japan National Tourism Organisation (JNTO) and the Japan Association of Travel Agents (JATA). The Prime Minister gave the keynote address before the signing of a Memorandum of Cooperation to strengthen close tourism partnerships by the heads of JNTO and Tourism Australia.

Mr Abe then delivered the keynote address at the **Japan-Australia Business Dialogue**, which was attended by members of the Japanese business delegation accompanying the Prime Minister and their Australian counterparts. The Federal Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment, the Hon. Steven Ciobo MP and the then Premier of New South Wales, the Hon. Mike Baird MP, were among the attendees. After the business dialogue, then Premier Baird paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Abe.

The **Bilateral Leaders' Meeting** was held in the afternoon at Kirribilli House. It was described as a productive working meeting and discussions highlighted the depth of the Japan-Australia relationship and the two countries' shared strategic and economic interests<sup>1</sup>.

Prime Ministers Abe and Turnbull witnessed the **signing of a new Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA)** to further facilitate mutual logistical support between the Australian Defence Force and the Japan Self-Defense Forces. The leaders affirmed that Japan and Australia's respective security alliances with the United States remain as relevant and important today as they have over the last six decades.

Prime Ministers Abe and Turnbull noted that their meeting was the day before the two year anniversary of the Japan Australia Economic Partnership Agreement (JAEPA) coming into effect, and they emphasised the **success of JAEPA** and reaffirmed their commitment to an open global trading environment.

1. See the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' website for details of the Joint Meeting Outcomes:

[www.mofa.go.jp/files/000218411.pdf](http://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000218411.pdf)