

Consul-General of Japan in Sydney's Newsletter

No. 24 Three Japanese Organisations in Sydney: Supporting the Japanese Community in a Multicultural Society

18 September 2020

On 28 August, the annual general meetings for the Japanese Society of Sydney (JSS) and the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (JCCI) in Sydney, both took place online, and their new chairman and president were elected. On 9 September last week, I took the opportunity to invite the newly elected representatives of both organisations and their new secretary-general, together with the president of the Japan Club of Sydney (JCS), to meet and exchange views.

In Sydney, there are three major organisations which Japanese people and groups participate in broadly: the Japanese Society of Sydney (JSS), which consists mainly of expatriates from Japanese companies and organisations; the Japan Club of Sydney (JCS), which consists mainly of Japanese who have settled in Sydney; and the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (JCCI) in Sydney, whose members are Japanese companies and organisations. Each of the three organisations conducts its own activities, and at the same time, they cooperate and work together.

In this issue of my Consul-General's newsletter, I would like to introduce recent activities by these three organisations and talk about my own impressions having participated in some of these activities. I invite you to reflect with me on how this Consulate should support these three organisations in order to further develop the local Japanese community.



**Meeting with the representatives and secretary-general of the
three Japanese organisations**

**(From left: JCCI President Mori Tomohito, JSS Chairman Ishikawa Yoshikazu,
Consul-General Kiya Masahiko, JCS President Hisae Costello, and JCCI/JSS
Secretary-General Chiba Masataka – 9 September 2020)**

● A meeting with the three Japanese organisations

The 9 September meeting with the three Japanese organisations was the first time to meet face-to-face since the new committees were elected. The severity of the situation caused by COVID-19 was again made clear to me. Many of the groups' activities have been significantly affected by COVID-19, forcing events to be cancelled, scaled down or shifted online.

Of particular note is the decision to cancel the “Matsuri Japan Festival” events held around metropolitan Sydney. Not only the June festival in Parramatta and the September festival in Chatswood, but also the main festival held in December at Darling Harbour – the largest of its kind in the southern hemisphere – has had to be cancelled this year. While it is unavoidable given the current circumstances, it makes it no less a bitter disappointment.

However, with the decreasing number of infections in NSW, each organization is gradually restarting activities. For example, JSS has already resumed many club activities, and JCS has a “Kimono Sale” planned for the weekend of 26-27 September in Paddington, Sydney.



**Participating in Clean Up Australia Day
(1 March 2020, photo courtesy of JSS)**

● **Japanese Society of Sydney (JSS)**

On 28 August, I attended and gave greetings at the JSS annual general meeting. Listening to the report for the previous year, I was again impressed by the breadth of their activities. JSS was founded in 1957 and there are currently 595 members. In addition to various annual events, they manage golf, swimming, fishing and tennis clubs, and JSS is also involved in the management of the Sydney Japanese International School.

I have participated in several events. There was a wonderful end-of-year atmosphere during the Christmas party at the Four Seasons Hotel on 27 November, and I enjoyed the raffle and the trivia quiz. I also took part in the Clean Up Australia Day rally at Lane Cove National Park on 1 March; after contributing as a member of the Japanese community helping to clean up Australia, I was able to enjoy a barbecue of delicious beef from a farm operated by a Japanese company.

Other annual JSS events include the spring and autumn softball tournaments and the bus tour to coincide with the Cowra Sakura Matsuri (Cherry Blossom Festival). However, I have heard that they are also cancelled due to COVID-19. I hope that these activities will be able to resume as soon as possible.



**Event in support of Great East Japan Earthquake Reconstruction
(6 March 2020, photo courtesy of JCS Rainbow Project)**

● **Japan Club of Sydney (JCS)**

JCS, with Japanese settlers at its core, works to maintain and pass on Japanese culture, and aims to contribute to Australian society, all while fostering friendship. Established in 1983, members currently number some 350 households.

The Club's activities include holding social gatherings, supporting the operation of three Japanese community language schools, publishing a club newsletter, and supporting Great East Japan Earthquake reconstruction through its "Rainbow Project", as well as running club activities such as the Soran Odoritai and Hula Aloha dance groups and softball. In addition, JCS organises the Matsuri Japan Festivals in Parramatta in June and in Chatswood in September, and cooperates in all aspects of the Matsuri Japan Festival in Darling Harbour in December, which is such a large-scale event that a separate host organisation and steering committee have been established.

I had the opportunity to participate in the Great East Japan Earthquake Reconstruction event held on 6 March this year. After the disaster was commemorated with a minute's silence, films relating to the earthquake were screened and local Tohoku food and crafts were sold. The money raised on that day was not only given to support youth education in Tohoku; funds were also given in support of the Australian bush fire disaster. It was very impressive to see not only support from several local companies, but also the participation of many young volunteers.



**New Year Economic Lecture and Social Gathering
(10 February 2020)**

- **The Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (JCCI) in Sydney**

On 28 August, I also attended and greeted the JCCI annual general meeting and heard the report on the previous year's business. Established in 1958, the membership currently comprises 169 corporations and organisations. Among JCCI's activities, it holds lectures, seminars and study tours for members and

more specifically for the 5 separate industry groups within its membership. JCCI also exchanges views with Japanese and Australian government representatives at the Australian National Conference of Japan Chambers of Commerce and Industry. Every year, JCCI edits "The Outline of Australia", which has extensive and very useful content. I encourage you to take a look at the most recent edition which has just been released.

In response to the recent bushfire disaster in Australia, JCCI gathered donations from member companies and organisations and raised a total of approximately A\$50,000, which was donated to the Australian Red Cross. Through activities such as this, JCCI plays a role representing Japanese business in the local community.

When the Japan/Tokyo Chamber of Commerce and Industry (JCCI/TCCI) Economic Mission came to Sydney in February this year, the then President of JCCI Mr Miyaji Hiroshi represented local Japanese businesses and gave a presentation on Western Sydney development. At the New Year Economic Lecture and Social Gathering held immediately afterwards, the eminent economist Mr Shimanaka Yuji was invited to give the lecture. In this way, JCCI also serves as a point of contact with the business community in Japan.



The cover of “Japanese in Australia”
(Nikkei Australia website)

- “Japanese in Australia” – digital version released

In relation to this topic, I would like to make you aware that you can freely download the book titled *Japanese in Australia – Japanese footprints over a century*. It was recently made available as a digital publication by the organization called Nikkei Australia.

The publication was first conceived as part of the Australia-Japan Friendship Anniversaries (1996-98), and in 1998, the book was published by the Japan Club of Australia. The overall coordinator of this commemorative publication was Mr Hosaka Yoshihide, the first president of the Japan Club of Sydney and the Japan Club of Australia.

The book is written by various individuals who tell of Japanese people's lived experiences, explaining what their life was like and the activities they engaged in. The reader hears the voices of pearl divers in the early days on Thursday Island, stories of cooperation during WW1, of conflict during WW2, of post-war war brides, of Japanese technicians and artists, and of expatriate and migrant businesspeople. I believe that it is thanks to the efforts of people such as those included in *Japanese in Australia* that today's Japanese are able to engage in their activities, and the activities of Japanese today will build the future of the Japan-Australia relationship.



At the opening ceremony of Matsuri Japanese Festival performing *kagamibiraki* with representatives of JCS, JSS, JCCI and Cr Robert Kok, City of Sydney (7 December 2019, photo courtesy of Nathan Souriyavong-NS Studio)

- **For a Japanese community living in a multicultural society**

Today, there are approximately 33,000 Japanese nationals living in Sydney, so the Japanese who are involved in the activities of these three Japanese organisations represent only a fraction of all Japanese nationals living here.

However, through their cooperation at major annual events such as the service of respect held every September in Cowra and the Matsuri Japan Festival held in December, and through cooperating to raise funds for causes such as the bushfires, these three Japanese organisations in Sydney represent the Japanese community within the broader community, increasing the Japanese community's contribution and presence, and deepening understanding towards Japanese people. I am profoundly grateful for the efforts of the three organisations – efforts which can be described as “civil society diplomacy”.

Australia advocates multiculturalism in which people of various backgrounds can make the most of their strengths and contribute to the development of society. The three Japanese organisations in Sydney deepen friendship among Japanese and provide mutual assistance to members, while playing an active part promoting various exchanges and contributing to Australian society. This Consulate would also like to do all that it can to support them in their activities.

Japanese Society in Sydney (JSS)(Japanese)

<http://www.jssi.org.au/>

Japan Club of Sydney (JCS)

<https://www.japanclubofsydney.org/english/>

Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (JCCI)

<http://www.jcci.org.au/english/e.htm>

Japanese in Australia – Japanese footprints over a century

<https://www.nikkeiaustralia.com/japanese-in-australia/>

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