

## **Consul-General of Japan in Sydney's Newsletter**

### **No. 27 The Northern Territory and Japan: Towards deepening and widening business and exchange**

6 November 2020

Measures against COVID-19 are proving increasingly effective and border restrictions are being eased. Have you travelled or been on a business trip across state borders yet? From 9 October, it became possible for people in Greater Sydney to travel to the Northern Territory without observing 14 days of quarantine, and so, soon after this change came into effect, I visited Darwin, from 25 to 28 October. While in Darwin, I made a site visit of the planned location of a prawn aquaculture business, which is currently being developed under the partnership of Japanese and Australian companies, and I also exchanged views with representatives of the NT Government and others involved in Japan-Australia exchange.

The Northern Territory (NT) has a population of approximately 246,000 people, which is only about 1% of the total Australian population. However, in terms of area, at 1,350,000km<sup>2</sup>, the NT is the third largest state or territory behind Western Australia (1<sup>st</sup>) and Queensland (2<sup>nd</sup>). Moreover, the NT has deep ties with Japan – the Japanese bombing of Darwin during WWII and the steps to reconciliation afterwards, the visit by then Prime Minister Abe Shinzo and the beginning of operations at the Ichthys LNG project in 2018, among other connections.

In August this year, the Northern Territory elections were held, and the ruling Labor Party, led by Chief Minister Michael Gunner since August 2016, took out 14 of a total 25 parliamentary seats, retaining government. My visit occurred soon after the second term of the Gunner Administration commenced, and it was good timing to talk about the further strengthening of Japan-NT relations.

In this issue of my newsletter, based on my visit, I would like to report on the latest situation of the four pillars of Japan-NT cooperation and exchange: 1) economy and business, 2) political and security cooperation, 3) culture and exchange, and 4) peace and reconciliation. At the same time, I invite you to consider with me how we can further deepen and broaden Japan-NT ties.



**With Chief Minister Michael Gunner [4<sup>th</sup> from left] and Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Agribusiness and Aquaculture Nicole Manison [3<sup>rd</sup> from right] during the prawn aquaculture project site visit  
(26 October 2020 | Photo courtesy of NT Government)**

### ● **Economy and Business**

The most important factor in strengthening ties between the NT and Japan is the expansion of business following the start of operations of the Ichthys LNG Project in 2018. On 26 October, I took part in a site visit together with NT Chief Minister Michael Gunner and Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Agribusiness and Aquaculture Nicole Manison. We inspected the planned site of a prawn aquaculture project called “Project Sea Dragon” by the Australian company, Seafarms Group Ltd, which receives investment from the Japanese company Nissui (Nippon Suisan Kaisha Ltd).

This business is a large-scale aquaculture project producing premium black tiger prawns. The project comprises (1) one of the world’s largest grow-out facilities at Legune Station located approximately 350km south-west of Darwin, (2) a hatchery facility in Bynoe Harbour located approximately 50km south-west of Darwin, and (3) a processing plant located approximately 110km south-west of Legune Station at Kununurra in Western Australia.

The first stage of the development (1,180ha) has already received the necessary approvals, and after the final investment decision is made, exports could start as soon as early 2023.

With this project in mind, the NT Government has already completed a road upgrade between Legune Station and the border with Western Australia, and I inspected this with Chief Minister Gunner from a helicopter. The Western Australian Government plans to upgrade the stretch of road from the border to Kununurra next year.

Being accompanied by the Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister on this site visit, I was really aware of the enthusiasm the NT Government has for this business project. Moreover, taking this opportunity, I also had time for discussion with them, and we confirmed the future direction of cooperation between the NT and Japan.



**NT Government Roundtable  
(27 October 2020)**

The day after, on 27 October, I participated in a Government Roundtable with NT Government representatives and had comprehensive discussions to work towards strengthening future economic and business ties between Japan and the NT.

When it comes to natural gas, in addition to INPEX operating the LNG Ichthys project, Japanese companies are participating in the development of Darwin LNG project, and there is also enormous potential to develop natural gas inland in the Beetaloo sub-basin.

In the agricultural sector, in addition to the example of prawn aquaculture which I mentioned above, experimental demonstrations of agriculture utilising solar-generated hydrogen in Alice Springs with the University of Miyazaki are under consideration.

In the tourism sector, in 2019, Japanese accounted for the largest number of foreign tourists who visit the NT, including Uluru. Currently this sector is greatly impacted by the effects of COVID-19. However, we can expect this industry to expand again in the future.

Discussions and cooperation are also progressing in other areas including the development of critical minerals (rare metals), digital strategy (e.g. submarine cables), and the space sector (quasi-zenith satellite).





**At NT Parliament House  
with Minister for Veterans' Affairs Paul Kirby  
(27 October 2020)**

### ● **Political and Security Cooperation**

The second pillar of Japan-NT ties is built on political dialogue through mutual visits by top representatives/officials and on security cooperation through joint training exercises and so on. Chief Minister Gunner has visited Japan twice since assuming office, and in 2018 then Prime Minister Abe was the first Japanese prime minister to visit Darwin.

On 27 October, I visited Minister for Veterans' Affairs Paul Kirby at Parliament House, and we exchanged wide-ranging views about strengthening ties between the NT and Japan in the future. Prior to the Cabinet reshuffle, Minister Kirby's portfolio covered primary industries and resources. It was a very fruitful discussion which enabled me to learn the point of view of a key member of the cabinet regarding various issues, including COVID-19 measures and economic recovery, and the expectations to Japan.

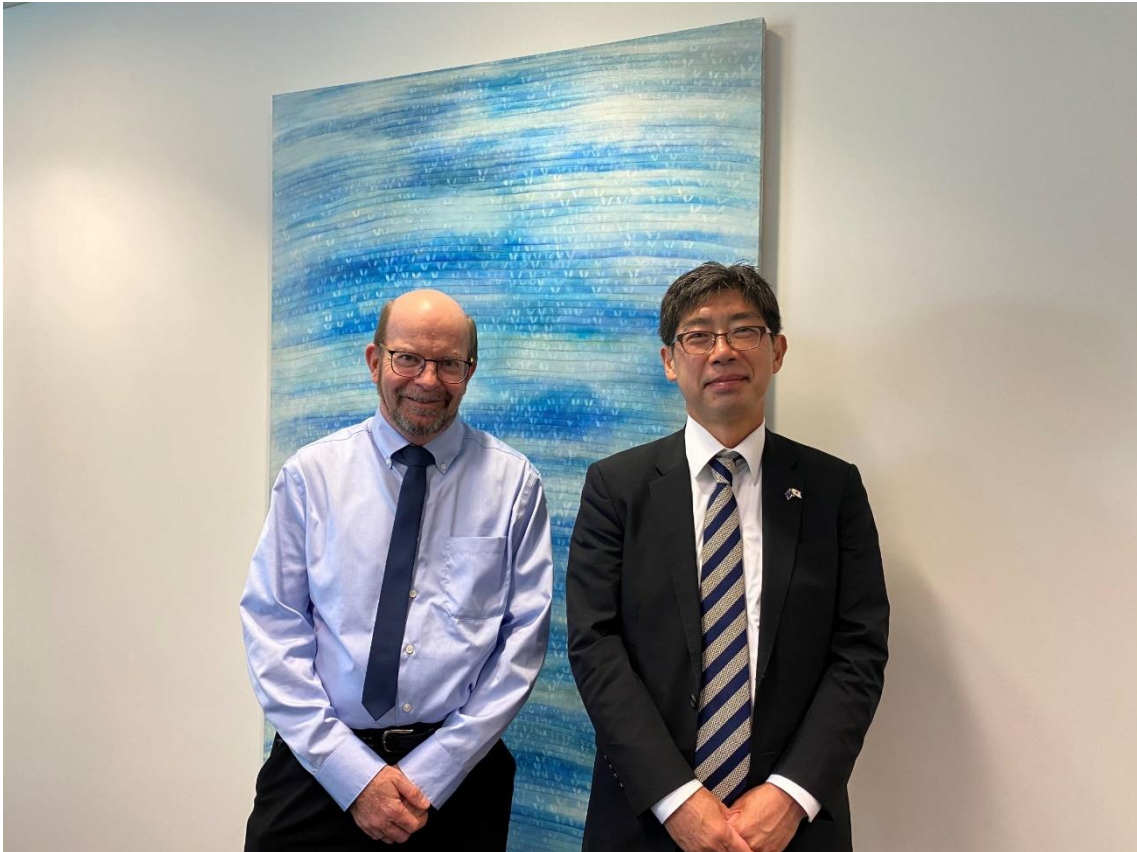


**In the City of Palmerston  
with Mayor Athina Pascoe-Bell and CEO Luccio Cercarelli  
(28 October 2020)**

### ● **Culture and Exchange**

The third pillar is culture and exchange. On 28 October, I paid a visit on Mayor Athina Pascoe-Bell of the City of Palmerston, which is a satellite city of Darwin. Palmerston is a sister city with Aridagawa Town in Wakayama Prefecture, Japan, and this year marks their 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary as sister cities.

Although it had to be cancelled this year due to COVID-19, Palmerston and Aridagawa have an annual mutual student exchange program for high school students. When the junior high school students from Japan visit, they are guided around the city council office (town hall) and have a commemorative photo taken with the mayor wearing her official mayoral chain and feather-trimmed gown. I thanked Mayor Pascoe-Bell for how warmly they welcome the Japanese students.



**With Prof. Simon Maddocks,  
Vice-Chancellor of Charles Darwin University  
(27 October 2020)**

I also paid a call on Professor Simon Maddocks, who is the Vice-Chancellor of Charles Darwin University, the NT's only university. There are about 25,000 students in tertiary education, including students attending vocational or technical colleges, and around 2,500 are international students.

Right now, there are very few Japanese students. However, there are study abroad arrangements with Kyoto University, among others, and when international students are again accepted from November this year, students from Japan will be among their number.

Capitalising on the NT's location in the very north of Australia, research into tropical medicine and disaster management in South-East Asia and Pacific island countries is advancing, and I would like to explore the possibility of cooperation and exchange in these areas of research with Japan.





**With committee members of the  
Australian-Japanese Association of the Northern Territory (AJANT)  
(27 October 2020)**

In Darwin, the Australian-Japanese Association of the Northern Territory (AJANT) is the force behind Japanese cultural events and I met with AJANT committee members. In July this year, AJANT gained the cooperation of this consulate and The Japan Foundation Sydney to hold an outdoor film screening for children of the Studio Ghibli movie “Kiki’s Delivery Service”.

Due to COVID-19, the annual Darwin Japanese Festival held in September had to be cancelled this year, and the Japanese Film Festival usually held in October had to be postponed to February next year. We shared ideas about what preparations and measures to take in order to hold cultural events effectively and efficiently going forward.

Many of the committee members are also involved in Japanese language education at schools and community centres. I heard how it is important to devise ways to have students express themselves and develop their own interest in their studies and that



it is also important to read Japanese picture books to infants. I felt the strong enthusiasm of Darwin's Japanese teachers and educationalists.



**Video-conference with the Fujita Family  
at the Darwin Memorial Uniting Church  
(25 October 2020)**

#### ● **Peace and Reconciliation**

The fourth pillar is peace and reconciliation. Soon after the outbreak of the War in the Pacific during World War II, Darwin was extensively bombed by the Imperial Japanese Navy on 19 February 1942, and through to November 1943, the city was bombed 64 times. After WWII, the salvage contract for removing wreckage in Darwin Harbour was awarded to a Japanese company, Fujita Salvage, which undertook the work from 1959 to 1961. The CEO of the company, Mr Fujita Ryugo, strove for reconciliation between Japan and Australia, and when the Darwin Memorial Uniting Church was established in 1960, Mr Fujita donated 77 crosses made of metal salvaged from the wreckage.

Exchange and visits between the Uniting Church and Mr Fujita's family continue to this day. On 25 October, when I visited the Darwin Memorial Uniting Church, the Church organised for me to meet Mr Fujita's second son Senichiro and his granddaughter Yoshiko for the first time via a video-conference.

On the same day I also met and spoke with the Deputy Mayor of Palmerston, Tom Lewis, who has researched the history of the bombing of Darwin and the sinking of the Japanese I-124 submarine off the coast of Darwin.

The history of the bombing of Darwin and the history of reconciliation are important to the future of the Japan-Australia relationship. During the National Commemorative Service held in Canberra in August this year to mark the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the Second World War, Prime Minister Scott Morrison introduced the episode of the 77 crosses in his commemorative address. Even after the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the war, I would like Darwin's history to be a cornerstone of future cooperation between us for many years to come.



**An aerial view of the Ichthys LNG Project onshore facilities  
(26 October 2020)**

- **Towards deepening and widening business and exchange between the Northern Territory and Japan**

Since arriving in Sydney in October last year, I have visited Darwin three times and Alice Springs and Uluru once. This has allowed me to deepen my understanding of the importance of the Northern Territory to Japan.

The NT's population might be small but Japan can see big business potential for new developments - in agriculture and mineral resources including natural gas, and also in the digital and space sectors. The NT also strongly desires increased business ties with Japan. Beyond business, Japan and the NT have deep ties in political and security areas and in culture and exchange, as well as profound ties in history and reconciliation.



Through the series of visits I have made, I have had the opportunity to meet with many people who have been advancing cooperation and exchange between us, and I have felt their enthusiasm for even stronger ties. As the consul-general who has jurisdiction over the Northern Territory, I would like to realise everyone's strong feelings and do all I can to further deepen and expand ties between the Northern Territory and Japan. If you feel that this consulate can do anything to support the strengthening of NT-Japan ties, please feel free to contact us. You are welcome!

Prawn aquaculture project (Project Sea Dragon | Seafarms Group Ltd)

<https://seafarms.com.au/about-project-sea-dragon/>

Sister City Exchange between the City of Palmerston and Aridagawa Town, Wakayama Prefecture

[https://www.sydney.au.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr\\_en/sister\\_city.html#palmerston](https://www.sydney.au.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr_en/sister_city.html#palmerston)

Australian-Japanese Association of the Northern Territory (AJANT)

<https://www.ajant.org/>

The Fujita Salvage Story – a symbol of peace and reconciliation

<https://dtsc.nt.gov.au/news/2016/salvage-and-salvation-the-fujita-salvage-story-a-symbol-of-peace-and-reconciliation>

Darwin and Japan (Consul-General of Japan's Newsletter No. 3)

[https://www.sydney.au.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr\\_en/about\\_consul\\_generals\\_newsletter\\_archive\\_no3.html](https://www.sydney.au.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr_en/about_consul_generals_newsletter_archive_no3.html)

Darwin and Japan (Part 2): From the Bombing of Darwin to the Ichthys LNG Project (Consul-General of Japan's Newsletter No. 10)

[https://www.sydney.au.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr\\_en/about\\_consul\\_generals\\_newsletter\\_archive\\_no10.html](https://www.sydney.au.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr_en/about_consul_generals_newsletter_archive_no10.html)

Alice Springs and Uluru : Looking beyond COVID-19 (Consul-General of Japan's Newsletter No. 16)

[https://www.sydney.au.emb-japan.go.jp/document/CGKiya\\_16newsE.pdf](https://www.sydney.au.emb-japan.go.jp/document/CGKiya_16newsE.pdf)

75th Anniversary of the End of the Second World War: From Enemies to Friends (Consul-General of Japan's Newsletter No. 22)

[https://www.sydney.au.emb-japan.go.jp/document/CGKiya\\_22newsE.pdf](https://www.sydney.au.emb-japan.go.jp/document/CGKiya_22newsE.pdf)

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