

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

### **No. 30 Major Regional Cities in NSW: Promoting Business and Exchange with Japan**

4 December 2020

As the COVID-19 situation has improved, we have been able to travel safely around Greater Sydney and NSW. For the first time last month, I visited Wollongong, Newcastle and Central Coast City, meeting with people engaged in business and exchange with Japan.

In NSW, the cities with the largest populations are as follows: 1<sup>st</sup> is Sydney with around 4.32 million people, 2<sup>nd</sup> Newcastle with around 320,000, 3<sup>rd</sup> Central Coast with around 310,000, 4<sup>th</sup> Wollongong with around 260,000, and the cities coming in as 5<sup>th</sup> largest or smaller, all have populations of less than 100,000 people (2016 Australian Census). Looking at the number of Japanese residents, there are approximately 35,000 Japanese living in Greater Sydney, and in the other three cities, each has between 300 and 500 Japanese residents (2019 Survey of Japanese Nationals Living Overseas). I am pleased to have been able to visit each of these important regional cities within this year.

Thanks to my visits to these cities, I realised that it is not only in the Greater Sydney area that there is a significant Japanese presence. In each of these regional cities, business and exchange with Japan has been developing over many years. In this issue of my newsletter, as I report on the outcome of my visits, I invite you to consider with me how creating stronger ties at the regional city level can contribute to promoting mutual benefit and prosperity for both Japan and Australia by deepening mutual understanding and bonds of trust.



**With the Vice-Chancellor and Deputy Vice-Chancellor of  
the University of Wollongong  
(16 November 2020)**

### ● Visit to the City of Wollongong

On 16 November, I made a business trip to Wollongong, one and a half hours by car from Sydney, and met with Vice-Chancellor Professor Wellings and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Global Strategy) Professor Frino at the University of Wollongong (UOW). UOW is relatively young, having been founded in 1975. However, since its establishment it has grown significantly and even has campuses in Dubai, Hong Kong and Malaysia. Today, there are more than 27,000 students domestically, and when the international campuses are included, there are in excess of 35,000 students.

UOW's connections with Japan included around 100 students from Japan studying at Wollongong, and it has some 30 agreements with universities in Japan. Every year, approximately 20 students participate in study abroad and exchange in both directions. Furthermore, joint research is being undertaken with various Japanese universities and research institutions, and joint papers are released.

Related to Western Sydney development, in 2017, UOW formed the NUW Alliance together with the Universities of Newcastle and New South Wales. NUW now includes Western Sydney University. It was clear to see that there is strong enthusiasm to promote collaboration with Japanese companies and universities in the future.



**The University of Wollongong's Innovation Campus where NEC is based  
(16 November 2020)**

NEC Australia has set up a hub at the UOW Innovation Campus, the university's centre for technology development and business. Having received the commission from the NSW Government, NEC uses this hub at the UOW Innovation Campus to deliver ICT-related services to public transportation systems throughout the state.

During the site visit, I was kindly guided around the NEC hub by General Manager Martin Braithwaite. The opening of the hub in 2016 was attended by NSW Minister for Investment Stuart Ayres among others. Today there are not only 130 people working at the hub, NEC also provides research and employment opportunities for UOW graduates specialising in ICT.



It is wonderful to see a Japanese company contributing in this way by creating employment and developing human resources through collaboration with a local university.



**The Kawasaki Bridge in Wollongong's Botanic Garden  
(16 November 2020)**

The City of Wollongong became a sister city with Kawasaki City in 1988. At the time, Wollongong was looking to transition from the steel and coal industries to high-tech industries and redevelop the city, while Kawasaki saw the value in learning from Australia with its vast land and relaxed lifestyle, and so, the sister city agreement was signed.

Since then, the two cities have conducted youth exchange and cultural exchange continuously over many years. Of particular note is the “Kawasaki Junior Cultural Prize” held since 1992. In August each year, the four prize winners go to Wollongong on a goodwill visit. It is a pity that the trip had to be cancelled this year due to COVID-19.

Also since 1992, university students learning Japanese at UOW have done homestays in Kawasaki while studying Japanese at Senshu University and exploring the city. In addition to the abovementioned examples, exchange is also occurring in the areas of music education and welfare.

At Wollongong Botanic Garden, there is a 'taiko' or drum bridge which was gifted by Kawasaki in 1993 and restored in 2005. This bridge has become a tourist spot. When I went to see the bridge, there was a lively graduation party taking place there.



Receiving the presentation book commemorating the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the sister city relationship between Newcastle and Ube Cities from Newcastle Lord Mayor Nuatali Nelmes  
(19 November 2020)

#### ● Visit to the City of Newcastle

In the same week on 18 and 19 November, I visited Newcastle which is about a two-and-a-half hour trip by car from Sydney. On 21 November in 1980, Newcastle City and Ube City in Yamaguchi Prefecture signed their sister city agreement, so I visited Newcastle just before the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this relationship.

At the time the cities became sister cities, both Newcastle and Ube cities were deeply involved with the export and import of coal (half of Ube's coal imports shipped from the Port of Newcastle), and the cities had similar populations in the hundreds of thousands. It was against this background that they became sister cities. For many years since then, the mayors and councillors of Newcastle and Ube have made reciprocal visits, and layers of youth and cultural exchange have been built up.

As reciprocal visits were not possible this year due to COVID-19, I paid a courtesy call on the Lord Mayor of Newcastle. After exchanging views, I was presented with a copy of the book commemorating the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the sister city relationship between Newcastle and Ube Cities by the Lord Mayor, who showed me the interactive digital commemorative story wall which has a video message from the mayor.

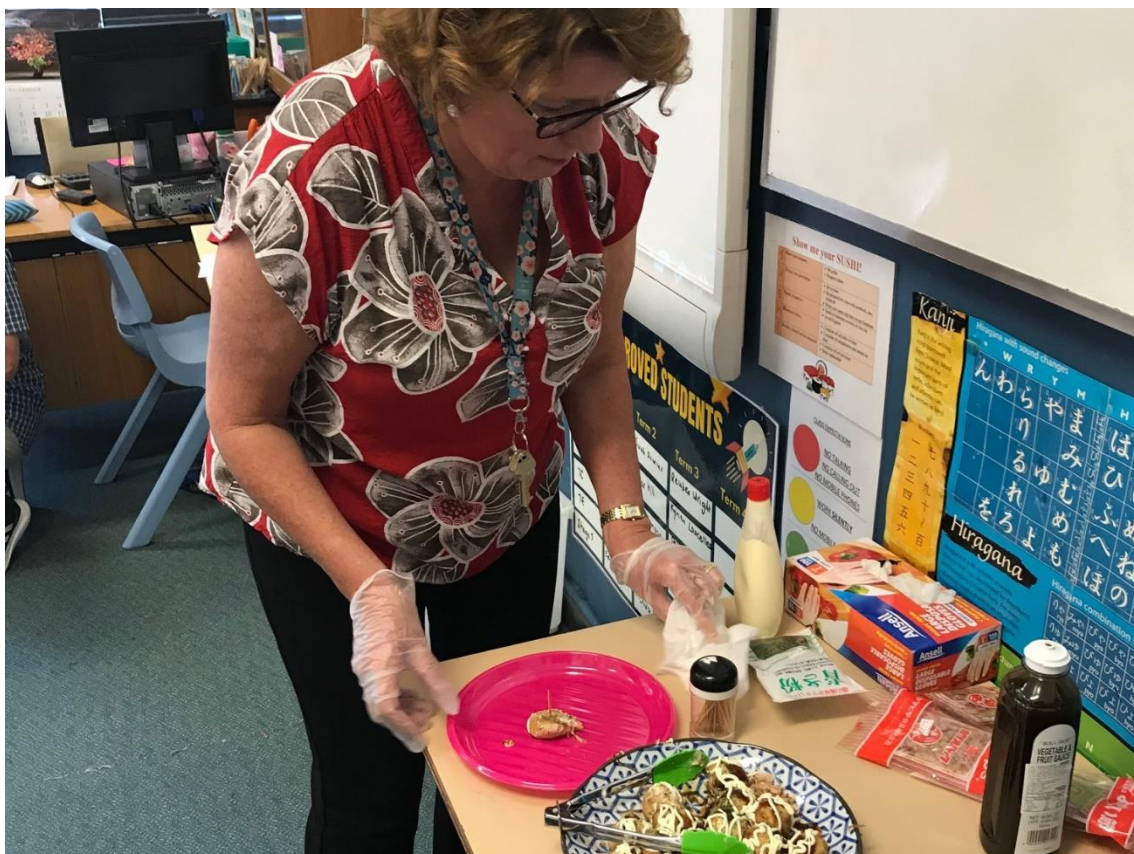




**Site Visit to the Astra Aerolab Precinct next to the Williamtown Airforce Base  
(18 November 2020)**

During the visit to Newcastle, I also made a site visit to the new defence and aerospace “Special Activation Precinct” co-located with RAAF Base Williamtown and Newcastle Airport which is being promoted by the NSW Government. This large-scale special development zone is currently in the planning stages, but ahead of that development, New Castle and the neighbouring city of Port Stephens are already progressing with the development of the Astra Aerolab Precinct. BAE Systems has existing facilities onsite and is planning expansion for the F35 program. Lockheed Martin and Boeing are also in the precinct and are looking for expansion opportunities on the Astra Aerolab site.

Another part of my visit was to hear from people working for Japanese companies that are based in Newcastle. Shikoku Electric Power has established a subsidiary in Newcastle to enable stable coal procurement. NYK Line (Nihon Yusen) also has specialists in Newcastle to ensure the efficient export of cargo including coal. Hitachi Construction Machinery acquired the local mining machinery company Bradken in 2017, and while implementing improvements to the company, it has expanded its business and increased revenue. Also in 2017, Asahi Kasei Homes became a minority shareholder in a major local real estate company, McDonald Jones Homes, and has entered the Australian housing market and is steadily achieving results.



**Preparing *takoyaki* to teach food-related vocabulary in the Japanese lesson of Mrs Jodie Vandermeer at Newcastle High School (19 November 2020)**

In Newcastle, I visited two high schools.

First, I visited Merewether High School which won the School of the Year prize in the annual Australia-Japan Relations Essay Contest for Secondary School Students in NSW and the NT, which is run by this Consulate, and presented the awards. The theme of students' essays was where they would go or what they would do if they visited Japan. The students chose topics that interested them, such as the Nakasendo Route, a museum of musical instruments and temples, and the essays showed careful research.

Next, at Newcastle High School, I observed a Japanese language class. The teacher, Mrs Jodie Vandermeer, is passionate about Japanese culture and I could feel her enthusiasm as she shared this with her students, explaining Japan's attractions. The objective of the lesson was to teach the names of some common Japanese dishes in *hiragana* and *katakana*. For ramen, she showed a clip from



the movie “Tampopo”, to show how to make *sukiyaki* there was a video with a quiz, and for Takoyaki after watching a video of a *takoyaki* shop by a YouTuber from Osaka, the students got to taste warm *takoyaki* for real. It was a privilege to see the class.



**Small Forest Winery in the Upper Hunter  
(19 November 2020)**

The Hunter region, which includes Newcastle, is famous for producing wine. In the Upper Hunter, about one and a half hours by car from central Newcastle, there is a Japanese winemaker, so in the evening of the 19<sup>th</sup>, I visited the winery.

Called the Small Forest Winery, it is run by Mrs Atsuko Radcliffe, whose maiden name is Kobayashi (小林) or 'small forest'. From 1999, she worked at a major Australian winery and also gained experience making sake at Urakasumi Sake Brewery in Miyagi Prefecture. Then, in 2013, she established her own wine brand. While facing many difficulties including bush fires, she has produced highly regarded wine that has received awards in various competitions.



To see a Japanese woman creating her own wine brand in the heart of a major Australian wine area is such an inspiring example and symbolises the friendship between Japan and Australia. In 2018, Mrs Radcliffe was awarded a Consul-General's Commendation from this Consulate. I look forward to encouraging her future endeavours in wine.



**At the Gosford Regional Gallery and Edogawa Commemorative Garden  
with Gallery Director Tim Braham (centre) and Central Coast Council  
Section Manager Arts and Culture Chris King (right)  
(20 November 2020)**

#### ● **Visit to Central Coast City**

On 20 November, I visited Central Coast City. Central Coast City was established in 2016 when the cities of Gosford and Wyong were merged.

In 1988, to mark Australia's Bicentenary, Gosford City signed a sister city agreement with Edogawa Ward in Tokyo. The following year, the Australian Government gifted 6 wallabies to Edogawa Natural Zoo. Later in 1994, the

Edogawa Commemorative Garden was opened in Gosford with the support of Edogawa. In 2000, the Gosford Regional Gallery was built next to the garden and it is popular spot attracting many visitors.

Edogawa also conducts a reciprocal youth exchange program with Narara Valley High School in Central Coast City and grassroots exchange is deepening between them.



**Ms Katherine Brownlee's Japanese class at Gosford High School  
(20 November 2020)**

While in Central Coast, I observed a Japanese class at Gosford High School. The theme was the same as at Newcastle High School – Japanese food. It was a very lively Japanese lesson with the students doing group work and taking on each other in competitions and games, utilising photos and hiragana charts. I also watched videos produced by the students, again as group work, showing them acting out skits in Japanese. They were all very creative efforts!

At Gosford High School, all students must study a foreign language in year 8; half of the 90 students in the year level study French and the other half study Japanese. From year 9 onwards, foreign language study is an elective subject,



but the number of students continuing on to year 12 is more than 20, which is really encouraging to hear.

On this occasion, I was also able to observe a variety of classes at the school, including art, music, home economics, chemistry and others. No matter the subject, I could see that it is not just facts being passed on to students; student independence is respected and the students are fortunate to be receiving such an education.



**Kunitaro's Waratah Farm located in the Mangrove Mountain district  
(20 November 2020)**

My final appointment for the day was a site visit to the Kunitaro green tea farm, called Waratah Farm, located in the Central Coast suburb of Mangrove Mountain. Kunitaro searches out farmland all around the world that is suitable for organic agriculture. Waratah Farm was chosen for its low humidity and almost zero pests. The land was acquired in 2004 and Japanese tea bushes were imported from Japan. The soil was first prepared together with the NSW Government and tea has been grown using Kunitaro's own organic fertilisers.

The tea is dried and crushed in a factory on the farm to make 'tencha', which is then sent to the factory in Shizuoka Prefecture for final processing. People are often surprised to learn that apart from just before harvest time, all the work on the farm is done by one person, Mr Onozawa Akio, who has been responsible for tea production from the very beginning.

Changes to consumer demand in Japan mean that all tea production is switching to matcha tea. Currently, the tea is not being actively sold locally, but I heard that the tea is at the stage of being marketed to cafes etc, and I hope that local demand will grow and the tea will be sold here.



Large card displaying images from the 2019 trip to Japan  
by Gosford High School's Japanese class  
(20 November 2020)

- **Deepening mutual understanding and bonds of trust centred on business and cultural exchange**

As I visited these regional cities in NSW, I realised that if we promote both business and cultural exchange in parallel at the regional city level in Japan and Australia, mutual understanding and bonds of trust will be further deepened, which will be to the mutual benefit and prosperity of both Japan and NSW and Australia.

In the Japanese classroom at Gosford High School, there is a large, colourful card displaying memories from last year's trip to Japan. At Newcastle High School, the walls of the Japanese classroom are similarly covered with photos from reciprocal exchange visits. I believe that such visits will remain major experiences in the lives of every student. Continuing this type of exchange is incredibly meaningful.



All in all, mutual understanding and trust between Japan and Australia are supported by numerous business ties developed over many years as well as by exchange between the cities and schools of both countries. This Consulate would like to provide any boost it can to these connections and values every one of these bonds between the people of Japan and Australia.

University of Wollongong

<https://www.uow.edu.au/>

NEC's base at the University of Wollongong

<https://www.uow.edu.au/media/2016/new-nec-office-in-wollongong-drives-ict-growth-in-regional-australia.php>

<https://www.investregional.nsw.gov.au/success-stories/nec/>

About Wollongong and Kawasaki (Kanagawa Prefecture) Cities' sister city relationship (Consulate's website)

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

Media release and message regarding the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the sister city relationship between Newcastle and Ube (Yamaguchi Prefecture) Cities

<https://newcastle.nsw.gov.au/council/news/latest-news/city-of-newcastle-celebrates-40th-sister-city-anni>

<https://www.facebook.com/NuataliNelmes/posts/3833939633305640>

About Newcastle and Ube (Yamaguchi Prefecture) Cities' sister city relationship (Consulate's website)

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

Williamstown Special Activation Precinct and Astra Aerolab

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/snowy-hydro-legacy-fund/special-activation-precincts/williamtown-special-activation-precinct>

<https://www.astraaerolab.com.au/>

Newcastle High School – foreign language education

<https://newcastle-h.schools.nsw.gov.au/our-faculties/languages.html>

Small Forest Winery

<https://smallforest.com.au/>

Articles about Ms Atsuko Kobayashi Radcliffe

<https://japanezy.com/2020/10/26/small-forest-by-atsuko-japanese-wine-in-the-hunter-valley/>

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/life/2017/11/11/food/whirlwind-wine-romance-led-brand/>

Ms Atsuko Kobayashi Radcliffe receives Consul-General's Commendation  
(December 2018)

[https://www.sydney.au.emb-](https://www.sydney.au.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr_en/about_consul_generals_gallery_archive_2018.html#Dec2018)

[japan.go.jp/itpr\\_en/about\\_consul\\_generals\\_gallery\\_archive\\_2018.html#Dec2018](https://www.sydney.au.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr_en/about_consul_generals_gallery_archive_2018.html#Dec2018)

Gosford Regional Gallery and Edogawa Commemorative Garden

[https://www.centralcoast.nsw.gov.au/recreation/venues-and-facilities/galleries/edogawa-](https://www.centralcoast.nsw.gov.au/recreation/venues-and-facilities/galleries/edogawa-commemorative-garden)  
[commemorative-garden](https://www.centralcoast.nsw.gov.au/recreation/venues-and-facilities/galleries/edogawa-commemorative-garden)

[https://www.centralcoast.nsw.gov.au/recreation/venues-and-facilities/galleries/gosford-](https://www.centralcoast.nsw.gov.au/recreation/venues-and-facilities/galleries/gosford-regional-gallery/)  
[regional-gallery/](https://www.centralcoast.nsw.gov.au/recreation/venues-and-facilities/galleries/gosford-regional-gallery/)

Gosford High School – foreign language education

<https://gosford-h.schools.nsw.gov.au/learning-at-our-school/languages.html>

About Central Coast and Edogawa (Tokyo Prefecture) Cities' sister city  
relationship (Consulate's website)

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

Kunitaro Farm Australia (SBS report)

<https://www.sbs.com.au/news/could-green-tea-be-australia-s-next-big-export>

(End)