

Consul-General of Japan in Sydney's Newsletter

No. 35 Darwin and Japan: the Ties of History, Business, and Security

4 March 2021

Every year on 19 February, the Bombing of Darwin Commemorative Service is held in Darwin. This year, His Excellency the Ambassador of Japan, Mr Yamagami Shingo, paid an official visit to the Northern Territory, and he attended the commemorative service and a series of discussions and site visits. I had the opportunity to accompany him on many of his programs, and I felt that relations between Japan and Darwin, and Japan and the Northern Territory, are developing further.

There are three points of deep connection between Darwin and Japan – history, business and security. In this issue of my newsletter, while introducing these three points, I would like to invite you to reflect with me upon the future between Japan and Darwin, and between Japan and the Northern Territory.



**Laying a wreath at the Bombing of Darwin Commemorative Service
(19 February 2021)**

● **History: from reconciliation to exchange and cooperation**

It was the second time I had participated in the Bombing of Darwin Commemorative Service (19 February) and laid a wreath. In the 10th issue of my newsletter last year, I wrote about the commemoration itself and the history behind it.

This time, I accompanied Ambassador Yamagami. We participated in the USS Peary Commemorative Service conducted by the Australian American Association of the Northern Territory and also visited the I-124 Submarine memorial, which the Australian-Japanese Association of the Northern Territory was central in establishing in 2017. We laid wreaths at both memorials and paid our respects to those who lost their lives.

The development of the current Japan-Australia relationship and the peace and prosperity we enjoy today are built on the sacrifice of precious lives lost during WWII, and at the commemorations, I felt this fact anew.



**A Japanese 'Zero' fighter on display at the Darwin Aviation Museum
(17 February 2021)**

This time, in addition to visiting the Darwin Military Museum, which I had visited last year, I also observed the Darwin Aviation Museum for the first time. On display at the Aviation Museum is the Zero fighter plane flown by Toyoshima Hajime that was damaged and crash-landed in the Bombing of Darwin on 19 February 1942.

The pilot Toyoshima was later sent to the Cowra Prisoner of War Camp, and on 5 August 1944, he blew the assault trumpet which signalled the start of the Cowra Breakout and killed himself during the incident. At the Cowra Japanese War Cemetery, which I visited last year, among the 522 graves you will find the grave of Mr Toyoshima Hajime under the alias of "Minami Tadao". The non-fiction book by Nakano Fujio "Cowra's Assault Trumpet: Why did the Zero fighter pilot die?"(Bunshun Bunko) depicts the situation of the time while tracing Mr Toyoshima's life.



**At the Darwin Japanese Film Festival with committee members of the Australian-Japanese Association of the Northern Territory (AJANT)
(19 February 2021)**

After the war, from 1959 to 1961, the Japanese company Fujita Salvage removed the wreckage of sunken vessels. The owner of the company also contributed to reconciliation between Japan and Australia. When the Darwin Memorial Uniting Church was completed in 1960, he donated 77 crosses made from metal salvaged from wreckage to the church, and exchange between Fujita family and the Darwin Memorial Uniting Church continues to this day.

On 26 February this year, a PD (professional development) for Japanese teachers in the Northern Territory was held in Darwin, and on this occasion, the Japanese teachers took part in a special session by Ms Lauren Merritt of the Darwin Memorial Uniting Church to prepare for teaching the history of war and reconciliation between Japan and Australia, and of exchange and cooperation between them.

Today, a new generation of Japanese and Australians is looking after exchange between Japan and Australia. In 2017, the Australian Japanese Association of the Northern Territory (AJANT) gained the support of the Australian Government to erect the I-124 submarine memorial. The following year in 2018, then Prime Minister Abe Shinzo and NT Chief Minister Gunner visited the memorial and laid wreaths.

This time, from 19 to 20 February, AJANT, together with the Japan Foundation, presented the Darwin Japanese Film Festival, and I gave the opening remarks. Taking the appropriate COVID-19 measures, the festival screened 4 films and was a great success with a few hundred people gathering for the event.



In the central control room (CCR) of the Ichthys LNG onshore plant
(20 February 2021)

- **Business: new strides forward built on the foundation of Ichthys**

I again made a site visit to the Ichthys LNG onshore plant, this time accompanying Ambassador Yamagami. It is now the third year since operations began at the plant, and even under COVID-19, operations have been continuing smoothly. The LNG from this plant accounts for 7% of Japan's LNG imports, and accounts for more than 95% of NT exports to Japan.

In the plant's central control room (CCR), Japanese and Australian engineers work as one unit on a 24 hour rotation system. I felt that this embodies Japan-Australia cooperation.



**Northern Territory Government business briefing
(19 February 2021)**

Building on this foundation, new business cooperation is developing between Japan and the NT. During the visit to Darwin, NT Government representatives conducted a business briefing about investment opportunities, focusing on natural gas, hydrogen and critical minerals, which I attended together with the Ambassador and Mr Katayama Hiroyuki, General Manager of Japan Oil, Gas and Metals National Corporation (JOGMEC). It was decided to consider holding a seminar aimed at Japanese companies in Sydney.

This consulate will do its utmost to assist various Japan-Australia joint ventures follow the path of Ichthys to start-up, which will contribute to economic development and greater employment opportunities, both in Japan and Australia.



Visiting Australian Defence Force Northern Command
(20 February 2021)

● **Security: at the juncture of the Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean**

In recent times, the importance of Japan-Australia cooperation in the field of security has been increasing. Japan is working towards achieving a “free and open Indo-Pacific”. Darwin is at an important geopolitical location, facing both the Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean. Moreover, Darwin is Australia’s gateway to Asia.

In the hinterland of Darwin, there are expansive training grounds. Every year in the dry season, US Marines are rotated in and out of Darwin, and Darwin functions as a base for various joint training exercises. The Japan Self-Defense Forces are also taking part in such exercises.

This time in Darwin, I accompanied the Ambassador on his visit to the Australian Defence Force’s Northern Command and listened to a briefing. I became strongly aware of the potential and importance of further cooperation under the current international environment.



At Charles Darwin University

with Dr Suresh Thennadil, Director, Energy and Research Institute (right) and Dr Akhilesh Surjan, Research & Theme Leader, Humanitarian, Emergency and Disaster Management Studies (left)

(17 February 2021)

● **Japan, Darwin and the Northern Territory: toward the future**

As outlined above, Japan and Darwin, and moreover, Japan and the Northern Territory, are deeply connected through the three aspects of history, business and security, and these are still developing. When it comes to each of these aspects, it is important that we are thankful for the strong foundations built by people who came before us, as we accumulate new initiatives for the future.

During my visit to Darwin in October last year, I met with Professor Simon Maddocks, Vice-Chancellor of Charles Darwin University, and we discussed the possibility of strengthening ties with Japan in the fields of energy, tropical medicine and disaster management. This time, I greeted Professor Mike Wilson, CDU Interim Vice-Chancellor. I also met with Dr Suresh Thennadil, Director, Energy and Research

Institute, and Dr Akhilesh Surjan, Research & Theme Leader, Humanitarian, Emergency and Disaster Management Studies, and learnt about the latest developments and connections with Japan.

From here on, I intend to make quarterly visits to Darwin and support various efforts by diverse stakeholders, both Japanese and Australian. If you have any questions or requests about Japan-Darwin or Japan-NT exchange and cooperation, please contact us at any time!

Consul-General's Newsletter No. 3 - Darwin and Japan (29 November 2019)

https://www.sydney.au.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr_en/about_consul_generals_newsletter_archive_no3.html

Consul-General's Newsletter No. 10 - Darwin and Japan (Part 2): From the Bombing of Darwin to the Ichthys LNG Project (6 March 2020)

https://www.sydney.au.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr_en/about_consul_generals_newsletter_archive_no10.html

Consul-General's Newsletter No. 16 - Alice Springs and Uluru: Looking beyond COVID-19 (29 May 2020)

https://www.sydney.au.emb-japan.go.jp/document/CGKiya_16newsE.pdf

Consul-General's Newsletter No. 27 - The Northern Territory and Japan: Towards deepening and widening business and exchange (6 November 2020)

https://www.sydney.au.emb-japan.go.jp/document/CGKiya_27newsE.pdf

The Zero fighter exhibition at the Darwin Aviation Museum

<https://www.darwinaviationmuseum.com.au/mitsubishi-zero-a6m2-model-21-bii-124-1942/>

Australian-Japanese Association of the Northern Territory (AJANT)

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

INPEX Ichthys LNG Project

<https://www.inpex.com.au/projects/ichthys-lng/>

Investment opportunities in the Northern Territory

<https://theterritory.com.au/invest>

Japan-Australia Defence Cooperation and Exchange - Ministry of Defence, Japan
(Japanese)

https://www.mod.go.jp/j/approach/exchange/area/pacific/pdf/australia_20201208.pdf

United States Force Posture Initiatives (USFPI) - Department of Defence, Australia

<https://www.defence.gov.au/Initiatives/USFPI/>

Charles Darwin University

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

Energy and Resources Institute, Charles Darwin University

<https://www.cdu.edu.au/engineering-it-environment/research/eri>

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