

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

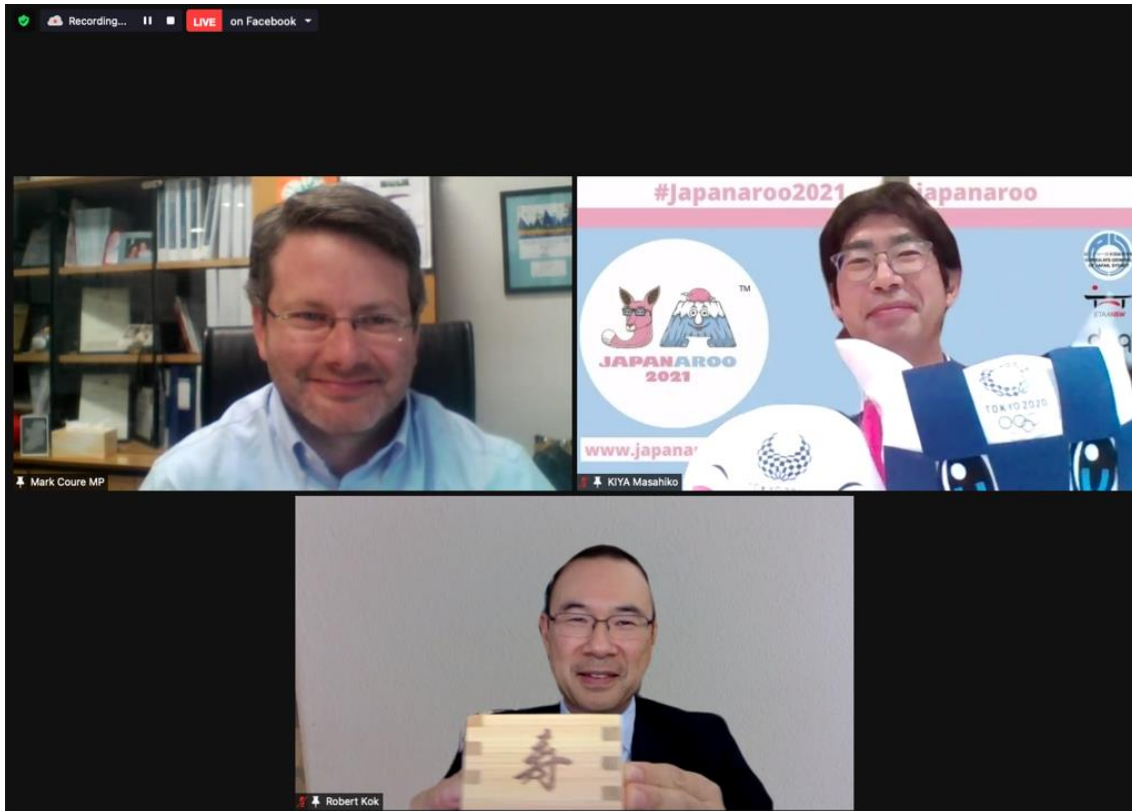
### **No. 47 Overcoming lockdown together**

31 August 2021

When will Sydney's lockdown end? On 20 August, NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian announced at the daily 11am media conference that the lockdown for Greater Sydney would be extended until the end of September. Since that announcement, the number of COVID-19 cases has increased, with some days even exceeding 1,200 cases per day. On the other hand, the pace of vaccination keeps reaching new records.

At the NSW Premier's media conference on 26 August, it was announced that when the COVID-19 vaccination rate reaches 70%, various restrictions would be eased for fully vaccinated people. If the current pace of vaccinations continues, this should be reached in mid-October. The following day on 27 August, it was announced that face-to-face learning at schools will recommence from late October through to early November. Looking at this from another perspective, people in Greater Sydney are still facing two more months of lockdown, which they need to overcome, in addition to the two months already passed.

How are you all spending your days under this strict lockdown? This consulate is doing what it can, looking to the future. In addition to taking COVID-19 measures at the consular service counter and sending out consular e-mails, we are engaging in online public relations and cultural activities and disseminating information about COVID-19 vaccination and mental health. In this issue of my newsletter, I would like to introduce this consulate's activities during lockdown and, together with you, think about how we can survive this time.



Screenshot taken after the opening remarks at Japanaroo Opening Night  
(20 August 2021)

### ● The start of Japanaroo 2021

Japanaroo 2021 - the Japanese cultural event largely organised by Japan-Australia related groups in Sydney - kicked off as planned, during lockdown, on 20 August.

The very first event of Japanaroo 2021 was the [webinar organised by the Australia Japan Business Co-operation Committee \(AJBCC\) featuring the Ambassador of Japan to Australia, HE Yamagami Shingo](#). Approximately 170 people participated. In his [speech](#), Ambassador Yamagami looked back at the history of trade and investment between Japan and Australia, and said that “friendship” and “respect” have been developed in a wide range of areas including tourism, people-to-people exchange and security. He said that from now on, we should work together to achieve “excellence” and mentioned concrete ways that Japan-Australia cooperate in enhancing COVID-19 measures, promoting rules-based international order, developing economic resilience, and reducing emissions. The Q&A session was also lively and stimulating.

In the evening of the same day (20 August), [Japanaroo Opening Night](#) was held. Around 150 people participated in a rich line-up of content, including an origami workshop, an introduction of Japanese food and drinks, Japanese cultural performances, messages of support for the Paralympians and a conversation between the Japanese artist and the Australian artist behind the Japanaroo logo (video links are [here](#)). Opening remarks were delivered by Cr Robert Kok from Sydney City Council and Mr Mark Coure MP, Secretary of the NSW Parliament Asia Pacific Friendship Group.

In my [opening remarks](#), I expressed my belief that at this very time when we are facing COVID-19, it is all the more important to demonstrate our strength by enjoying ourselves and entertaining others through Japanaroo. I also stated that the Japanaroo participants and event organisers make up the core of the “Japan-Australia community” and act as catalysts to enhance multiculturalism and prosperity in Australia.

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**An online exchange session between Campbelltown and Koshigaya junior high school students (21 August 2021)**

**• Video and online sister city junior high school student exchange**

The next day on 21 August, Campbelltown and Koshigaya junior high school students engaged in online exchange. The two cities [signed a sister-city agreement in 1984](#), and for many years, they have sent reciprocal junior high school student and youth delegations. Since last year, COVID-19 has made such exchange difficult and, this year, an online exchange session was planned.

Despite the strict COVID-19 restrictions, both groups of junior high school students created videos introducing famous places in their cities and exchanged these videos ahead of the online session. On the day, approximately 30 students were divided into four groups and discussed topics such as the music, sports and food they like. I was impressed by the enthusiasm of everyone in both cities to continue this youth exchange, even at this time when mutual visits are not possible.



NSW Japanese Speech Contest  
(22 August 2021)

● **Online Japanese speech contest**

The following day, 22 August, the [NSW Japanese Speech Contest](#) was conducted online. Last year, the contest had to be cancelled due to COVID-19, but this year, people were determined that the contest should go ahead, and from early on, preparations proceeded anticipating the possibility of the contest being held as either an on-site or online event.

There were 17 participants over three divisions: High School Senior Division, Open Beginners Division and Open Division. They spoke on a wide range of topics and the participants' passion for Japanese was inspiring. It was my first time to listen to a Japanese speech contest and I was surprised by how wonderful they all were. It was not just their Japanese proficiency, but also the content, which included Japanese dialects, the role of men and women, and lifestyle habits. The contestants talked about topics that interested them and I could feel the strength of their intellectual curiosity. Please take a look at the [video](#) if you are interested. In my [opening remarks](#), I expressed my hope that the participants would continue to study Japanese and contribute to Japan-Australia relations in the future.

I was particularly impressed by the speech of the Open Division winner, Ms Monika Agarwal - "Message from an older sister to an older brother" (1hr 45min into the [video](#)).

It was a speech of strong content in which she addressed the great difficulties that her family had faced and how she herself had overcome them. I am extremely grateful to everyone on the steering committee for creating this opportunity to showcase such wonderful speeches despite the lockdown.



**Online symposium about the COVID-19 situation in Japan  
(25 August 2021)**

- **Online symposium**

On 25 August, there was an online symposium about the COVID-19 situation in Japan. It was organised by University of Sydney Law School and supported by Australia-Japan Research Centre (AJRC) of Australia National University (ANU), Australia-Japan Society of NSW, Australian Network for Japanese Law (ANJeL), Centre for Asian and Pacific Law at the University of Sydney (CAPLUS), and Japanese Studies Association of Australia (JSAA). Some 90 people participated in the symposium.

Originally the symposium was planned to be held as a hybrid event at the University of Sydney, however, due to the lockdown, it took place online only. However, the symposium still brought together people in Australia doing research about Japanese law, politics, economics and society, and they were able to exchange the latest information and knowledge relating to COVID-19, which is such a crucial issue at this time. It is so pleasing that this was conducted on the occasion of Japanaroo.

Soon after the symposium was over, the [video](#) and a [summary](#) were uploaded to the website. I felt the strong enthusiasm of the organisers and supporting organisations. Thank you very much.



**Qantas's "Fly Away" campaign commercial**  
(Posted on 23 August of the Qantas [YouTube](#) channel)

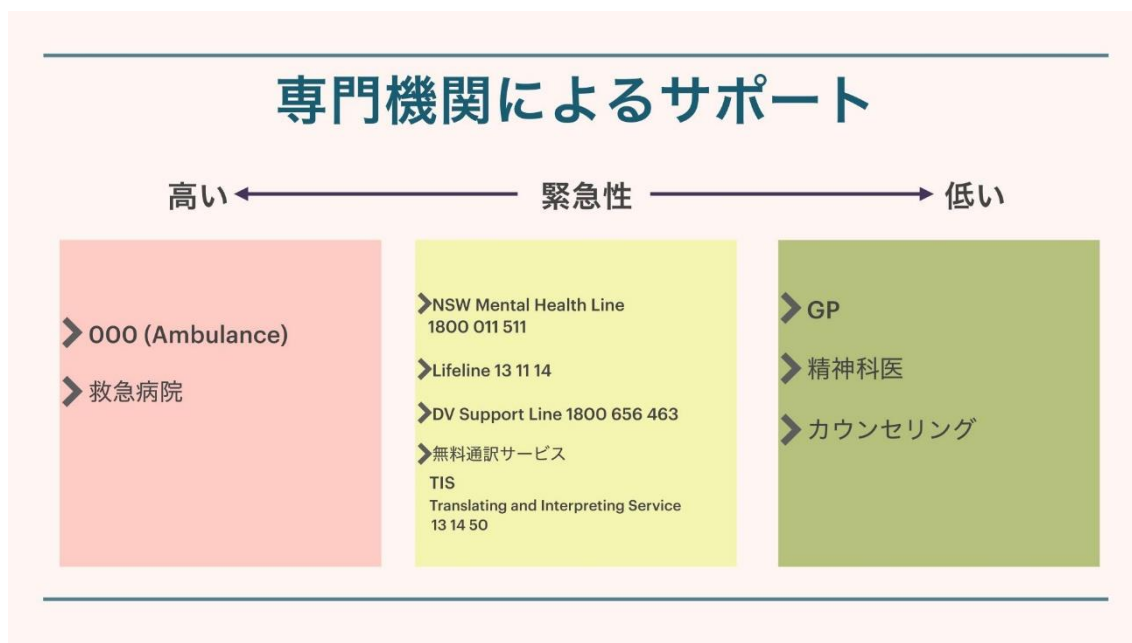
- **Promoting vaccination and preparing for easing restrictions**

As lockdowns continue in NSW and elsewhere, the Australian Government has begun calling for a shift towards relaxing restrictions post-COVID while promoting vaccination. On 22 August, Prime Minister Morrison published an ["opinion" about an exit strategy titled "Time to Shift Focus from Case Numbers to Hospitalisations"](#). At the subsequent media conference, he emphasised that once the 70% and 80% vaccination targets are reached, we should not fear the virus and continue lockdowns, rather we should ease restrictions and learn to live with the virus.

Premier Berejiklian also states at her daily media conferences that the most important figure is not the number of cases but the number of vaccinations. She says from now on, we should vaccinate and preparations must begin for a series of easing of restrictions to be implemented once the 70% vaccination target is reached.

In the media, there are positive messages emerging - “Meet your family at Christmas and you can travel too.” Qantas has launched a [campaign called “Fly Away”](#) which will give you mileage points or discount vouchers if you register your vaccination. The campaign video has become a hit with already 400,000 views on [YouTube](#). We can also look forward to travelling to Japan post-COVID-19, can’t we!

This consulate has uploaded [a summary in Japanese of vaccination information](#) for the use of residents in NSW and the NT. I hope it will be useful.



[Lecture materials](#) presented by psychologist Iketani Ami  
(26 August 2021)

- Mental health measures

Even so, taking measures to look after your mental health will be crucial to endure the next two months of lockdown. On 26 August, this consulate held a conference to communicate safety measures to Japanese living here. Participating in the conference were Japan-related organisations and study-exchange companies etc. [Ms Iketani Ami, a local psychologist](#), gave a lecture about mental health measures (lecture materials are [here](#)).

Amongst the advice she gave in the lecture was that it is completely normal to become “depressed” and that you shouldn’t suffer and think it’s because you are weak, that only one in ten people are be treated for depression but the therapeutic effect is high at



between 70% to 80%, thus it is important to see a doctor early. Another piece of advice was to be aware that domestic violence has also increased during the pandemic. She introduced the numbers for Lifeline Australia, Domestic Violence Line, translation services and other useful information.

In addition, the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs in cooperation with Japan-based NPOs has [commenced efforts](#) to carefully respond to the loneliness and isolation that Japanese nationals living abroad may experience and the various problems that accompany these conditions. People experiencing problems are encouraged to make use of Japanese chat and social media (SNS) consultation services. Consultations are offered via the major social media platforms (LINE, Twitter and Facebook) and online web chats. Consultations are accepted regardless of age or gender.

### マーガレット・ビーズリー NSW州総督からのメッセージ

「新型コロナウイルスの大流行は、おそらくそれぞれ異なる形ではありますが、私たち全ての人々に影響を及ぼしています。」



Message from NSW Governor Margaret Beazley  
([Japanese translation](#) – 27 August 2021)

- Giving thanks and having compassion

As we find ourselves in this situation, members of the consular corps including this consulate received a message from Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC QC, Governor of New South Wales, in which she requested that we convey her

appreciation and support to NSW's multicultural communities that are being affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. We have [translated the Governor's message into Japanese](#) and encourage you to read it.

In her message, the Governor writes that NSW is “celebrated for the vibrancy and strength of its multicultural community” and introduces the facts that with nearly 28% of NSW residents born overseas, 215 languages are spoken and 146 religions are practised across the state. She continues to say that “they reflect a rich tapestry of diverse cultures which come together to create a robust and rich community in which we all take enormous pride.” She also expresses her wish for us all to support each other and conveys her heartfelt appreciation for the various efforts being made, including for getting vaccinated.

As Sydney, the state of NSW and other parts of Australia are working to overcome lockdowns, the local Japanese community is also working together in this effort. This consulate will do its utmost so that the local Japanese community can overcome this lockdown by helping each another with gratitude and compassion within this multicultural society during the difficult period of the next two months. If you have any difficulties or concerns, please feel free to contact this consulate at any time.

Kiya Masahiko,  
Consul-General of Japan in Sydney

(Ends)