

Consul-General of Japan in Sydney's Newsletter

No. 50 Reopening Australia and Japan

14 October 2021

Sydney's three-and-a-half-month lockdown is finally over! It was really tough, wasn't it? What was the first thing you did? For me, arranging a haircut: the barber I always go to was already heavily booked, but I managed to get an appointment for mid next week. Restaurants and shops in the city are gradually beginning to open. Within the next couple of weeks when the double vaccination rate is expected to reach 80%, and further on 1 December, step-by-step easing of restrictions will be implemented. We are finally on the road towards life post-COVID-19.

In Japan too, the number of new COVID-19 cases has decreased dramatically thanks to the progress in vaccination among other factors. The level of daily new case numbers is now less than 100 people in Tokyo and less than 1,000 nationally. I greatly respect all those who have been working tirelessly on the frontline, including for the rollout of vaccinations.

Meanwhile, there have been major political changes.

In NSW, the start of this month saw NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian and Deputy Premier John Barilaro announce their resignations one after the other. They were succeeded by the Hon. Dominic Perrottet MP as the Premier of NSW and the Hon. Paul Toole MP as Deputy Premier.

In Japan, Prime Minister KISHIDA Fumio was inaugurated on 4 October. A Japan-Australia Leaders Video Teleconference Meeting was held on the very next day, and the policy direction of the new administration was set out in Prime Minister Kishida's policy speech.

How will the reopening of both Japan and Australia post COVID-19 progress under these new settings? In this issue of my newsletter, while reporting on new developments since the start of October, I invite you to consider with me the road to reopening Australia and Japan and how we should cooperate going forward.



**NSW Premier Perrottet's media conference
on the first day after the lockdown was lifted
(11 October 2021; Premier Perrottet's Facebook)**

● **The inauguration of NSW Premier Perrottet**

On 1 October, NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian called a media conference and announced her resignation. This was in response to the announcement by the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) to investigate matters relating to her. I am grateful for her great achievements since assuming the position of premier in 2016, not only in recent years responding to the bush fire crisis and COVID-19, but also for promoting close cooperation between Japan and NSW.

Following her resignation, a Liberal Party room meeting was held, and the Hon. Dominic Perrottet, NSW Treasurer and Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party in NSW, was chosen as the new Premier of NSW and Leader of the Liberal Party in NSW. At the same time, the Hon. Stuart Ayres, NSW Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney, was elected the new Deputy Leader of the NSW Liberal Party and gained the portfolios of Trade and Industry. The Hon. Matt Kean, NSW Minister for Energy and Environment, became NSW Treasurer.

On 3 October, the Hon. John Barilaro, NSW Deputy Premier, announced his resignation. In the National Party room meeting that followed, the Hon. Paul Toole, NSW Minister for Regional Transport and Roads and Deputy Leader of the Nationals in NSW, succeeded him as the new Deputy Premier of NSW and the Leader of the

Nationals, and the Hon. Bronwyn Taylor, NSW Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women, became the Deputy Leader of the NSW Nationals.

While continuing to follow the existing COVID-19 restrictions framework, Premier Perrottet is emphasising the reopening of the economy and society and has announced a further easing of restrictions. The pilot program to allow people arriving in New South Wales from overseas to do 7 days home quarantine is progressing, as are preparations to accept 500 overseas students within this year. New South Wales is home to Australia's largest international city, Sydney, and it is at the forefront of efforts to reopen Australia to the world.



**Japan-Australia Leaders Video Teleconference Meeting
(5 October 2021; Cabinet Public Relations Office)**

- **The inauguration of Prime Minister Kishida**

In Japan, at the 4 October Extraordinary Session of the Diet (Japan's parliament), the new Leader of the Liberal Democratic Party, Mr Kishida Fumio, was elected as the Prime Minister of Japan. The very next day, 5 October, the [Japan-Australia Leaders Video Teleconference Meeting](#) was held, following the Japan-US Summit Telephone Talk.

During the Japan-Australia meeting, Prime Minister Morrison congratulated Prime Minister Kishida on his appointment to office, and both leaders confirmed that they would further strengthen the Japan-Australia “Special Strategic Partnership” and continue to work together toward the realisation of a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific.”

Regarding bilateral relations, the two leaders affirmed that they would further (1) deepen cooperation in the areas of security and defence and economy, (2) strengthen cooperation with allies and like-minded countries, including through the Japan-Australia-India-US “Quad”, and (3) cooperate on global issues including climate change. During the discussion, Prime Minister Kishida stated that Japan welcomes the establishment of the Australia-UK-US trilateral partnership (AUKUS). Both leaders also shared their strong opposition to any economic coercion and any unilateral attempt to change the status quo by force in the East and South China Seas.

On 8 October, Prime Minister Kishida delivered his [Policy Speech](#). Declaring the third priority policy area to be diplomacy and security that fully protect the Japanese people, he stated he would vigorously promote a “free and open Indo-Pacific” in cooperation with Japan’s allies and with like-minded countries, including notably the United States as well as Australia, India and the countries of ASEAN and Europe, and making use of the Quad of Japan, Australia, India and the US.

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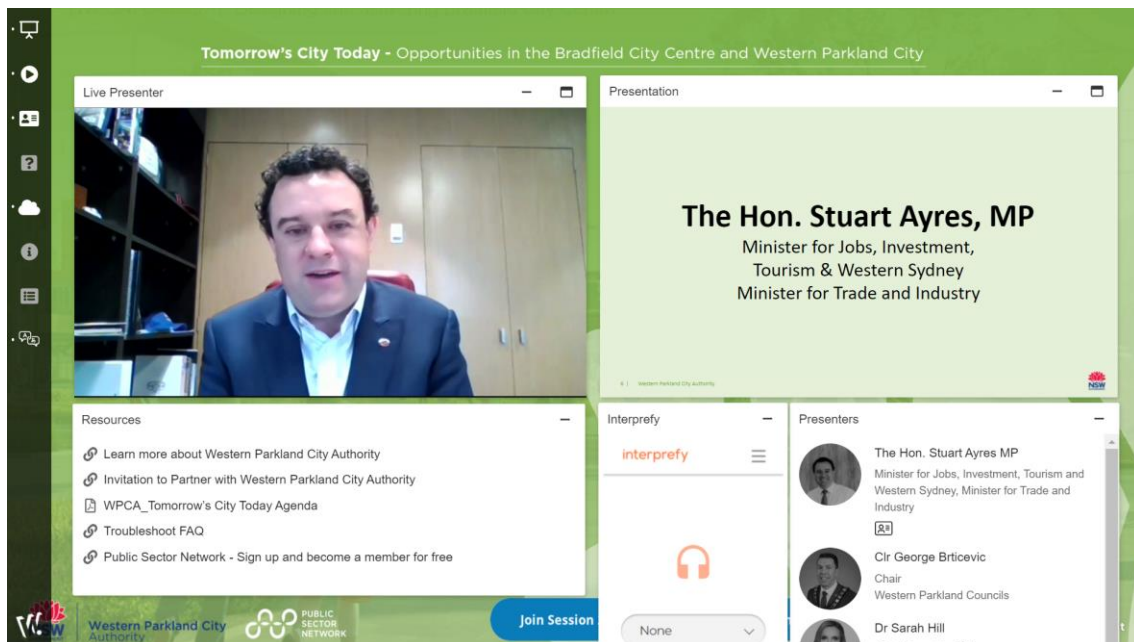
The 58th Annual Australia-Japan Joint Business Conference
(5 October 2021; Japan-Australia Future Leaders Program on Twitter)

- **The 58th Annual Australia-Japan Joint Business Conference**

On the same day as the Japan-Australia Leaders Video Teleconference Meeting (5 October), the 58th Annual Australia-Japan Joint Business Conference was held online. After greetings from both committee chairs, there were greetings from [Prime Minister Morrison](#) and [Ambassador Yamagami](#) representing the governments of both countries. The Hon. Steven Marshall MP, Premier of South Australia, also gave a message on behalf of South Australia. The keynote speech was delivered by the Hon. Dan Tehan MP, the Australian Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment.

The conference included speeches and panel discussions with participants from both Japan and Australia on three topics: (1) energy security, (2) economic recovery post-COVID, and (3) strengthening global supply chains. The next generation of leaders also gave a presentation about the future direction of Japan-Australia cooperation. The [Joint Statement](#) adopted by the Conference confirmed the key conclusions and announced that the next Joint Business Conference would be held in Tokyo next October.

Alongside the main conference, sideline events such as the [breakfast webinar about hydrogen and ammonia](#) and the [industry briefing on the Australian infrastructure pipeline](#) shared up-to-date and detailed information. I also participated in the event throughout the day, and I realised that this annual conference has become a centripetal force in Japan-Australia business cooperation.



**Western Sydney development update event
(8 October 2021; screenshot of Western Parkland City Authority video)**

- **Western Sydney development update event**

On 8 October, the NSW Government [organised an online update event regarding Western Sydney development plans](#). The line-up of speakers included the NSW Minister for Western Sydney Stuart Ayres, Dr Jennifer Westacott AO, Chair Western Parkland City Authority, and Dr Sarah Hill, CEO Western Parkland City Authority, as well as the CEO of Western Sydney Airport and a representative of Sydney Metro. Over 5 hours, the latest information was shared – for example, about a [market sounding opportunity for companies that are interested in real estate development and investing in the centre of Western Sydney \(Bradfield City Centre\)](#), whose scale is valued at more than A\$1 billion. There are great expectations for Japanese companies and all sessions during the event were simultaneously translated in Japanese. You can still view [recordings of the event in English](#).

Participating in this event, I again realised that with the development of the new airport planned to open in Western Sydney in 2026, large-scale investments continue to be made in greenfield sites over a vast area; this is an ambitious initiative to implement world’s best practice in urban development and it is about to really take off. As procurement is set to begin from next year, companies involved in a wide range of fields such as energy, housing, transportation, manufacturing, retail, finance and transportation infrastructure are beginning to make their moves.

I feel that key to fostering participation by Japanese companies is making them aware of the huge business opportunities in Western Sydney, providing early and specific information, and matching them with Australian partner companies. I would like to continue to promote dialogue and cooperation between the NSW Government and Australian companies, and Japanese companies.



Japanaroo+ announced
(Japanaroo [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#))

- **Japanaroo+ announced**

Thanks to the efforts of everyone involved, Japanaroo 2021, which began on 20 August, was a great success with around 10,000 unique users attending the online events. In the evening of 2 October, an “Otsukaresama Party” was held online for the organisers of the Japanaroo 2021 events, and I presented [a summary of Japanaroo 2021](#). Of the more than 50 events during Japanaroo 2021, the top three most viewed events in terms of website access numbers were all tourism-related. From this result, we can expect an increase in travel to Japan post-COVID.

Heading into the new week, 5 October saw the [announcement that Japanaroo+ will be held from 3 to 19 December](#), enabling groups to hold on-site events that had to be cancelled due to COVID-19. An Ikebana exhibition at the Sydney Royal Botanic Garden, tea ceremony demonstrations in the Blue Mountains, a talk about Japanese art at the Art Gallery of NSW, food events around the city highlighting the cuisine of

Nagoya, Fukuoka and Okinawa, a Japan expo and concert at Sydney Town Hall, and Matsuri Japan Festival in Chatswood – these are all part of the series of events planned for Japanaroo+. The prize campaign offering a ticket to Japan has also been extended.

I will work together with all the stakeholders and organisers to prepare for Japanaroo+, so that it may enhance Japan's presence in Australia, contribute culturally and economically, and lead to a dramatic increase in travel to Japan next year.

18 DEC.

JAPAN CLUB OF SYDNEY

Matsuri Japan Festival in Chatswood 2021

The Matsuri Japan Festival in Chatswood 2021 is an occasion to celebrate Japanese culture and cross cultural friendship. This event is for everyone who loves Japan as much as we do. You will find many Japanese festival activities at the Matsuri Japan Festival including food stalls, traditional arts and crafts workshops, a vibrant kimono stall and stage performances.

Date & Time
18 December 2021
from 11am to 6pm

- Drop by our Japanese tea, Ikebana, calligraphy and Origami workshops to learn more about traditional Japanese arts.

Matsuri Japan Festival in Chatswood

(To be held on 18 December 2021; Japan Club of Sydney Facebook)

● Towards the reopening of Japan and Australia

As mentioned above, NSW and Japan both have new leaders. With the launch of new efforts towards restarting the economy and reopening society post-COVID-19, I think that each and every one of us will experience significant changes in our work and daily lives.

First, we must continue to comply with the various COVID-19 regulations and limit the risk of infection. As we do so, we should predict and adapt to the direction that the economy and society are moving as they work to reopen. It is important to be at the forefront of these developments.

If all proceeds well, travel between Japan and Australia should become easier as restrictions gradually ease from the end of this year into the first half of next year. Once this happens, it will be much simpler for people to visit family, to travel and to go on study exchange. Now is the time to review and prepare well while keeping an eye on every new development, so that we can make great progress when travel is possible again.

I will commit all my energy to doing what should be done now as together we move towards the reopening of Japan and Australia. I thank you for your continued support of Japan-Australia relations.

Kiya Masahiko, Consul-General of Japan in Sydney

(Ends)