

Consul-General of Japan in Sydney's Newsletter

No. 51 Australia-Japan business and cultural exchange with synergy effect

1 November 2021

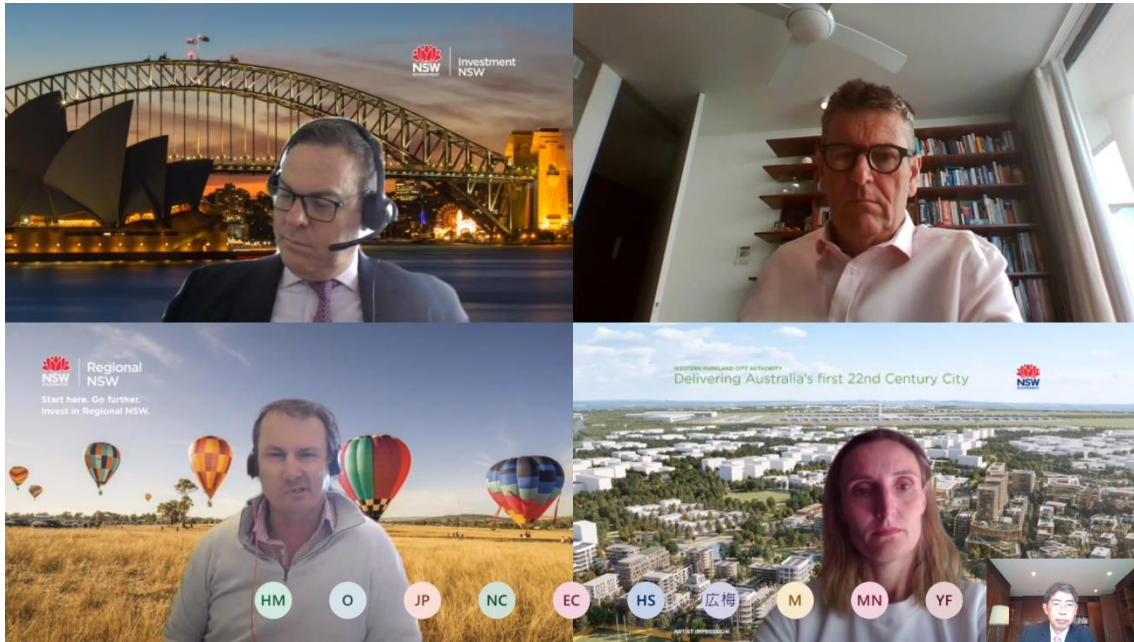
COVID-19 restrictions have just been eased further. From today (1 Nov.), Australians, permanent residents and their families who are fully vaccinated will be able to leave and enter Australia without applying for permission. When arriving in NSW, international arrivals will not have to quarantine. Furthermore, people can now move freely between Greater Sydney and regional NSW. The full vaccination rate in NSW has already reached 87.7% and the rate of first vaccinations has reached 93.6%.

I feel that cooperation and exchange between Japan and Australia will accelerate post-COVID-19. In response to the pandemic, online meetings quickly become the norm. Last month, the first online meeting was held between representatives of major public and private organisations that promote business between Japan and New South Wales. Joining this online trend, the Australia-Japan Business Cooperation Committee (AJBCC) and the Japan External Trade Organisation (JETRO) collaborated to hold a webinar, which is now on track. Furthermore, as various in-person meetings resume in Australia from this month and travel between Japan and Australia begins in earnest from next year, we can expect synergy effects between online and in-person meetings.

It is the same for cultural events. With the lifting of the lockdown last month, the Japan Foundation Sydney reopened and its Japanese Sports Posters exhibition started. The annual Japanese Film Festival, which also moved online last year, will be held in cinemas this year. In an increasingly digital society, I once again realise the benefits of meeting in person.

There is also a synergy effect between business and cultural exchange. As prosperous societies, in both Japan and Australia various aspects of culture, such as cuisine, the arts and sports, have become businesses in their own right. They also bring about opportunities to deepen mutual understanding and trust, thereby further promoting business.

Business and cultural exchange are inseparable. In this issue of my newsletter, while introducing the latest trends in Japan-Australia business and the resumption of in-person cultural events post-COVID-19, I would like to consider with you how synergy effect is being realised between business and cultural exchange.



**Japan-NSW Business Public-Private Partnership Meeting
(20 October 2021)**

● **Japan-NSW Business Public-Private Partnership Meeting**

On 20 October, representatives of major organisations promoting Japan-NSW business meet for the first time online. Participants from the NSW Government included Mr Geoff Roberts AM, Chief Commissioner of the Greater Sydney Commission, Dr Sarah Hill, CEO of the Western Parkland City Authority, Mr Ian Smith, Director of the NSW Office of Regional Economic Development, and (acting as moderator) Mr Michael Newman, Senior Trade and Investment Commissioner – North Asia. Participants from the Japan side were Mr Shirai Hiroshi, President of the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Sydney Inc, Mr Miyake Hitoshi, General Manager of Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation, Sydney Branch, Mr Takahara Masaki, Managing Director of JETRO Sydney, and me (acting as moderator). Participants exchanged frank opinions about opportunities for Japanese companies to trade and invest in NSW, as well as about issues and solutions to take advantage of these opportunities.

Even under the difficult conditions due to COVID-19 restrictions, I have been regularly communicating with the NSW Government office responsible for trade and investment via phone and video meetings. However, with the appointment of Commissioner Newman and the increasingly broad nature of the business opportunities in Greater Sydney infrastructure, hydrogen, important minerals and so on, what is now required is to bring stakeholders together in one place. This framework has become necessary to avoid “messaging games”, to share information and recognition regarding challenges, and to respond quickly with concrete measures.

On 15 and 16 November, the general assembly of the Federation of Japan Chambers of Commerce and Industry in Australia will be held in Canberra, and on 19 November, the 5th Japan-Australia Infrastructure Networking Meeting will be held in Sydney - both are planned as in-person events. I would like to utilize the results of the recent exchange of opinions during these upcoming meetings. Going forward, I intend to continue promoting high-level, close collaboration and cooperation while making best use of both online and in-person opportunities.



**Australia & Japan Circular Economy Opportunities – webinar
(10 November 2021)**

● **Australia & Japan Circular Economy Opportunities – webinar**

The AJBCC-JETRO webinar series is on track. In August this year, the [first webinar was held on the topic of hydrogen](#) and it was a great success with around 350 people participating. In October, the [Annual Australia-Japan Joint Business Conference](#) was held online, but the next one will be held in Tokyo in one year's time.

The next AJBCC-JETRO webinar, to be held on Tuesday 10 November, will be on a topic that a survey during the first webinar revealed to be of great interest – [Australia & Japan Circular Economy Opportunities](#). The Hon. Susan Ley MP, Federal Minister for the Environment, will be one of the Australian participants, and cases of Victoria and a waste oil recycling company will be introduced. On the Japanese side, presentations by Sojitz and Asahi Beverages are being planned.

In the future, topic-specific webinars such as these will continue, and in addition, a new webinar series focussing on Japan-Australia startup cooperation is currently in the planning stages. We cannot allow a sense of complacency to set in with the current state of Japan-Australia business; opening up new frontiers should be the mission of our two prosperous nations. Going forward, this consulate will continue to deepen efforts so that Japanese and Australian companies can join forces and work together.



Japanese Sports Posters exhibition
22 October 2021 – 22 January 2022

● **Japanese Sports Posters exhibition**

Having been closed for a long time due to the lockdown, the Japan Foundation Sydney's library reopened on Thursday 10 October and its gallery reopened on Friday 22 October. On the 22nd, I went to see the Japan Foundation's new exhibition, "[Japanese Sports Posters](#)", which was opening on the same day as the gallery reopened.

Visitors can enjoy how six Japanese graphic designers have captured the dynamism of sports in a 2D-printed format through the 24 posters on display which include posters from the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. This exhibition is debuting in Sydney and will travel to Paris and Toronto. Please take the opportunity to mark the lockdown lifting by visiting the gallery.

While you are there, why not drop into the [library](#)? With around 18,000 books, the library has the largest collection of Japanese language books in Australia. It includes many children's books (picture books etc.) and books can even be borrowed by post.



The Japan Foundation Sydney – Japanese Film Festival 2021

28 October – 5 December 2021

- **Japanese Film Festival 2021**

The Japanese Film Festival 2021 has also begun. Happily, it will be held at cinemas this year. There are 5 main festival locations – Canberra, Perth, Brisbane, Melbourne, and Sydney. In Sydney, JFF21 will run from Thursday 25 November until Sunday 5 December at 4 cinemas.

The Japanese Film Festival was first held in 1997 with 3 free films screened by the Japan Foundation Sydney. From those beginnings, it has grown to be one of the largest Japanese film festivals in the world, and pre-COVID, JFF attracted more than 30,000 people around Australia.

Last year's online JFF was also popular. As a result, a one-week special [online screening](#) will be held between Monday 15 and Sunday 21 November, screening 5 films – “Dance With Me”, “Gon, The Little Fox”, “Little Nights, Little Love”, “The Great Passage” and “Tora-san in Goto”. This will mean that anyone anywhere in Australia can enjoy them and I hope many people do.



Japan Expo – scheduled for 17 December 2021

- **Promoting Australia-Japan business and cultural exchange with synergy effect**

Having supported both business and cultural exchange here in NSW and the NT, I found a great potential of their synergy effect.

When we look at the Japan Foundation Sydney's Japanese Sports Posters exhibition and Japanese Film Festival, Japanese companies and local companies with a connection to Japan are supporting these events as sponsors. The Matsuri Japan Festival event that has been held for many years at Darling Harbour (Sydney) also receives sponsorship and participation from the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Sydney and from diverse companies. As Japan and Australia increasingly value each other's culture and lifestyle, such collaboration will surely only deepen.

When companies develop their business, rather than only doing their own business, it would be more beneficial to collaborate with various cultural exchanges – this will broaden their sphere of activities and encounters, and as a result, people will become more familiar with such companies. Furthermore, in many circumstances cultural exchange groups face major funding and operational constraints, and having corporate support is very reassuring.

This year's [Japanaroo+](#) in December embodies this synergy effect between business and cultural exchange. For example, [Japan Expo](#), which is scheduled to be held at Sydney Town Hall on 17 December, is an attempt to promote businesses such as

Japanese cuisine and tourism to Japan as visitors enjoy the Japanese culture – there will be exhibition booths which will showcase Japanese culture, food and tourism. The consulate would like to extend any possible support for this type of initiative.

During my many years working in various posts, I have felt that there are values that lie 'sleeping' in the spaces between different fields, and through the very act of bringing them together, we can spark and realise new values. By linking Japan and Australia, and business and cultural exchange, I intend to support new developments in both spheres. I would be grateful to all of you reading this newsletter if you would help spark this synergy effect as you go about your daily work and lives - drawing together business and cultural exchange, and Japan and Australia.

Kiya Masahiko, Consul-General of Japan in Sydney

(Ends)