

Consul-General of Japan in Sydney's Newsletter

No. 71 Japanaroo 2022, visit to Darwin and farewell

21 September 2022



Okinawa Festival (3 September 2022)

My three years in Sydney are coming to an end and I will be returning to Japan today. I would like to sincerely thank you all. Thanks to your support, I could overcome many challenges including those caused by the pandemic, and I was able to play my part in strengthening Japan-Australia ties.

Before leaving my post, I was able to participate in multiple Japanaroo 2022 events and visit Darwin. In this my final newsletter, I would like to report on those events and say farewell.



Japanaroo Trivia Night (7 September 2022)

●Japanaroo 2022

[Japanaroo 2022](#) was held from Saturday 3 September to Sunday 11 September. I went around to see or participate in as many events as I could and greet everyone involved in organising, exhibiting or participating in the events.

On the first day, the opening event JAPAN EXPO 2022 was held at The University of Sydney's Great Hall, and despite the rainy weather, more than 5,000 people attended and it was a great success. Queues formed at all the booths, which included Japanese food and tourism booths, crowds gathered at the stage, and I strongly felt the potential for future development. That evening in the same hall, the Okinawa Festival sold out with more than 300 people attending. The audience truly enjoyed the wonderful performances by actors who came not only from Sydney, but also from Okinawa and Perth.

On Wednesday 7 September, Japan Trivia Night was held in a city hotel and almost 100 people took part with many members from the joint organisers, JETAA NSW and AJS-NSW. The various quizzes about Japan were led by an Australian-style MC and the night was greatly enjoyed by all.



Matsuri Japan Festival in Chatswood (10 September 2022)

The day before Japanaroo finished on Saturday 10 September, Matsuri Japan Festival in Chatswood was held at Chatswood Mall. Many Japanese people live in this area. On a central stage, group after group gave performances of music, dance and cheerleading. There were booths with *takoyaki* and *yakisoba*, others with workshops including ikebana, calligraphy, *sumi-e* (ink brush painting) and tea ceremony. Local people took part, enjoying the cultural exchange.

The opening ceremony was attended by Japanese Ambassador YAMAGAMI Shingo and Willoughby Mayor Tanya Taylor who both gave speeches, and together with representatives of three Japanese organisations in Sydney (JCCI, JSS and JCS) and me, they took part in the *kagamibiraki* – the traditional opening up of a sake barrel with wooden mallets for good fortune. I realised that this Matsuri event has become an occasion for the local Japanese community to come together as one.



Memorial service for the I-124 submarine on the occasion of the port of call by *JS Kirisame* (11 September 2022)

- **Visit to Darwin**

From Sunday 11 to Wednesday 14 September, I visited Darwin. The visit coincided with the port of call by the destroyer escort *JS Kirisame* for the multilateral maritime joint Exercise Kakadu hosted by the Royal Australian Navy.

On Sunday 11 September, a commemorative service, organised by Fleet Escort Force Commander FUKUDA Tatsuya in town for Exercise Kakadu, was held in front of the memorial for the I-124 submarine in the presence of Australian dignitaries and naval personnel. I also took part.

The memorial plaque was erected on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the sinking of the I-124 submarine and the Bombing of Darwin, and it was in front of this memorial that members of the *JS Kirisame* conducted the three volley salute. I was pleased to see that this is now a place that confirms the partnership between Japan and Australia.



Farewell call on NT Chief Minister Natasha Fyles (12 September 2022)

It was my 10th visit to the Northern Territory, my 9th to Darwin. (One visit was to Alice Springs and Uluru.) Despite the severe COVID-19 inter-state border control that were in place in the NT, I visited the NT on average once every 4 months, and was able to work on strengthening ties between Japan and the NT.

As it was the final visit before the end of my tenure, on Monday 12 September, I made farewell calls on Chief Minister Natasha Fyles, Deputy Opposition Leader Gerard Maley, Legislative Assembly Speaker Mark Monaghan, and Darwin Mayor Kon Vatskalis.

During my visit with Chief Minister Fyles, we were able to discuss the results of her visit to Japan in July this year, which was her first overseas visit, and I felt that the hard work over the past 3 years had been worthwhile. Furthermore, Opposition Leader Maley and Mayor Vatskalis also see the importance of ties with Japan, and they look forward to further strengthening future ties, including business and people-to-people exchange.



**Viewing material relating to Fujita Salvage
at the Northern Territory Archives Centre (13 September 2022)**

On Tuesday 13 September, I visited the Northern Territory Archives Centre for the first time. During my previous visit to Darwin in June, I learnt that in 2010 Mr FUJITA Senichiro donated materials relating to Fujita Salvage to the archives centre, and I wanted to check their contents so that more people would be aware of the history of reconciliation between Japan and the NT.

At the archives centre, I was welcomed by the Library & Archives NT Assistant Director Wendy Garden and Director Heritage Branch Michael Wells. They explained that not only are the donated photos and film carefully preserved at the archives centre, a special exhibition was arranged when the items were donated and the materials ([website](#), [film](#)) can be easily accessed online. The fact that Mr Fujita took a large number of photos and movies at the time and left them as records was probably because he was aware of the historical significances of the salvage operation.

To this day, the interior of the church is still decorated with the 77 crosses that were made out of bronze salvaged from a recovered ship and donated when the church was established in 1960. I felt the weight of the history of reconciliation and exchange anew when I visited the Darwin Memorial Uniting Church to say farewell before I leave my post.



Presenting the Consul-General Commendation to the Australian-Japanese Association of the Northern Territory [AJANT] (13 September 2022)

The same day, my final evening in Darwin, the presentation of the Consul-General's Commendation to [Australian-Japanese Association of the Northern Territory \(AJANT\)](#) was held at a hotel in the city.

AJANT has held Japan-Australia cultural exchange events based in Darwin over many years. In 2017, on the 75th anniversary of the sinking of the I-124 submarine and the Bombing of Darwin, AJANT erected the I-124 submarine memorial with the cooperation of the Governments of Japan and Australia; in 2020, they planted the Tree of Healing at the same site; and this year, on the occasion of the 80th

anniversaries, they erected a new memorial with the names of the 80 crew members who perished onboard the submarine.

Over the past three years, whenever I have visited Darwin, I have been sure to meet with members of the AJANT committee to exchange views and get to know them, and I have also supported their events such as their film festival by giving or sending remarks. Particularly memorable is the work preparing to erect the memorial which involved regular online meetings with representatives of AJANT, the Embassy of Japan in Australia and Heritage NT. It was an honour to present them with the commendation before my tenure ends.



Japan Expo 2022 and Japanaroo Committee closing party
(16 September 2022)

● **Farewell remarks**

As my tenure was drawing to an end, many of you invited me to farewell parties. Many of you also attended my farewell reception at my official residence. Thanks to all of you, I was able to spend a very enjoyable time remembering the various events we have worked on together over the past three years. Thank you very much.

Working across various fields here in Sydney, I was only able to achieve what I did thanks to your support. If you have the time, please do take a look at my farewell remarks which were uploaded as a short [video](#) and as [text](#).

This newsletter is my 71st issue. On average, I published two every month. I hope that the [back issues](#), which document the background of various activities, might prove useful towards further strengthening our ties in the future.

Going forward, I intend to work hard at my new appointment, making use of the experience I have gained and maintaining the relationships I have been fortunate to make here. In this age when we can stay connected wherever we are in the world, I hope to have the pleasure of working with you for many years to come. I wish you well in your future endeavours.

Kiya Masahiko
Consul-General of Japan in Sydney