

Speech by Consul-General Kiya Masahiko

50th Anniversary of the Epping and Ikebukuro Rotary Sister Club Relationship

17 May 2021 (Monday)

Ms Toula Serna, President of Epping Rotary

Mr David Clark, District Governor of Rotary International

Ms Monica Saville, Past District Governor (and member of Epping Rotary)

The Honourable John Alexander MP, Member for Bennelong

Distinguished Guests, Ladies & Gentlemen

Let me begin by congratulating the Epping and Ikebukuro Rotary Clubs on marking their 50th anniversary as sister clubs.

It is wonderful to see active exchange between your two Clubs. I am sure you are looking forward to resuming mutual exchange visits post-COVID.

As I came to Australia one year and half ago and studied the history of Australia, I was greatly impressed by the success of Australia for many decades. It has continued to be a “lucky country” by responding to changes and taking the lead in multiculturalism and free trade.

I am glad to note that Japan has been with Australia throughout this success. First in trade: importing iron ore and coal, beef and wheat, and natural gas, to name but a few. Japan is still the top importer from NSW.

Also in investment: across sectors from insurance and housing to food, infrastructure, energy and ICT, the Japanese private sector has become more active in making full use of business opportunities in growing Australia.

Cultural exchange and tourism also developed. In addition, security ties have become more important in recent times, as exemplified by the development in the QUAD framework.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

What shall Japan and Australia do for the next step? I believe that, given the importance of Japan and Australia in the Indo-Pacific region and the world, we should be ambitious in taking the lead on many fronts.

Hydrogen is a good example. Japan and Australia are currently undertaking a joint hydrogen supply chain project to transport hydrogen produced in Australia to Japan for power generation and other uses, replacing fossil fuels.

Smart infrastructure can be introduced as part of Greater Sydney development with Japan's latest technology and investment combining with Australia's innovation capability.

Japan and Australia can make full use of our respective networks and strong relationships with the United States, South East Asia, South Asia, Europe and the rest of the world to deliver our strength globally.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This is made possible thanks to our mutual respect and trust that we, including Rotary Clubs, have nurtured for many years.

Japan and Australia are very lucky, as time differences are just a few hours, our countries' characters are complementary in many respects, and both our countries lie at the heart of the growing Indo-Pacific, and last but not least, we share values of rule of law, freedom, human rights, and democracy.

So, let me conclude my brief remarks by reiterating our joint responsibility to the world and also the importance of our friendship and trust, which serve as the basis of our cooperation. Your activities in Rotary Clubs are so important in this respect, and I wish you all the best for further success!

Thank you.