

Dear Friends and Supporters of Japan in NSW, NT and Australia,

As we welcome Christmas and the changing of another year, I take this opportunity as the representative of the Consulate-General of Japan in Sydney to thank you for your ongoing support.

2021 was another year profoundly affected by COVID-19. The Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games will be remembered as being a symbol of unity as the world worked to overcome the pandemic. For more than three months from the end of June, stay-at-home orders were issued for Greater Sydney, and recently the new Omicron variant has emerged. In cooperation with the other Japanese missions in Australia, this Consulate is working at full capacity, providing the latest information and supporting international departures and arrivals among other efforts.

Japan-Australia exchange continued to deepen despite these adversities. High-level meetings included Summit Meetings between our prime ministers in June and September, and immediately after Prime Minister Kishida's inauguration, our two countries' prime ministers met in Glasgow in the UK. In addition, the Japan-Australia-India-U.S. (the Quad) Summit Meeting was held in person in September. It advanced cooperation across various areas, including towards realising a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific".

In the business arena, cooperation has also progressed steadily, making use of online tools that have become widespread in response to COVID-19 restrictions. Webinars were held related to natural gas, hydrogen, critical minerals, circular economy and Western Sydney development, among other topics, and many Japanese companies participated. To realise these events, this Consulate collaborated with the NSW Government and the NT Government, Japanese Government organisations such as JETRO, the Australia-Japan Business Cooperation Committee (AJBCC) and other stakeholders.

On the cultural front too, online activities increased. One such undertaking is the "Japanaroo" initiative which is a public-private partnership to connect business and cultural exchange to create synergistic effects. From August during the lockdown through to October, Japanaroo 2021 featured many online events, and now in December, on-site events are being held as part of Japanaroo+. In the lead-up to the Tokyo Games, the Australian Olympic Committee (AOC) connected Japanese and Australian school students in some 600 classes through the "Tomodachi Connect" online exchange program.

In order to strengthen ties with New South Wales and the Northern Territory, over which this Consulate has jurisdiction, this year I have not only visited Greater Sydney, but have also been fortunate to visit Darwin, Cowra, Orange, Bathurst and Lismore, among others. I report regularly on these events in my newsletter, which is published fortnightly on our website. If you would like, please take a look. Next year, seven cities in NSW will mark commemorative years with their respective sister city in Japan. I look forward to visiting each NSW city on these occasions to help foster ever broader ties of friendship between Japan and Australia.

In 2022, February marks the 80th anniversary of the bombing of Darwin and June marks the 80th anniversary of the attack on Sydney Harbour. I would like to take the opportunity to reflect on the scourge of war and reconfirm the spirit of reconciliation between Japan and Australia, as well as renew my determination to advance our relationship to a future of ever closer cooperation. I will continue to work with many people who have built our history of friendship and with those who will create our shared future. I will do my utmost to work towards ever stronger Australia-Japan ties, and I would greatly appreciate your ongoing cooperation and support.

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Consul-General of Japan in Sydney



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