

Speech by Consul-General Kiya
JNTO Japan Networking Event
25 February 2022 – 12.30 (speech 12.45)
Saké Restaurant & Bar, The Rocks

1. Introduction

Good afternoon, everyone.

It's great to see so many representatives of the travel industry here.

This year will be the year travel takes off again.

After two difficult years due to COVID-19, it is becoming easier to travel.

As borders reopen and we can expect more travel between our two countries, Japan looks forward to being able to welcome Australian travellers once again.

2. Appeal of Japan

Japan is a favourite destination for Australians.

I don't want to suggest that Australian travellers are solely led by their stomachs, but there is no doubt that Japanese food is a major attraction for Australians travelling to Japan!

In addition to food, skiing is another popular reason for Australians to choose Japan as a holiday destination. Other sports or activities, such as cycling and walking Japan's ancient mountain trails, are also attractive options.

Japan's traditional culture of arts and crafts continues to exert its appeal, and Australians who enjoy cultural tourism will be spoilt for choice. Not only are such traditions well preserved, they continue to find new expressions as living aspects of contemporary Japan.

The Japanese spirit of hospitality is encapsulated in the word - OMOTENASHI. A warm, genuine welcome, OMOTENASHI, and an attention to those small details that make for a comfortable and memorable stay – these are waiting for Australians when they travel to Japan.

Many Australians have already discovered this for themselves.

3. Appeal of regional Japan

The numbers tell us this. So many Australian tourists are repeat visitors – in 2019, around 43% of Australians were repeat visitors.

These repeat visitors are looking beyond the traditional tourist spots to discover new places and new experiences in Japan. And this is where the appeal of regional Japan comes to the fore.

I hope that many Australians will enjoy exploring the variety of experiences that Japan's regions offer – not least the regional differences in Japanese food culture.

4. Strong growth

I, for one, am optimistic that travel between Japan and Australia will rebound strongly.

The trend pre-COVID was very solid. In the 5 years between 2014 and 2019, the number of Australian travellers to Japan doubled, from around

300,000 to more than 600,000.

Also, during the COVID lockdowns, of the many online and in-person events that were part of the Sydney-based Japanaroo 2021 and Japanaroo+, tourism events such as virtual tours and events at restaurants introducing regional cuisine were very successful.

I am pleased to say, Australians' interest in Japan hasn't waned!

5. Concluding Remarks

I hope that this networking event by JNTO, bringing together tour operators and Japanese suppliers, creates new connections.

It is hoped that knowledge gained here today will allow you to produce and offer tours and packages of even higher quality, that will inspire Australians to seek out their own Japan again and again.

(End)