

**52nd NSW Japanese Language Speech Contest Opening Address**  
**Kiya Masahiko, Consul-General of Japan in Sydney**  
**7 August 2022**

みなさん、おはようございます！シドニー総領事の紀谷昌彦と申します。日本の総領事をしています。3年前にシドニーに来ました。今57歳です。

(Thanking the organisers and participants)

It is my great honour and pleasure to be invited to the 52nd NSW Japanese language speech contest.

It is my second time to attend.

Last year I was very impressed by the speeches – particularly by their contents. Giving a speech even in your first language is a challenge, but to do it in a new or second language is even more so.

Hearing young people giving speeches in Japanese was a joy for me.

Maybe even more than hearing my native language being spoken, what impressed me most was how much thought had gone into the speeches.

I look forward to hearing more interesting speeches this year.

Thank you to the Steering Committee for organising this event which is such an important opportunity for students to utilise their Japanese skills.

I was very pleased to learn that there are more students taking part this year.

I would like to thank the teachers for encouraging and supporting students in this contest.

The contest is now in its 52nd year having survived the difficulties of recent years.

This is evidence of everyone's commitment and enthusiasm for the teaching and learning of the Japanese language here in NSW.

Thank you very, very much.

(My speech experience)

As I mentioned at last year's contest, I myself took part in a speech contest in English when I was a university student.

Later in life, I started making public speeches in Belgium about 10 years ago, and when I was the Ambassador of Japan to South Sudan, I made so many speeches myself and listened to so many speeches of others. Here, in Sydney, too.

Through these experiences, I have learned why making a public speech is so important. It is because you can change the world together for the better by the power of words.

Only by making your ideas known to others by speaking up can others get to know you and work with you.

I am doing this in English, and you will now do this in Japanese.

Just by taking part you are making a big step forward today. I hope it is one of many exciting and enjoyable steps along your road learning Japanese.

Japan and Australia are important partners. We can create great things together.

And young people like you - you are the future of Australia-Japan relations. I wish you all the best!

Thank you very much.