

Consul-General Kiya's Speech
Consul-General's Commendation Conferment Ceremony and Celebratory Dinner
Ms Kumi Taguchi

The Residence, 02 September 2022

To begin, I would like to welcome you all to my residence.

We are here to recognise the achievements of Ms Kumi Taguchi.

It is an honour to award Kumi with a Consul-General's Commendation for her contributions to the friendship and mutual understanding between Japan and Australia.

I have been wanting to present this commendation for some time now, but it has been difficult to find a time that suited us both. I am so glad that we are able to meet like this one more time before I have to leave Sydney.

I don't want to come across as some kind of crazy fan, but let me tell you, Kumi, that I became aware of your activities almost immediately after I arrived. You are a wonderful role model of a Japanese Australian contributing to this country's narrative and multiculturalism.

On important occasions, you have embodied the Japan-Australia relationship and been an inspiration for Japanese residents.

To give just some examples:

You have engaged directly with the Japanese community such as when you gave the congratulatory speech at the 50th anniversary of the Sydney Japanese International School in May 2019.

Your excellent documentary made with ABC TV called “Kumi’s Japan” was screened the same month that I arrived in October 2019. While your story is of course unique to you, the search for identity and living between and with two cultures are common to so many people in Australia.

In August 2020, you were a co-host of ABC TV’s “Australia Remembers: 75th Anniversary of the End of WWII”. At that time, I felt a strong appreciation for the role that you have played through your work in the media as a bridge between Japan and Australia.

As part of the Tokyo Olympics coverage on Channel 7 last year, you contributed to mutual understanding, commentating on the cultural and artistic elements of the Opening and Closing Ceremonies.

Your ongoing high-profile media presence continues to inspire Japanese Australians through your current role as host of Insight on SBS.

As a representative of the Government of Japan, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude for your contribution to mutual understanding, Kumi, and for the ties of friendship this has helped foster.

Kumi, I am sure that you still have much more to contribute and I wish you the very best for your future endeavours wherever they may take you.

(END)