

National Day Reception on the occasion of His Majesty the Emperor's Birthday

11 February 2020

[Acknowledgements redacted.]

1. Introduction

(Weather)

I am happy the weather has been kind to us. I know that the rain we just had was a welcome sight for so many who have been facing drought and bushfires.

(Bushfire)

My heartfelt sympathies go out to the victims of the bushfires. I wish the affected communities the very best as they start along the road to recovery.

Our Government has extended its support, and I am grateful to all those companies, organizations and individuals who have given support to relief and recovery efforts.

I hope that many people will take the opportunity to visit the affected towns and areas where tourism is such a vital industry.

(First National Day reception under the new emperor)

This is the first national day reception to celebrate the birthday of the new emperor of Japan, His Majesty Emperor Naruhito, in the Reiwa era. His Majesty turns 60 this month and I would like to take this opportunity to wish His Majesty continued good health.

(Thanking participants)

It is wonderful to see so many friends of the Australia-Japan relationship here this evening.

Since my arrival in mid-October last year, I have been fortunate to meet committed people engaged in all aspects of our multifaceted relationship in business, culture, sport, Japanese language, sister-city, and security ties. Indeed, today the Australia-Japan relationship is characterized by Special Strategic Partnership. Thank you all for your important contributions.

2. Tokyo 2020

I found that Australians are sport lovers, and this year sport is high on the agenda, as Japan is set to host the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, and Tokyo is the sister-state of NSW. The Olympic Games will take place from 24 July to 9 August, and the Paralympic Games from 25 August to 6 September.

This follows the 2019 Rugby World Cup, that we all remember, and will lead to the 2021 World Masters Games in Kansai.

More than 600,000 Australians visited Japan last year. Japan looks forward to welcoming even more Australians to its shores this year, with direct flights increasing. I hope that Japan will become a favourite destination for them.

3. Business

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Business ties between Australia and Japan are both long-standing and deepening, particularly between NSW and Japan.

Western Sydney Development was an important topic when the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Economic Mission came to Sydney

just last week.

Through our business collaboration, we can take on important challenges of energy and the environment with technology and innovation. We are working not only for ourselves, but also for the world and the planet.

4. Culture

We are grateful to many individuals and organizations promoting a wide range of Japanese culture, such as food, tea ceremony, flower arrangement, music, martial arts, calligraphy, and even more!

Japanese cultural festivals and performances are regularly held not only in Sydney but in many other cities, advancing and enriching multiculturalism in Australia.

We also appreciate Japanese language schools and teachers. Thanks to your sustained efforts, on a per capita basis, Australia has the largest number of people studying the Japanese language in the world.

Our mutual understanding is further promoted by sister city exchanges. I attended sister cities' anniversary celebrations last year and felt their strength and importance. I will continue to support sister-city activities.

5. History

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the end of the Second World War.

We send our most sincere condolences towards the many souls who lost their lives during the war, and we are grateful for the spirit of tolerance and for the friendship that Australia has shown to Japan.

And we are very glad to be where we are today.

Across all areas, the Japan-Australia relationship is deeply rooted in mutual trust and friendship between our two peoples, which is the basis of our further contribution to the world.

6. Concluding Remarks

Before ending, let me thank the organisations and companies providing support for this reception: Sydney Japanese International School, Go-Shu Australian Sake, Jun Pacific Tokyo Mart, All Nippon Airways, Japan Airlines, Prince Hotels and Resorts, Gifu Prefecture with Hida-wagyu beef, JR Tokai, Grow Green Tea Company, Lion – a subsidiary of Kirin Holdings, Panasonic, JNTO tourism organization, and CLAIR local government office.

I would like to conclude by thanking all of you who gathered here today and I look forward to working with you further this year!

(End)

[Link to Gallery showing pictures from this event.](#)