

Letters and Essays from Sydney 2.0 – Edition 1

7 October

(Translation published 11 October)

Today it is two weeks since I assumed my post on 23 September.

The day after arriving, I visited Cowra and took part in the “Sakura (Cherry Blossom) Festival”. The next day, I had the honour of participating in a memorial service and laying a wreath.

During these past two weeks, I have met many people, including government officials, business representatives, and Japanese people active in various fields such as culture, the arts, academia, food and people-to-people exchange. With each day so richly filled, the fortnight has flown.

I will have the opportunity to introduce these various encounters in later editions.

Going forward, I would like to use my “Letters and Essays from Sydney 2.0” to communicate with you in essay format my thoughts and feelings, as well as points I would like to remember, that arise through daily encounters as I go about my duties as Consul-General.

As this is the first edition, I would like to share with you all my “first impressions”, which are very much personal impressions based on the very short time I have been in Sydney. Even during the process of writing this, I received feedback from those around me, such as “You’re looking at things through rose-coloured glasses or just on the surface”. I am aware that this is true, but still, I would like to record my frank “first impressions” of Sydney. You might have equally frank opinions, differences or comments in response to my “first impressions”, and I would be delighted to hear them when we meet in the future.

1 The city is clean

In Sydney, there is hardly any rubbish on the ground, it is tidy and clean, and it is a comfortable place. “Everything is in order” – that’s the perfect phrase to describe it. People you pass by also seem “orderly”, and I feel at ease.

2 A city where it’s easy to integrate

Even for someone like me, who is in Australia for the first time, it takes no time to integrate yourself into the city. Here in Sydney, the individual that I was in Japan fits in well – I can be who I am. I have the impression that there is a tolerance which is kind to beginners like me. Things seem to rub along well together – if something new becomes necessary, it is nurtured. This easy-going and generous spirit seems to exude from the streets themselves.

3 A city that is kind and open, and full of vitality

Lost on a street, staring at Google Maps, I am frequently asked “Are you lost?” And in reverse, there are people who come up to me (and I am clearly a foreigner) to ask the way. This city is open and kind; it doesn’t make distinctions about anyone. The faces of the people you pass on the street are lively, and the city is full of vitality.

4 Ingredients are abundant and food is delicious

An abundance of “Made in Australia” vegetables, fruits, meats and other ingredients satisfy you, body and soul. This is incredibly important to be able to lead a healthy life.

5 Friendly towards Japan

I have experienced this for myself and it was in keeping with what I heard before coming here. No, I have felt this even more than I anticipated. When it comes to the Japan-Australia relationship, the tide is rising. I will not take this for granted. I feel it is my own extremely important mission to enhance the presence and reputation of Japan and her people.

For me, this posting in Sydney represents many firsts. It will be (1) my first time working in the southern hemisphere, (2) my first time at an overseas posting where the days are long and sunny, (3) my first time at a small-medium sized office, (4) my first time to be engaged in such a broad portfolio (beyond political diplomatic negotiations), and (5) my first time as head of an overseas mission.

So, there they are: the “first impressions” of this beginner’s first two weeks.

I welcome your criticism and comments.

I would be delighted if you were to read and, I hope, enjoy future editions of “Letters and Essays from Sydney 2.0”.



Skywriting a marriage proposal in a blue Sydney sky ... something I never saw even during Japan's bubble (boom) period [photo taken on 2 October]