

Speech by Consul-General Masato Takaoka
JMSDF Training Squadron Reception
Thursday 11 September 2014

Rear Admiral Hideki Yuasa, Commander of the Japan
Maritime Self-Defense Force Training Squadron,

The Honourable Don Harwin, President of the
Legislative Council of New South Wales,

Rear Admiral Stuart Mayer, Commander of the
Australian Fleet, Royal Australian Navy,

Members of the New South Wales and Federal Parliaments,

There are many very important guests I would like to
acknowledge. Please do not be offended that I don't as I
have to finish my speech in only 3 minutes.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to welcome all friends and
supporters of the Japan-Australia relationship on the
JS Kashima.

I would like to thank Sydney for accepting the port call of the Japan Training Squadron, whose mission is not only to train young officers over a long voyage around the world, but also to promote goodwill between Japan and Australia. Incidentally, later this year another Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force vessel will visit Australia to participate in the centennial celebration of the first ANZAC convoy which included the escort of HIJMS Ibuki.

Japan and Australia are excellent partners.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's visit to Australia in July was highly successful and historic. Prime Ministers Abe and Tony Abbott have developed a solid personal relationship of trust and are committed to elevating our ties to a higher level.

During his address before the Australian Parliament, which no other Prime Minister of Japan had had the privilege of, Prime Minister Abe spoke of the special relationship between our two countries as neighbours at a longitude of 135 degrees east. Australia is such a

big country and Sydney is at 151 degrees east to be precise, but this special relationship still applies here!

The Japan-Australia Economic Partnership Agreement, which was signed during the visit, is expected to give a significant boost to already extensive and mutually beneficial trade and economic ties.

Political and security cooperation is becoming an increasingly important aspect of our partnership.

Japan and Australia, sharing common values, join together to ensure peace and prosperity in our region.

At the Australian Parliament, Prime Minister Abe appreciated the attendance of two New South Welshmen: Mr Robert McNeil of Fire and Rescue New South Wales, and Ms Dawn Fraser, an Australian sporting great – they are both with us this evening.

Mr Robert McNeil led a team of 76 people and two dogs that flew to Minamisanriku for rescue operations in the immediate aftermath of the 2011 tsunami disaster, a kindness that Japan will never forget.

Ms Dawn Fraser's power "dazzled" Prime Minister Abe at the 1964 Tokyo Olympics and for him she epitomized Australia. The 2000 Sydney Games were certainly inspiring for Australians and for Japanese as well. And the 2020 Tokyo Games will in the words of the Prime Minister "bring forth a new dawn for Japan and a new dawn to the future of Australia-Japan relations".

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Mr McNeil and Ms Fraser exemplify the extensive network of people-to-people ties which has been developed thanks to the efforts of many, many, many individuals. These links have contributed enormously to the strength of today's wider Japan-Australia relationship, and with that thought in mind, it is truly an honour to welcome all of you – 'friends of Japan' – here this evening.

Thank you.

542 words