

Media Release

19 August 2016

Foreign Minister's Commendation

(on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the signing of the Basic Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation between Japan and Australia)

On August 19, the Japanese Foreign Ministry announced the awardees of the Foreign Minister's Commendation on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the signing of the Basic Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation between Japan and Australia which was signed in 1976. The awardees in New South Wales include the following 12 individuals and 2 groups.

The Foreign Minister's Commendation is to honor individuals and groups for their prominent contribution in promoting friendship and goodwill between Japan and foreign countries.

1. Individual

(1) **Mr Akira Isogawa** (Fashion Designer)

Since opening his first boutique in Sydney in 1993, Mr Akira Isogawa has been contributing to the promotion of Japan-Australia exchanges through fashion. His design often incorporates the essence of Japanese tradition and has been influential in the Australian and international fashion industries.

(2) **Mr Ian Williams** (Vice President, Australia-Japan Business Co-operation Committee (AJBCC))

Mr Ian Williams, as a lawyer, has been assisting the investment by Japanese companies into Australia since 1995. He also contributed to sport exchange between Japan and Australia, having represented both the Japanese and Australian national rugby teams and was a board member of the Australia Japan Foundation. He assumed the position of Vice-President of the Australia-Japan Business Co-operation Committee in 2006 and has been promoting economic relations between the two countries.

(3) **Ms Satsuki Odamura** (Koto Player, Representative of the Australia Koto Music Institute)

Ms Satsuki Odamura moved to Australia to establish the local branch of Sawai Koto School in 1988. Since then she has been contributing to the promotion of musical exchanges between Japan and Australia through the teaching and performing of Koto, Japanese traditional harp, in Australia. In 2007, Ms Odamura established the Australia Koto Music Institute. She works with a number of musicians of other genres and orchestras, promoting the appeal of Koto in Australia.

(4) **Mr Ian Cleworth** (Wadaiko Player, Co-Founder of Taikoz)

Mr Ian Cleworth co-founded the taiko ensemble Taikoz, with Mr Riley Lee in 1997. As a performer and teacher, he has been contributing to the introduction and the promotion of Japanese drumming in Australia. The performance of Taikoz has been highly recognised across Australia and internationally.

(5) **Ms Aiko Goto** (Violinist, Australian Chamber Orchestra)

Ms Aiko Goto has become a member of Australian Chamber Orchestra in 1998. As a Japanese violinist, she has been contributing to the promotion of musical exchanges between Japan and Australia. Ms Goto also dedicates herself to teaching young musicians, helping the development of Australian youth performers.

(6) **Mr David Jacobs** (CEO, Australia-Japan Business Co-operation Committee - AJBCC)

Mr David Jacobs, after graduating from the University of Sydney, became an economist at the Australia-Japan Economic Institute (AJEI) in 1974. Since then, he has been continuously making a contribution to promote Japan-Australia economic relations through his roles as Director of AJEI, an Australia-Japan business consultant and CEO of the Australia Japan Business Co-operation Committee (AJBCC). He also held the positions of President and Vice-President of the Australia Japan Society of NSW.

(7) **Mr Mitsuo Shoji** (Ceramist)

For almost 30 years, Mr Mitsuo Shoji served as a lecturer in ceramics at the Sydney College of the Arts, having dedicated his life to the promotion and dissemination of Japanese ceramics in Australia. Pieces of his works are displayed at the National Museum of Australia and many other museums in Australia, which demonstrates his contribution to cultural ties between Japan and Australia.

(8) **Ms Chihiro Kinoshita Thomson** (Professor, University of New South Wales)

Since Ms Chihiro Kinoshita Thomson joined UNSW in 1993, she has been dedicating herself to teaching the Japanese language and nurturing post graduate students in the University, contributing to the dissemination of Japanese language education and Japan studies. She has served as the Head of Department of Japanese Studies, the Head of School of Modern Language Studies at the University and the President of Japanese Studies Association of Australia.

(9) **Mr Philip Mitchell** (President, Australia Japan Society of NSW)

Mr Philip Mitchell became President of the Australia Japan Society of NSW in 2009. He has been making a great contribution to strengthen friendship and mutual understanding between Japan and Australia through his role as President by organizing many functions and events, as well as supporting Australian education in Japanese language and culture. Mr Mitchell has also a long and distinguished record of assisting business between the two countries as an international business lawyer.

(10) **Dr Riley Lee** (Shakuhachi Player, Co-Founder of Taikoz)

In 1980, Dr Riley Lee was the first non-Japanese to attain the rank of dai shihan or Grand Master. Dr Riley Lee founded the Australian Shakuhachi Society in 1996 in Sydney, contributing to the promotion of Japanese traditional performing arts by introducing and disseminating the shakuhachi (bamboo flute) in Australia and throughout the world. He is also a co-founder of Japanese traditional drumming group Taikoz.

2. Group

(1) **Chado Urasenke Tankokai Sydney Association**

Since being founded in 1973 as the Sydney branch of Chado Urasenke Tankokai, Urasenke Tankokai Sydney Association Inc. has been contributing to the promotion of Japanese culture and the friendship between Japan and Australia through the art of Chado, Japanese tea ceremony. The association offers opportunities to experience tea ceremonies to local residents in Sydney, Newcastle, Canberra, Blue Mountains and Dubbo, etc. and one such example is the annual tea ceremony at the Royal Botanic Garden in Sydney.

(2) **SMASH**

As the organiser of the pop culture event "SMASH!", SMASH has been contributing to the introduction and the dissemination of Japanese pop culture in Australia. "SMASH!" has been held every year since 2007 and had over 15,000 people in attendance in 2015. SMASH has encouraged broad interest in Japan among young Australians, and provided motivation to learn the Japanese language.