

Japan REPORTS

The Consulate-General of Japan in Sydney's
Quarterly Newsletter

Volume 44 No.3
Spring 2009

Japan: A New Prime Minister and Ruling Party

Mr Yukio Hatoyama is Japan's new prime minister, the Democratic Party of Japan having been elected to power after a resounding win at the national lower house poll held on 30 August. Prime Minister Hatoyama and his Cabinet were sworn in on 16 September 2009.

The Democratic Party of Japan's (DPJ) victory had been widely expected prior to the election; the scale of the win was however a surprise to many. The clear rejection of the previous Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) is seen as a mandate for change from the Japanese public.

The DPJ won 308 of the 480 seats at stake in the House of Representatives election, up from its pre-election strength of 115 seats. The LDP on the other hand was down from 300 to 119 seats.

The new Japanese government is a coalition between the DPJ and two minor parties: the Social Democratic Party (SDP) which won 7 seats and the People's New Party (PNP) which won 3 seats.

Given the number of seats that changed parties, the make-up of the Diet is significantly different. The DPJ fielded a large number of first-time politicians, and approximately one third of the 480 seats were won by newcomers. There is also a historically high number of female lawmakers with 54 elected to the House of Representatives.

- ► **The Hatoyama Cabinet**
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**Japanese Prime Minister
Mr Yukio Hatoyama**

Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama

Prime Minister Hatoyama was born in Tokyo in 1947. He comes from a family of politicians—his grandfather Ichiro was Prime Minister in the 1950s and his father Iichiro was a foreign minister in the 1970s—but he began his own career as an academic.

After graduating from Tokyo University in 1969 with a bachelor of science in

engineering, he went on to obtain a PhD in engineering from Stanford University. He met his wife, Miyuki, while studying in the United States. He worked at the Tokyo Institute of Technology and became an associate professor at Senshu University, Tokyo.

Mr Hatoyama entered politics in 1986 as a member of the LDP, but in 1993 he left with other defectors after disputes over political reforms to form a new party, the now defunct New Party Sakigake. He contributed to the Morihiro Hosokawa coalition government which ruled after the LDP was ousted in 1993 for the first time since 1955. He was a founding member of the DPJ, established in 1998, and became party president in May this year.

Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama is the 93rd prime minister of Japan, the 60th individual to hold the position.

For information about the DPJ's platform see:
www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/hatoyama/statement/200909/16principles_e.html

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