

Consul-General Kohara's lecture on Australia-Japan Relations at the University of Sydney

On 2 September, Dr Kohara gave a lecture to students and academics at the University of Sydney on Australia-Japan relations, their history and future.

Below is a summary of his speech. The full text can be found on the consulate's website:
www.sydney.au.emb-japan.go.jp/english/about_us/cgspeech_usyd02092010

The Consul-General's speech was a comprehensive overview of the Australia-Japan relationship. He also discussed the parameters used to measure and evaluate the relationship. He contends that this is crucial given the changing nature of bilateral and multilateral ties.

Dr Kohara began by explaining how in the four months since he had assumed his role, he had become more conscious than ever of the importance of Australia-Japan relations.

In his speech, the Consul-General spoke about Australia-Japan economic relations, including two-way trade, examples of major trade items and investment in new quality projects such as the Ichthys LNG project in the Northern Territory, areas of new economic activity, and the increasing need to look beyond bilateral trade.

He pointed out that if trade between Australia and Japan is simply looked at in terms of bilateral trade figures then there is a danger of being misled. For example, many Japanese brand products imported to Australia are made in a third country and these

do not appear in the traditional bilateral trade figures. The Japanese economic and trade presence is not actually decreasing. Rather the proportion of global operations by Japanese companies is increasing as they are truly multinational companies.

The Consul-General also looked at people-to-people exchange, including tourism and exchange programs such as the JET Programme. In the short time that he has been in Australia, he has been impressed by the number of exchange programs for young Australians and Japanese.

And finally he discussed the new strategic partnership between Australia and Japan which includes stronger political and security relations that have been developing since the 1990s. He examined Australia and Japan's role in the Asia-Pacific region particularly in regards to developing a new regional architecture that engages all players. Australia and Japan shared values such as democracy, human rights and the market economy are

important, and Japan and Australia should work together to see them adopted as a norm in the region, particularly as the international order is changing as emerging powers become more prominent.

The Consul-General concluded his speech by referring to a *Newsweek* survey that had appeared in the previous week. In its first-ever Best Countries special, Japan and Australia both ranked highly—national well being was considered broadly by asking the question 'which country would provide you the best opportunity to live a healthy, safe, reasonably prosperous, and upwardly mobile life?*' He said that while we should never be complacent, Japan and Australia were certainly fortunate to have each other as partners. Australia and Japan have much to offer each other, and Dr Kohara expressed his hope the new relationship which is developing between Australia and Japan would continue to provide leadership in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.

* www.newsweek.com/2010/08/16/best-countries-in-the-world.html
See section *How We Ranked the World*

From the Desk of the Consul-General

More details and photos of the Consul-General's recent activities can be found on our website.

Continued from page 1 culture can be. As such, I will do all I can to help take the Australia-Japan relationship to the next level through tourism, culture and education, and local level exchange.

Finally, I would like to wish you all well for the last months of 2010. There are many events coming up, and my office's calendar is full. It has been quite a cool spring for Sydney so far and personally I am looking forward to my first summer in Sydney—but I do hope the heat will not be as extreme as the 2010 summer that Japan has just been through!

My best wishes,

Masahiro Kohara

Dr Kohara giving a lecture at the University of Sydney on 2 September

Consul-General Kohara spoke at the High Speed Rail World Australia 2010 Conference held in Sydney on 24 August.

