One of the first official announcements and support before also visiting my made by Mr O'Farrell after becoming Premier was a donation of \$1 million to assist those who were affected by the terrible earthquake and tsunami in my home country.

Mr O'Farrell is a man of sincerity. When this disaster struck Japan, he called me to express his sympathies office to sign a condolence book.

wish to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude and appreciation for the incredible

The Consul-General concluded by saying that he looked forward to the Premier's first official visit to Japan.

Consul-General Kohara's activities

Speech to the Australia-Japan Society (NSW)

On 24 June, the Consul-General gave a talk to members of the Australia-Japan Society (NSW) on the topic Japan and the Japan-Australia Relationship After the Great East Japan Earthquake.



Kashima Antlers FC Courtesy Call

On 13 April, Mr Shigeru Ibata [left], president of Kashima Antlers FC, one of Japan's top football teams, visited Dr Kohara prior to the team's game against Sydney FC in the Asian Champions League.

The match had been postponed due to the 11 March disaster in Japan.

Kashima Antlers FC defeated the home side, Sydney FC, 3-0. The return match played in Tokyo on 10 May saw Antlers beat Sydney 2-1.

World Heritage in Japan-**Exhibition Opening**

On 15 June. Dr Kohara attended the opening of the beautiful World Heritage in Japan: A Photographic Exhibition at the Japan Foundation Sydney Gallery. Ms Tokiko Kiyota [right], Director of the Japan Foundation, Sydney, looks on.



Update on the 11

The 11 March earthquake and tsunami disaster and the resultant nuclear power plant accidents are now referred to collectively as the "Great East Japan Earthquake" following a decision by the Japanese government on 1 April 2011.

Casualties and Damage

The 11 March earthquake and tsunami devastated the east coast of the Tohoku district, the name given to the northern part of Japan's main island of Honshu. Damage was also incurred in the Kanto region, however, the major damage was to the prefectures of Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima.

The number of deaths is 15.689, the number of injured is 5,714 and the number of missing is 4,744 (as of 10 August according to the National Police Agency). Many people are still living in evacuation centres and temporary living arrangements; according to the Fire and Disaster Management Agency, the number of evacuees is 94,553 as of 4 August.

Support from Abroad Including Australia

Japan received expressions of sympathy and offers of support from around the world and it greatly appreciates the sincere and broad support it has received.

Rescue teams, medical assistance teams and disaster relief teams from 23 countries and regions, as well as several United Nations agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), have arrived in Japan. The US forces in Japan have also been extending assistance.

Australia was one of the first countries to send a search and rescue team. An Australian C17 aircraft has been providing transportation assistance in Japan and one of its tasks was the urgent transportation of a special pump needed for cooling TEPCO's Fukushima Dai-ichi Nuclear Power Plant from Australia.

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March disaster

Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard's visit to one of the most heavily affected areas, the town of Minami-sanriku, was the first by a foreign leader and received wide coverage in the Australian media. Perhaps less well covered here was the way the Prime Minister's visit was received in Japan.

Minami-sanriku's mayor was reported saying it was the first time he had seen so many happy faces in his town since the disaster struck. The Prime Minister of Japan, Mr Naoto Kan, said that her visit to Japan was highly significant as her presence expressed more clearly than any words could that Japan is safe to visit.

Infrastructure

Transportation infrastructure has been largely normalised. All international and major airports are working as normal. The Tohoku Shinkansen was back in operation by the end of April. Only certain train lines in Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima are not operational. The Japan National Tourist Organisation (JNTO) has extensive information on transportation at:

www.jnto.go.jp/eq/eng/02_transport.htm.

Due to efforts to save electricity, it is expected that Japan will avoid rolling blackouts. But visitors will notice the night lights are less bright and some escalators have been turned off in some train stations and buildings.

Japan: Open for Business ... and for Travel

Japan would like to emphasise that it is open for business and travelkeen to promote business as usual and to welcome visitors to its shores.

For an overview of the Great East Japan Earthquake see—

www.mofa.go.jp/j_info/visit/ incidents/index.html

where you can find detailed information about the government's response including FAQs regarding nuclear safety concerns.

Japan wins Women's World

In the team's first ever FIFA World Cup final appearance, Japan's national women's football team, Nadeshiko Japan, defeated the highly fancied United States' team 3-1 on penalties after a 2-2 draw.

The victory brought joy throughout Japan. The women's resilience coming back twice from behind lifted the nation, inspiring determination and a positive spirit as the country works to rebuild after the 11 March disaster.

The team's name Nadeshiko refers to a flower (dianthus) said to embody the ideal Japanese woman among whose traits is resilience.

Bright young minds

Ten of Japan's top young science students were in Sydney to attend the 36th Professor Harry Messel International Science School (ISS) at the University of Sydney from 3 to 16 July.

The year 11 and 12 students, five boys and five girls, had been chosen by Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology to receive the ISS scholarships. Students were selected on the basis of academic merit and leadership abilities.

The Japanese scholars were among 150 participants from 10 countries: Australia, which has two thirds of the participants, China, India, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, Thailand, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

Seeking to foster excellence in young science students, the ISS offers a full program of lectures by top academics. It also gives students the opportunity to make friends with others who share their passion and talent for science.

The Deputy Consul-General of Japan in Sydney, Mr Kazutoshi Inadome, hosted a reception to welcome the Japanese ISS scholars to Sydney on 6 July at the Consulate -General. The Japanese students each invited an Australian ISS scholar as their guest and ISS staff members were also in attendance.

Watching the students enjoying each other's company, it was clear that ISS is not only a way to encourage top science students; it also fosters international exchange.

Held biennially, the Professor Harry Messel International Science School has been running since 1962 and the first Japanese students, five students, took part in the 1968 ISS.

In 1973, Mr Kunio Uehara was one of the Japanese scholars and he obviously remembers his time at ISS with fondness. Having made a contribution to the Messel Endowment. Mr Uehara was invited to send a message to this year's Japanese ISS scholars which was read out at the reception.

He urged today's scholars to make the most of ISS's world-class program and to recognise the importance of its international structure. Mr Uehara also hoped the students would be able to make 'precious' friendships, or personal connections, while here in Sydney.



Mr Kazutoshi Inadome, Deputy Consul-General of Japan in Sydney, hosted a welcome reception for Japanese participants at the 36th ISS, their quests and ISS staff.