

# Japan REPORTS

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

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## From the Desk of the Consul-General

*Dear Readers*

It is almost two years since I assumed the post of consul-general in Sydney. Not only do I consider myself very lucky to work and live in such a great city, I know that I will reflect upon several events during my time in Sydney as some of the most important.

One such event is without doubt the reception that was held on 16 March to commemorate the Great East Japan Earthquake. It was an honour to welcome Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir AC CVO Governor of New South Wales. Her kind words made me feel anew the friendship Japan shares with the people of New South Wales.

It was an honour too that so many guests were present, because the reception was also an opportunity for me to thank on behalf of the Japanese Government our Australian friends for all their support after the earthquake and tsunami. Members of the Fire and Rescue NSW rescue team who went to Minami Sanriku, one of the most heavily devastated towns, attended and I really appreciated being able to thank them personally.

As I mentioned on the evening, it is no overstatement to say that there are too many to mention, but there have been so many instances that have shown the strong friendship Australia and Japan share. Still a year on, Australians are thinking of the people in Tohoku. What has most impressed me since that terrible day in March last year are the people-to-people ties (*kizuna* as we say in

Japanese)—ties that have given so much strength to the people of Japan. At the time of the commemoration, I received encouragement from many people, including a warm letter from the Premier of NSW, the Hon. Barry O'Farrell MP. Japan is very happy to have such strong *kizuna* with Australia.

As I emphasised in my speech at the commemoration, Japan is well on the way to recovery. We are on track to emerge stronger than before. I hope you will find the time to visit the photo exhibition the consulate is currently holding in Sydney called *Tohoku, Japan: Rebuilding for a better tomorrow* (see p.5) and see for yourself evidence of our recovery.

Intellectual exchange is one area in which Australia and Japan share strong ties. It was a great pleasure for me to host a Roundtable Discussion for PALM 6 with the Lowy Institute (see p.2).

At the awards ceremony for the Australia-Japan relations essay contest (see p.2), I also met some young thinkers, who will perhaps take part in intellectual exchange in future years. I was impressed to learn that it was the fifth consecutive year that a New South Wales school was named the School of the Year. This is evidence of the strength of Japanese studies in New South Wales.

Finally, I am looking forward to what autumn brings—perhaps a few days of warmer weather than our Sydney summer just gone?

*Masahiro Kohara*  
March 2012



Consul-General Kohara with Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir AC CVO Governor of New South Wales at the commemorative reception

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