

Japan REPORTS

The Consulate-General of Japan in Sydney's
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The new Consul-General of Japan in Sydney Mr Masato Takaoka

PROFILE On 11 February, Mr Masato Takaoka arrived in Sydney to assume his current duties as the Consul-General of Japan in Sydney. Mr Takaoka is a career diplomat who entered the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) of Japan in 1981.

Prior to Sydney, he was posted to Baghdad where he served as Ambassador of Japan to Iraq from 2012.

Mr Takaoka's other recent positions include Deputy Director-General of the Economic Affairs Bureau of MOFA (2008-2010) and Deputy Director-General of the International Affairs Bureau of the Ministry of Finance (2010-2012), both of which he held upon his return to Tokyo after completing his tours of duty as Minister for Economic Affairs at the Embassy of Japan in UK (2005-2008) and Minister for Political Affairs at the Embassy of Japan in India (2003-2005).

Mr Takaoka is a graduate of Tokyo University (International Relations) and earned a Master's Degree in Public Policy (MPP) from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

Mr Takaoka was born in Hyogo Prefecture. He is married with two children.

Dear Readers, As I write this I have been in Sydney for just over a month. I am enjoying the peace and tranquillity after my previous posting in Baghdad where my life was very restricted. I enjoyed the challenge of that posting, but I really appreciate being able to go outside and walk wherever I want when I want. There's a great sense of freedom in that simple fact.



Mr Masato Takaoka
Consul-General of Japan, Sydney

It is not my first time in Australia. A few years ago, I was a chief negotiator on the Japan-Australia Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA). The mutually beneficial and complementary economic relationship between our two countries has been a key driver behind the close ties we now enjoy.

Of course our bilateral relationship thrives in diverse fields. I have only been in Sydney for a matter of weeks, but already I am aware how multi-faceted the ties between Japan and New South Wales are, and I have been impressed by how active supporters of the Australia-Japan relationship are and by the strength of our

friendship. The depth of this friendship can be seen in the 40 sister-city relationships that NSW alone has with Japan. It is important to build on what we have achieved—we ought to take the relationship to a higher level.

I hope to travel widely in New South Wales to meet people to promote Japan-Australia relations and to learn more about this important state. I am also looking forward to visiting the Northern Territory in April.

Lastly, since being in Sydney I have been fascinated by Australians' love of sports. I don't think AFL will be for me, but I do have an interest in cricket. I have been posted to India where there's a great love of the game, and when I lived in London, my flat was opposite Lord's cricket ground. So one of the experiences I'm looking forward to while here in Australia is watching the Ashes from the Aussie side.

Masato Takaoka

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