

A message from Consul-General Masato Takaoka

Consulate-General Activities

Commemorative Service for the 74th anniversary of the Bombing of Darwin Day

Dear Readers,

The start of 2016 seems to have flown by and it has certainly been a busy time for the Consulate with a number of major events.

I would encourage you to visit our website gallery from time to time because we regularly post photos and round-ups of events that we are involved in. Unfortunately we only have limited space in this newsletter.

I often speak of the important contribution made by the Japanese community, including many outstanding artists, to the vibrant multiculturalism of Sydney and New South Wales. Sometimes, the contribution to local communities is very down to earth. On 6 March, it was my third time to take part in Clean-up Australia Day with many members of the Japan Club of Sydney and the Japanese Society of Sydney doing our part to clean up Lane Cove National Park (and then enjoying a barbecue afterwards).

On 24 March, it was a great pleasure to welcome back the icebreaker Shirase to Sydney after an absence of two years. The reception on board is a wonderful opportunity to meet and thank the many supporters of the Japan-Australia relationship from so many fields.

It is often the case that when you live overseas, you learn more about your own country and its culture because of the questions people ask you. With the strong interest in Japanese cuisine here in Australia, the growing interest in sake is perhaps not unexpected. I was pleased to see guests at the Art of Sake 2016 (see p.3) approach sake tasting with the same consideration and enjoyment as a wine tasting. Never did I imagine my wife and I would be hosting guests to a special performance by *geiko* and *maiko* at my residence while in Sydney—it was a special chance for us too.

Masato Takaoka

EVENTS AND NEWS ARE REGULARLY
UPLOADED ON OUR WEBSITE
www.sydney.au.emb-japan.go.jp



On 19 February, a commemorative service was held in the Northern Territory city of Darwin in observance of the 74th Anniversary of the Bombing of Darwin. The Consul-General of Japan, Mr Masato Takaoka, participated in the service.

In this year's service, as a sign of Australia and Japan's close friendship, Consul-General Masato Takaoka had the privilege of laying wreathes side by side with Senator Natasha Griggs, Federal Member for Solomon, Northern Territory who acted on behalf of Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and Minister for Veterans' Affairs Dan Tehan.

Seiko Boutique opens in Sydney



On 2 March, Consul-General Masato Takaoka attended the opening reception of the first Seiko Boutique in Australia located in Sydney's famous QVB. Mr Takaoka expressed his hope that Seiko's watches will mark the time in Australia just as the Seiko Clock Tower at

Ginza 4 Chome has been a constant presence in Tokyo marking the time over generations.

The Chief Operating Officer Mr Hirohiko Umemoto represented Seiko at the opening. The company envisages the boutique will be an advertising hub allowing Australians to experience the latest offerings from the watch manufacturer.

Geiko and Maiko at the Consul-General's Residence



Some fifty guests had the rare opportunity to see *geiko* and *maiko* from the Gion-east district in Kyoto give a special performance at the Consul-General's residence on 24 February. As Consul-General Takaoka explained before the performance, it was an opportunity unusual even in Japan.

Members of the 'Jewels of Kyoto' tour performed three pieces, traditional dances accompanied by music and singing. The *okami-san* (manager) gave insightful explanations between the pieces. Afterwards, guests were able to talk with the performers during a relaxed reception.

[See related story on page 7.]