

# 55 years of sister-city ties between Japan and Australia

*With 108 sister-city and state relationships between Japan and Australia today, it is difficult to imagine the different circumstances back in 1963 when the people of Lismore in northern New South Wales and Yamato-Takada in Nara Prefecture decided to establish the very first sister-city relationship between our two countries. In 2018, the Lismore—Yamato-Takada sister-city relationship marks its 55th anniversary. In June, major celebrations of this historic connection took place in Lismore with visitors coming from Japan for the occasion.*

The Consul-General of Japan in Sydney, Mr Keizo Takewaka, attended a number of events between 20 and 22 June. A delegation from Yamato-Takada City was present, led by the Mayor of Yamato-Takada, Mr Masakatsu Yoshida. Several events over the weekend were also attended by Japan's Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Iwao Horii.

At a dinner held at Southern Cross University, the Consul-General remarked in his speech that when Lismore and Yamato-Takada entered into their sister-city relationship in 1963, it was “a new beginning for our two countries’ relations which led further to the sister city network that Japan and Australia enjoy today.”



Cutting cake—Mr Masakatsu Yoshida, Mayor of Yamato-Takada, and Cr Isaac Smith, Mayor of Lismore; Consul-General Keizo Takewaka and Mayor Isaac Smith; Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr Iwao Horii listening to an explanation of early connections with Nara Prefecture by Fr Paul Pidcock; Mr Horii with Mayors Yoshida and Smith as he delivered a special message from Japanese Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr Taro Kono [clockwise from top left].



To the left you see members of the Yamato-Takada delegation with locals and Miku Chan—here in the form of a 6-foot lantern. Miku Chan is Yamato-Takada's town mascot. It was the first time that the town took part in Lismore's lantern parade, and Miku Chan was lit up and joined in the parade (looking very happy to be there). The lantern parade attracted some 30,000 people, a sizable crowd considering Lismore's population is just under 44,000.



So, how did Lismore and Yamato-Takada become sister-cities all those years ago?

It was thanks largely to the efforts of Catholic priest, Father Paul Glynn, that Yamato-Takada and Lismore became sister-cities. Fr Glynn was originally from Lismore. While he was serving as a missionary in Nara City, he became friends with the then Mayor of Yamato-Takada, Senzo Nakura, and he had the idea to establish the sister-city link. His brother, Fr Tony Glynn, was later instrumental in establishing the Canberra-Nara sister-city relationship, formalised in 1993.

While it is now just one of many sister-city relationships between Japan and Australia, Lismore and Yamato-Takada share a unique place in our history of exchange.

Photos of the Consul-General's visits and Consulate events are regularly uploaded to our website and Facebook.

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