

30th Emperor's Birthday National Day Reception

On 30 November 2018, Consul-General Keizo Takewaka hosted a reception at his residence in celebration of the 85th birthday of His Majesty the Emperor. Some two hundred guests from various fields attended the event.

In his speech, the Consul-General mentioned the Japan-Australia Summit meeting in Darwin between Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Prime Minister Scott Morrison, referring to the Special Strategic Partnership and close bilateral relations that Japan and Australia share. Mr Jonathan O'Dea MP, Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier and Treasurer of New South Wales, attended the reception representing Premier Berejiklian. After expressing his congratulations to His Majesty the Emperor, Mr O'Dea spoke of the close cultural bond between the two countries citing the impressive number of students taking Japanese as a second language in Australia as well as the popularity of Japan as a destination for Australian travellers.



At the reception, a variety of Japanese foods was served, including sushi and wagyu, together with saké. There were booths promoting Japanese airline companies, the shinkansen bullet train, Japanese food and other Japanese products. A live performance by a Japanese taiko drumming group also entertained the guests.

The 2018 National Day Reception was the last one to be held in the Heisei Era. His Majesty the Emperor will abdicate on the last day of April 2019 to be succeeded by Crown Prince Naruhito on the first of May.

As the Consul-General remarked in his speech: "Over the three decades of the Heisei Era, Japan-Australia ties have become closer and closer, and these ties continue to deepen, across every sector."

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe visits Darwin

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe visited Darwin on Friday 16 and Saturday 17 November 2018. His successful visit comprised a number of engagements and activities, including the following.

A **Japan-Australia Summit Meeting** was held between Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Prime Minister Abe, the first such meeting between the two leaders.

Together with Prime Minister Morrison, Prime Minister Abe laid a wreath at the Darwin Cenotaph in memory of all those who perished in the war, and the following morning Prime Minister Abe laid a wreath together with NT Chief Minister Michael Gunner at the memorial to the Japanese submarine I-124 which was sunk off the coast of Darwin in 1942 with its crew members on board.

Another important part of Prime Minister Abe's visit was the ceremony to mark the start of full operations at the Ichthys LNG project which will supply natural gas to Japan for decades.



Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Prime Minister Scott Morrison at the Summit Meeting in Darwin

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Eighth Japan-Australia "2+2" Foreign and Defence Ministerial Consultations in Sydney

On Wednesday 10 October 2018, Japan's **Foreign Minister Taro Kono** and **Defense Minister Takeshi Iwaya** met with their Australian counterparts in Sydney for the Eighth Japan-Australia "2+2" Foreign and Defence Ministerial Consultations. The ministers discussed Japan and Australia's shared strategic and security issues.

The English text of the Eighth Japan-Australia "2+2" Foreign and Defence Ministerial Consultations Joint Statement is available at:

www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/files/000407228.pdf

Also: It was a busy run-up to the end of the year for Japan-Australia relations in 2018. Another very important event was the **56th Annual Joint Business Conference AJBCC**, held in Sydney from 14 to 16 October. At the conference, more than 400 Australian and Japanese business executives exchanged their opinions about the economic relations between the two countries on the theme of "Taking the Long View", including **Dr Akio Mimura AC** (Chairman, JABCC and Honorary Chairman, Nippon Steel & Sumitomo Metal Corporation) and **Sir Rod Eddington AO** (President AJBCC and Chairman, Asia Pacific Advisory Council, JP Morgan). Women played an active role in the conference, moderating six of the seven sessions. The next conference will be held from 7 to 9 October 2019 in Osaka.