

Visit to Darwin by Ambassador Takahashi

His Excellency the Ambassador of Japan, Mr Reichiro Takahashi, paid an official visit to the Northern Territory from 18 to 20 February 2019. It was Ambassador Takahashi's first official visit to any state or territory since his arrival in Australia.

During his visit, Ambassador Takahashi met with prominent citizens of the Northern Territory, including Her Honour the Honourable Vicki O'Halloran, Administrator of the Northern Territory, the Hon. Michael Gunner MLA, Chief Minister of the Northern Territory, and Lord Mayor Kon Vatskalis, City of Darwin.



Photo courtesy AJANT

On 18 February, Ambassador Takahashi participated in a commemorative tree-planting ceremony for the I-124 submarine that was sunk off the coast of Darwin during WWII.

On 19 February, the Ambassador attended the commemorative service for the 77th anniversary of the bombing of Darwin at the Cenotaph where he laid a wreath, and a ceremony to mark the sinking of the USS Peary earlier the same morning.

While in Darwin, Ambassador Takahashi also visited the Ichthys LNG Project Site, Fujita Hall at the Darwin Memorial Uniting Church, and the Darwin Military Museum.



On 12 March, **Dr Yasuhiro Matsuda**, Professor of Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia at the University of Tokyo gave a lecture on ***The Dilemma between Security & Economy: Japan's Strategy Toward the New Cold War*** at the Centre of International Security Studies, University of Sydney.



Cowra

The Cowra Festival of International Understanding was held in Cowra from Wednesday 13 March to Sunday 17 March 2019, attracting many visitors to the town. The Festival has been held annually since 1965 and Japan was last the guest nation back in 1966. This year marks the 75th anniversary of the Cowra Breakout, and Japan was selected to again be the official guest nation for the Festival.

On the Saturday, a Japanese parade marched through the town, followed by a carnival in the local park. The ringing of the Cowra Peace Bell, conducted by Cowra Mayor Cr Bill West and H.E. the Ambassador of Japan, Mr Reichiro Takahashi, heralded the start of the parade and carnival.

Many local clubs and organisations took part, including local primary schools. Cowra High School marched carrying messages to past exchange students from Seikei High School who visited over the years, such as "Your friends still think of you, Harumichi" (visited 1972). There was a strong contingent visiting from Sydney, and also interstate visitors.



Photos courtesy Japan Club of Sydney

Japan Club of Sydney and Consul-General Takewaka enjoyed a great day in Cowra.

The carnival included many performances such as Japanese drumming and a karaoke competition. There was also a haiku competition. While the duck race had no particular Japan-connection, it did share the element of fun! Looking at the local newspaper *Cowra Guardian's* online photo album* from the day reveals lots of smiles throughout the parade and carnival.

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On the Sunday, Consul General Takewaka participated in a memorial service at the POW camp and cemetery.

* www.cowraguardian.com.au/story/5959007/a-little-taste-of-japan-at-cowras-festival-of-international-understanding/?cs=2753