

## Sporting ties

As excitement builds ahead of Rugby World Cup 2019 and Tokyo 2020, let's take a look at a couple of lesser known competitions that demonstrate the ongoing nature of sports exchange between Japan and Australia—this time swimming and badminton.

**Swimming:** In May, the 2019 Sydney Open Meet was held at the Olympic Park Aquatic Centre between 10 and 12 May. Members of the Japanese national team were among the international competitors and 20 swimmers from Japan participated. On 11 May, Consul-General Keizo Takewaka visited the venue to support the team as well as to award medals.



**Badminton:** It is not one of the most high profile sports in Australia and probably only the keenest fans were aware of the Australian Badminton Open 2019 played in Sydney from 4 to 9 June. Japanese players achieved top results in the competition, coming 2nd in the women's singles and men's doubles, and equal 3rd in the mixed and women's doubles, and 1st in the women's doubles. High profile or not, that's a great result!

And a final word goes to rugby: **women's rugby union**. At the time of writing Newcastle (13 July) and North Sydney (19 July) were getting ready to host the two test matches between the Japanese and Australian national teams.

## Festive ties

Festivals are a wonderful opportunity to share Japanese culture and to celebrate friendships.

### Lantern Parade in Lismore City

On 22 June, Consul-General Keizo Takewaka participated in the Lantern Parade of Lismore City. The Lantern Parade marked its 25th anniversary this year. Lismore City has maintained a sister-city relationship with Yamato Takada City of Nara Prefecture since 1963;



Consul-General Takewaka [right] and Mayor of Lismore, Cr Isaac Smith, helped to carry Miku-chan in the parade



in fact, it is the oldest of all Japan-Australia sister-city relationships. Yamato Takada City's mascot character "Miku-chan" was very popular among the people of Lismore, following on from its debut last year.

### Matsuri Japan Festival in Parramatta

On 1 June, many people gathered at Centenary Square in Parramatta to enjoy the "Matsuri Japan Festival in Parramatta 2019" organized by the Japan Club of Sydney (JCS). At the opening ceremony, Consul-General Takewaka gave a speech and opened a sake barrel (kagamibiraki) together with Lord Mayor of Parramatta Cr Andrew Wilson, Mr Masayuki Koyama, President of Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Sydney Inc and Mr Yushiro Mizukoshi, President of JCS.



This year is the second year for the festival. Festival-goers could try their hand at activities such as the Japanese tea ceremony, Ikebana, origami and calligraphy. There were also many stage performances to enjoy, and there was an excellent choice of Japanese food to warm people up on a cold but fun day in Parramatta.