

Essay Contest Awards Ceremony

The awards ceremony for the **6th Australia-Japan Relations Essay Contest for Secondary School Students in NSW and the NT** was held at the official residence of the Consul-General of Japan in Sydney, Mr Kiya Masahiko, on Wednesday 4 December 2019.

Some 80 guests attended the reception which was an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of the prize-winning students. Guests included parents, teachers, principals, NSW Education Department representatives and contest supporters. They heard speeches from the first-prize winners - **Ms Bella Lim (North Sydney Girls' High School)**, in the Junior Division, and **Ms Chloe Hoang (Pymble Ladies' College)**, in the Senior Division. School of the Year was awarded to **North Sydney Girls' High School** whose students excelled in the Junior Division.



Prize-winning students with the Consul-General and several sponsors

Congratulations to all the prize winners and a heartfelt **thank you** to all who support the contest. They include our remarkable pre-readers and judges, and our wonderful sponsors **Japan Airlines, JTB Australia, Kinokuniya Bookstores** and **Tokyo Mart**.

For the full results, see - www.sydney.au.emb-japan.go.jp/english/education/essay_contest_2019_results.htm

SCHOOL VISITS

The Consulate's school visit team travelled to several schools in Term 4 2019 to give calligraphy workshops and a presentation. At **The King's School** (31 Oct.), Years 9 and 10 geography students had many interesting questions. At **St Georges Girls High School** (19 Nov.), year 9 students did some great work in their calligraphy workshop as part of their Japanese studies. The Years 7 and 8 at **International Grammar School** (25 Nov.) also put in a great effort; the workshop was the last session of their Japan day—they had also done a *furoshiki* wrapping workshop at the Japan Foundation.

Schools in New South Wales* are invited to apply for our 2020 program (Terms 1 & 2).

www.sydney.au.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr_en/education_school_visit.html

*Schools in regional areas and the NT are welcome to apply for visits, however, we may not be able to meet all requests.



Matsuri in Sydney

Matsuri Japan Festival in Sydney was another great success at Tumbalong Park in Darling Harbour on 7 December 2019.



The Consulate had a presence at the festival, distributing free *Niponica* magazines introducing various aspects of Japan. We also conducted a calligraphy workshop and were grateful for the assistance of many volunteers.

The turnout for Matsuri was still strong despite the smoke haze on the day. It was a warm day but that didn't stop many people dressing up for cosplay. What was terrific to see was the number of people interested in travelling to regional Japan with steady lines at the stalls giving out information about various parts of Japan.

Congratulations to the organisers of Matsuri Japan Festival in Sydney on a fantastic effort. Here's looking forward to the 2020 Matsuri!

matsurisdney.com

Japan's bean-throwing festival —

Throwing food around is normally frowned upon, but at the Setsubun festival, held annually on 3 or 4 February, throwing beans about is positively encouraged!

Winters can be tough in Japan, and the coming of spring has always been eagerly anticipated. Spring's arrival means winter's cold and icy grip on the land is a memory for another year.

One way to observe this transition is the custom of Setsubun. Setsubun actually means 'seasonal division', but today the term is only used to mark the end of the period known as *daikan* or 'big cold'. This is the eve of Risshun, the 'first day of spring'.