Tokyo 2020 in 2021

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Due to the unprecedented situation of COVID-19, it was decided to postpone Tokyo 2020, which had been so eagerly anticipated by Japan and its capital. The Games will now be held next year, sometime before summer 2021. The postponement will be a new logistical challenge, but one that Japan will embrace to deliver a great Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2021.

It will be the second time that Tokyo has hosted the Summer Olympiad. In 1964, Japan was the first nation in Asia to host this amazing international event.

"United by emotion" is the Olympic and Paralympic Motto for Tokyo 2020 and it encapsulates the ideas and concepts that the host city wishes to share with the world. It expresses the hope that all who gather in Tokyo, or who follow the Games from wherever they are in the world, will come together and understand that there is more that unites us than divides.

The **torch relay** helps to build excitement and a shared sense of ownership of the Games as the Olympic flame traverses the host country. The flame arrived in Fukushima from Greece in time for the original relay start date of 26 March 2020. The flame will stay in Japan until the new start date, serving as a beacon of hope.

The opening and closing ceremonies will be held in Japan's **new Olympic Stadium** designed by world-renowned architect Kuma Kengo. It is located close to Yoyogi National Stadium which was built for the 1964 Games and is known for its amazing suspension design by Tange Kenzo (1913-2005), one of the most significant architects of the 20th century. Yoyogi Stadium will be used again for Tokyo 2020. It falls within the so-called Heritage Zone which makes use of pre-existing assets. The Tokyo Bay Zone is the other zone where there are many new structures built on reclaimed land.

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Who are those charmers in the middle? That's MIRAITOWA on the left and SOMEITY on the right. MIRAITOWA is the **Olympic Mascot** and SOMEITY is the **Paralympic Mascot**. They're already familiar faces in Japan and will become more so from here on. These friendly characters were chosen via a popular vote by Japanese school children who selected them from a final three choices.

J-pop culture has countless fans in Australia and many of our readers would see MIRAITOWA and SOMEITY as prime examples of kawaii. What's also interesting about the mascots is that they draw on some very traditional design motifs: the blue and white chequerboard is taken from *ichimatsu* patterns, and behold those pink ears and eyes - definitely cherry blossom petals.

Connecting with youth is an important part of the Olympic and Paralympic movement, and Tokyo 2020's inclusion of **new sports** should attract a wider audience. In the Paralympics, badminton and taekwondo will be included for the first time. In the Olympics, new inclusions—surfing, skateboarding, BMX park and sport climbing—are all a long way from the image of track athletes but there is no doubting the extraordinary athleticism the sports require.

Also new this year is karate, a martial art loved around the world and developed in Okinawa, Japan, during the Ryukyu Kingdom (see last newsletter, p.5). Fun fact: at the 1964 Tokyo Games judo made its debut!

Good luck to athletes and organisers as they work towards Tokyo 2020 in 2021!

Tokyo has changed greatly since it first held the Summer Games in 1964—Tokyo Skytree is now the tallest structure in the city (far left) and in all Japan, but places such as the Imperial Palace in the centre of the city provide a sense of continuity.

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Karate kicks off at Tokyo 2020

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