

## **A record of exchange as the Consul-General of Japan in Sydney (Edition 11) The relationship between Japan and the Governor of New South Wales**

24 February

This is my first *Record of Exchange* for 2026. Belatedly, I would like to extend my best wishes to you all for the year ahead.

In this first edition for 2026, I would like to write about the relationship between Japan and the Governor of New South Wales.

The current Governor of New South Wales is Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC, who assumed the post in 2019 and became the 39th person to hold the position.

The Governor of NSW is the representative of the Sovereign in the state of New South Wales, and as such, all consuls-general in Sydney pay a courtesy call on Her Excellency upon their arrival. In my case, I paid a courtesy call soon after my arrival in Sydney in October 2024.

Governor Beazley attends many events hosted by the consulates-general of different countries and she frequently delivers speeches on such occasions. Her speeches reveal a deep understanding of history and delve into the historical connections between the different nations and New South Wales, and it is always a highly educational experience. Let us consider as an example ties with Japan. Every year there is a memorial service for the sinking of an Allied vessel by a Japanese midget submarine during the attack on Sydney Harbour on 31 May 1942. At last year's service, Governor Beazley remarked that the sinking was not a mere coincidence of timing, but rather the result of meticulous reconnaissance conducted beforehand by the Japanese military, and I particularly remember the passage which mentioned the bravery of the reconnaissance pilot.



Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of NSW (June 2025)

Of course, the Governor attends many events other than those hosted by the consular corps, and if you view the Vice Regal Program on the Government House website, you will understand how busy her schedule is. Amidst this very busy schedule, last year the Governor and Mr Dennis Wilson, her husband, travelled to Tokyo from 7 to 9 December.

In Tokyo, as NSW and the Tokyo Metropolitan Government have been sister cities since 1984, the Vice Regal Couple held talks with Her Excellency Ms Yuriko Koike, Governor of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government. Governor Beazley enjoyed the reunion with Governor Koike which was their first time to meet since Governor Koike's visit to Sydney in February 2024 on the occasion of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the NSW-Tokyo Sister-City Agreement.



**The Vice Regal Couple [centre and far right] and Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike [second right]  
(December 2025)**

The Vice Regal Couple also met with the Chair of the Board of Trustees of Nihon University, Ms Mariko Hayashi. By way of background, Nihon University and the University of Newcastle have a Memorandum of Understanding aiming to find areas of cooperation through a strategic partnership, and in September 2021, Nihon University opened a campus in the heritage-listed building of the former Newcastle Court House. This is one example of the ties between NSW and Japan to be found beyond Sydney.

(To touch on another example of these ties, Governor Beazley also travelled to Cowra to attend the Cowra Breakout 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorations in August 2024.)

In addition to the above meetings in Tokyo, the Vice Regal Couple also met with executives of airlines which operate direct flights between Sydney and Tokyo with a view to deepen exchange with Japan. The discussions included how to encourage more Japanese to visit Sydney given the current situation where visitors from Australia to Japan significantly outnumber those from Japan to Australia. Another exchange of views was held with Cochlear, the maker of cochlear hearing implant systems, which has its head office in NSW.

To give a brief introduction about Cochlear, its headquarters are located at Macquarie University in Sydney. The company has more than 60% of global market share in the

manufacture and retail of cochlear implants and bone-conduction hearing aids. The company is also working closely with the Japanese Parliamentary Committee for Hearing Loss Countermeasures, and in May last year, I had the opportunity to visit the Sydney headquarters.

It was explained to me that the latest cochlear implants are being manufactured in Australia and that the research shows that people who receive hearing implants anytime from birth up until to the age of three are able to develop their hearing and speech at a level close to those born with normal hearing. Moreover, in Sydney, there is the Shepherd Centre, which provides speech therapy post-implant surgery. I was impressed by how advanced this field is. In Australia, already 99% of children under-3 with a profound hearing impairment use cochlear implants, and Cochlear sees significant unmet need in Japan where implant use amongst children is only just over 50%. Furthermore, hearing implants can help in the prevention of dementia among the elderly, so it is felt that there is latent demand in Japan.



At Cochlear (May 2025)

Following their trip to Japan, last month I invited Governor Beazley and Mr Wilson to my residence to hear about their impressions. Given they are usually so busy, I thought that they would not be able to accept such an invitation, but I was honoured when they did, I believe because their impressions of their trip to Japan were still fresh.

It appeared to me that the Vice Regal Couple both enjoyed their trip to Japan, and while propriety dictates that I avoid revealing details of our conversation at the residence, there is just one point I will share with you. Regarding how to increase the number of Japanese visitors to Sydney, I began by saying, rather pointlessly, that I wished the yen would strengthen a little more against the Australian dollar. Having said that, we did exchange views on how to promote the attractions of NSW from various perspectives.



During the Vice Regal Couple's visit to the residence (January 2026)

Incidentally, during a special open house on Australia Day, just before their visit to my residence, I toured Government House, which is the Official Residence and Office of the Governor.

Government House is a majestic building located in beautiful gardens close to the Sydney Opera House. Inside, the furnishings are splendid, and the dining room was particularly magnificent. The Government House is open to the public most Fridays and weekends, with special Jazz@theHouse days on the first Sunday of each month, and large public events on Australia Day and the King's Birthday weekend. You can find out more at the Governor's website ([Visit us - Governor of New South Wales](#)). My visit made me feel that the Governor is close to the people of New South Wales.



At the Government House open house (January 2026)

Also, during this open house, there was a portrait of Professor the Honourable Dame Marie Bashir AD CVO, the 37th Governor of New South Wales, who passed away on 20 January this year. At the time of the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011, then Governor Bashir extended warm words of encouragement for the people of Tohoku, and she attended the first

anniversary commemoration held by this consulate, demonstrating her commitment to relations with Japan. I would like to take this opportunity to express my deepest condolences.

This year marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Basic Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between Japan and Australia. New South Wales is home to Australia's largest city, Sydney, and there are many direct flights with Japan – indeed, it can be called the gateway to Australia. To further deepen the ties of friendship between New South Wales and Japan, I shall carry out my duties as Consul-General, hopefully with the continued understanding and support of the Governor, and I look forward to your continued support this year.