

7 April 2017

Dear friends,

I hope this e-mail finds you well.

The devastation of Cyclone Debbie is something that has shocked us all.

I would like to begin my message by expressing my sincere condolences for those who have--and who still are--suffering from this terrible disaster. Japan has also experienced similar disasters, and we know how hard it is to cope with the aftermath.

Japan's very first Australian consulate was established in Townsville, so our people feel strong links with the region. Our hearts and minds are with the people of Queensland and New South Wales during this difficult time.

My wife Ikuko and I visited Queensland last month, and I delivered a speech for the Griffith University Perspectives Asia Seminar, titled *Strengthening Japan-Australia Relations at a time of International Uncertainty*. I have attached a [link](#) for your interest. I also had the honour of dining with the Governor of Queensland, the Honourable Paul de Jersey AC.



Banquet hosted by the H.E. the Hon. Paul de Jersey AC

I was delighted to learn how so much is happening on Japan-Queensland relations. The number of Japanese language students is increasing in the state and Japanese is

now more popular here than any other Asian language.

We visited a very unique bilingual school--Wellers Hill--which teaches maths and other subjects in Japanese. Students are highly skilled and use both modern and traditional techniques in their learning, including an abacus to polish their arithmetic skills!



Visit to Wellers Hill State School



Meeting with Chancellor Varghese at UQ

I also called in on Chancellor Varghese at Queensland University to see what more could be done to strengthen our academic exchanges.

On the business side, Japanese multinational telecommunication provider, Softbank (already well known for producing the mass-production scale humanoid robot "Pepper"), is keen to link in with Wellers Hill and other Australian businesses to further develop its software.

Our already strong business links with the state are underscored by the Queensland Government's commitment to our trade relations. It has established a Trade & Investment Queensland office in Tokyo with an expert team of 15, and their focus is finding new Japanese investment opportunities.

I think this commitment and investment by the state of Queensland is exceptional, and the initiatives are great news for Japan-Australia relations.

Yours Sincerely,

/S/

Ambassador Kusaka