

23 February 2017

Dear friend,

From Thursday 16th to Sunday 19th of February, my wife Ikuko and I visited the Northern Territory. On this official visit, I attended a commemorative service for the 75th anniversary of the bombing of Darwin, representing the government and people of Japan. I also attended the memorial service for the anniversary of the sinking of the USS Peary, which was sunk off Darwin on February 19, the first day of the Bombing of Darwin during World War II. Furthermore, I attended the unveiling ceremony of the memorial dedicated to Submarine I-124 of the Imperial Navy of Japan. This memorial was erected thanks to the generous contributions of the Australian Japanese Association of the Northern Territory as well as other similar organisations. ([Speech text](#))

While in Darwin, I also paid a courtesy call on the Hon. John Hardy OAM, Administrator of the Northern Territory, the Hon. Michael Gunner MLA, Chief Minister of the Northern Territory, and Ms Katrina Fong Lim, Lord Mayor of Darwin.



In my speech on the occasion of the 75th anniversary, I offered my sincerest condolences for the many countless numbers of souls lost within the maelstrom of war. We, the Japanese people will never forget the immeasurable damage and suffering inflicted by Japan on Australia, including Darwin during the war. Japan resolutely resolved to never again repeat the tragedy of war, and we are committed to being a free, democratic and peace-loving nation, governed by the rule of law. ([Speech text](#))

Japan now stands side by side with its allies and partners, Australia and the United States as we strive to achieve lasting peace. I joined Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull for the commemorative service. Reflecting on how far Japan and Australia have come, Prime Minister Turnbull stated in a media release that the attendance of representatives of Japan and the U.S. was a “strong sign of the friendship our countries share and the respect we have for each other”.



At the commemorative service, I shook hands with a 96-year-old veteran. Japan and Australia fought side by side during World War I, but were fierce adversaries during World War II. Since reconciliation following WWII, the relationship between these two countries continues to strengthen and deepen to this day across a range of areas, including economic and personal exchange, and more recently security and defence cooperation.



Japan is the largest trading partner of the Northern Territory, and I had the opportunity to hear first-hand how the 34 billion dollar LNG project of Japan's Inpex is progressing by company representatives.

This official visit to the Northern Territory was a journey to pray for the many souls lost during the war and that they rest in peace, as well as remembering this sad part of history. I will never cease to hope for the further strengthening of the relationship between Japan and the Northern Territory.

Yours sincerely,

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Sumio Kusaka

Ambassador of Japan to Australia