

## ***Visit to Adelaide – yet another milestone in the robust Japan- Australia relationship***

18 May 2018

Dear Friends,

This year marks the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the sister-state relationship between Okayama Prefecture in Japan and South Australia, and several celebratory occasions were held in Adelaide. Taking this opportunity, from 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> of May, my wife Ikuko and I paid a visit to Adelaide. The Governor of Okayama, Mr Ryuta Ibaragi led a delegation from Japan to Adelaide for the occasion. Governor Ibaragi and the delegation also met with the business community in South Australia to enhance business relations between the two states.

For those of you who are not familiar with Okayama, it is one of western Japan's transportation hubs, easily accessed from Kansai International Airport. Its geographical feature is diverse with mountains and basin areas in the north, and hill areas and plains in the south. Okayama's coastline faces the Seto Inland Sea, which is vast and calm with many beautiful islands. The Mizushima Industrial Area is concentrated with major companies and advanced manufacturing capabilities. Okayama is also blessed with historical tourist attractions, and is also known for its high-quality fruits due to its mild climate.



During my stay in Adelaide, I had the opportunity to have discussions with Governor Ibaragi. Governor Ibaragi was very excited and pleased to be able to visit South Australia for the first time.

He told me that by actually visiting South Australia, his understanding on South Australia deepened dramatically, thereby reaffirmed to enhance the relations between the two states in various fields. As the Japanese Government regards the local authorities in Japan as key players of Japan's diplomacy, the relationship between Okayama and South Australia is an integral part of the robust bilateral relationship between Japan and Australia. Between Japan and Australia, there are 108 sister-city/sister-state relationships. This is another evidence of how close peoples of our two countries are.

(For more information on Okayama, please see <https://www.okayama-japan.jp/en/>)



With Governor Ibaragi

I also had the opportunity to meet with the Premier of South Australia, the Hon. Steven Marshall MP. It was a happy surprise to start off our conversation by greeting in Japanese! Premier Marshall studied Japanese in his high school days. We renewed confirmation of the robust relationship between Japan and South Australia. Premier Marshall also indicated the establishment of a representative office in Tokyo in order to expand economic ties with Japan. I was also pleased to know that Premier Marshall has visited Japan a number of times for market research, as well as for business related trips on a regular basis during the former administration.



With Premier Marshall

Last but not least, I enjoyed reuniting with the Hon. Hieu Van Le, Governor of South Australia during a welcome dinner for Governor Ibaragi hosted by Governor Le. Together with Governor Ibaragi, I urged Governor Le, who has yet to visit Japan, to visit Okayama at an earliest possible time. I very much look forward to welcoming Governor Le in Okayama, which is also my dear hometown.



Governor Le and Mrs Le with Governor Ibaragi

My visit to South Australia this time was another occasion to appreciate the cordial and robust relations between Japan and Australia. At the same time, I am recommitted to further strengthening our relations in various fields and among all walks of life.

Yours sincerely,

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Sumio Kusaka

Ambassador of Japan to Australia