

News from under the Southern Cross – Edition 7. My second business trip to Sydney

22 March 2021

(1) Travelling to Sydney by Car

From the 8th to the 10th of March, I undertook my second business trip to Sydney. This time I did not travel by plane, instead choosing to go by car, which took 3 hours one way. One of my reasons for doing so was to promote Japanese automobiles. Despite Canberra hosting a great number of Japanese cars, almost all of the Australian dignitaries who visited my Residence travel in luxury German vehicles. So I thought this an opportune moment to promote Japanese cars and decided to make the long journey to Sydney in my Lexus.

Whenever I set out on my official duties, I always have a Japanese national flag attached to the front of my car, thereby making a strong impression of both Japan and Japanese cars on those who see it. I am honestly overjoyed when people wave to me from the side of road.



The Sydney Opera House



The Sydney Harbour

(2) A meeting with Prime Minister Morrison

The reason for my visit to Sydney on this occasion was an invitation to attend the annual Business Summit hosted by Australia's premier economic and business newspaper, the Australian Financial Review (AFR). It was a large meeting attended by around 300 guests, including executives from Australia's major corporations, and this year saw Prime Minister Morrison deliver a speech as the Guest of Honour.

I myself was invited to attend as a panelist, and as luck would have it, I had an opportunity to engage in brief conversation with Prime Minister Morrison in the Speaker's Lounge where presenters and panelists gathered. The Prime Minister possesses an honest, friendly nature indeed. He left a strong impression on me when he noted that he was looking forward to greeting Prime Minister Suga on his visit to Australia during the year.



In conversation with Prime Minister Morrison

(3) Conversations with former prime minister Turnbull

One further significant outcome from my visit to Sydney was the opportunity to engage in conversation over dinner with former prime minister Malcolm Turnbull and his wife Lucy at the Consul General's Residence in Sydney, thanks to arrangements made by Consul General and Mrs Kiya. As one would expect from his professional background that includes working as a lawyer and the Australian representative of Goldman Sachs before entering politics, Mr Turnbull spoke eloquently and flawlessly about geopolitics and the global economy, and shared many deep insights with me.

I was also very pleasantly surprised to receive a signed copy of Mr Turnbull's autobiography. There are more topics of discussion that were not covered this time, and so I very much look forward to exchanging views with Mr Turnbull at another time in either Sydney or Canberra.



At the dinner reception
with former prime minister Turnbull

(4) Attending the AFR Business Summit

The impetus for the invitation to me to participate as a panelist was [an interview I gave with the AFR soon after taking up my position in Australia](#). I felt extraordinarily honoured to be the only foreign ambassador invited to take part amidst the many dignitaries gathered at the venue, half of whom consisted of representatives from the political and business worlds. These included the Prime Minister, members of the cabinet, secretaries of various departments, and presidents and chief executives from Australian corporations.

For those members of the business world facing difficulties from the trade friction between Australia and China, I was able to share them with Japan's own experience with China. I was relieved to hear the host side commending my remarks as candid and timely. I felt that my appearance at the Summit was certainly worthwhile the time and effort I spent on it.



In front of the Queen Victoria Building,
the venue for the AFR Business Summit



A view of the AFR Business Summit

Links to the Video and the AFR Article are as below:

- [AFR article from 10th March](#)
- [Summit Video](#)

(5) My 'travels' continue

It is often said that the duties of an ambassador resemble those of a 'travelling entertainer'. Upon receipt of an invitation, an ambassador will go wherever one is needed in order to explain in clear language Japan's position and point of view in response to the interests of the host. This is one of the vital roles played by an ambassador. In this sense, I am profoundly grateful to the AFR for the invitation to take part in their most important event of the year.

In the week of 23rd March, I will be speaking at a seminar in Perth in Western Australia. “If the call comes, I will go no matter the destination”. This is the spirit in which I intend to conduct my appearances across the length and breadth of Australia.

YAMAGAMI Shingo



A view of Sydney Harbour