

## News from under the Southern Cross – Edition 14 Award Ceremonies

19 May

One important duty as Ambassador is to convey awards bestowed by His Majesty the Emperor of Japan on recipients abroad. Whenever I convey an award, the awardee is invited to my Residence, whereupon I personally hand over a patent of decoration and decoration received from His Majesty to the recipient. Recently three such ceremonies have taken place at my Residence in Canberra.

### 1. Honouring achievements

(1) Former Australian Ambassador to Japan Mr John McCarthy AO

Mr John McCarthy has had a long, distinguished career as an Australian diplomat, and served as Australia's ambassador to Japan from 2001 to 2004. In addition to Japan, he also served as Australia's ambassador to Vietnam, Mexico, Thailand, the United States of America, Indonesia, and India. As I mentioned in my speech (which can be read [here](#)), he managed to get the 'Royal Straight Flush' of ambassadorial appointments. Hence in recognition of his contribution to the promotion of Japan-Australia ties, Mr McCarthy was awarded the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star in spring of 2020.



Picture of Mr John McCarthy's award ceremony

(2) Former ANU Japan Centre Head Mr. Ikeda Shunichi

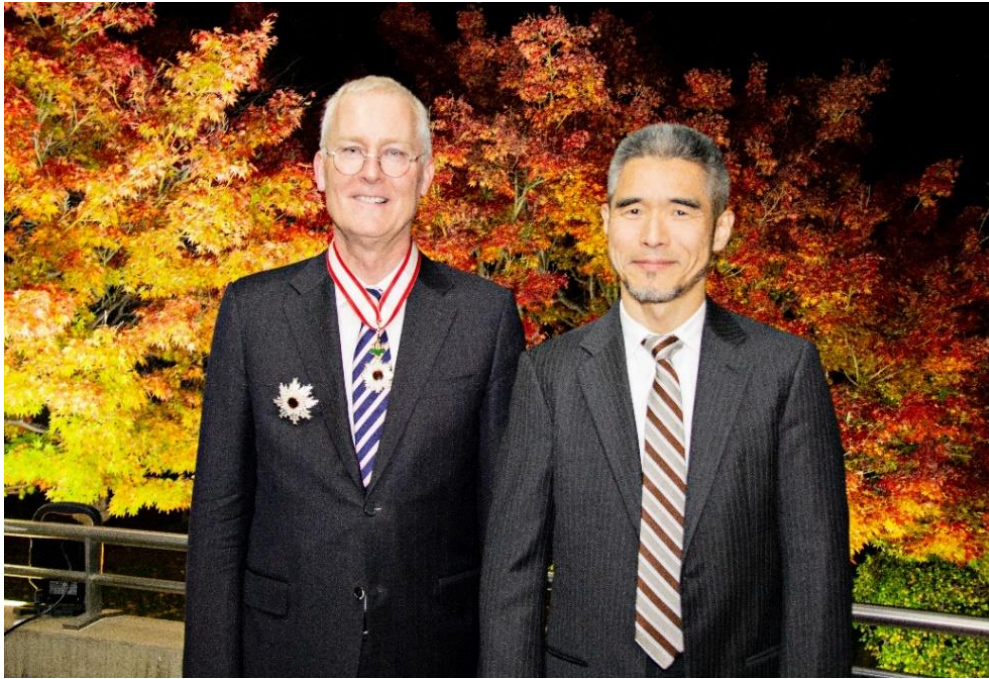
With a 35-year career as a Japanese language teacher at the Australian National University, a university recognized in recent years as number one in Australia according to international university ranking surveys (QS World University Rankings), Mr Ikeda has made an extraordinary contribution to the promotion of Japanese language education in Australia. Moreover, with his 40-year plus involvement in Australia-Japan Society activities, Mr Ikeda has expended every effort in promoting friendly relations between Japan and Australia. In recognition of his achievements, Mr Ikeda was awarded the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Rays in autumn of 2020. (Congratulatory Speech [Link](#))



Picture of Mr Ikeda Shunichi's award ceremony

(3) Former Ambassador to Japan Mr Bruce Miller AO

One of the most prominent Japan experts in the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Starting with his involvement in an exchange program while still in high school and followed by yet another exchange experience at Kwansai Gakuin University, Mr Miller served in Japan as a diplomat and as an ambassador on three separate occasions. In recognition of his exemplary contribution to the promotion of Japan-Australia relations, Mr Miller was awarded the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star in autumn of 2020. (Congratulatory Speech [Link](#))



Picture of Mr Bruce Miller's award ceremony

## 2. Consideration of timings

Some readers may be wondering “If the award was granted in 2020, why is it only now being conveyed?” The answer lies in the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. In Canberra, large groups of people were banned for a while from gathering together for receptions. Furthermore, because of restrictions placed on movement between Japan and Australia, it took some time for the patents of decoration and decorations to be dispatched from Japan.

As the COVID-19 pandemic has subsided in Canberra, a decision was made that the time had come to celebrate in earnest. After consulting with all three recipients on their preferred method for receiving their award (a meal involving small numbers of people, a reception



Some of the meals on offer at award receptions



involving large numbers of people), the Embassy was able to both celebrate the occasion and provide fitting recognition of the significant achievements of each of the recipients.

### **3. Strengthening bonds with Japan**

Conferral ceremonies not only shine a light upon the achievements of the recipients. These ceremonies enabled both awardees and myself to celebrate with many of the invited guests, and through the meals on offer, we were able to widely reconfirm both the importance of Japan-Australia ties and the necessity of Japanese language education. Moreover, it provided the perfect opportunity to for attendees to comprehend Japan's national trait of never forgetting the contribution and devotion that awardees have made.

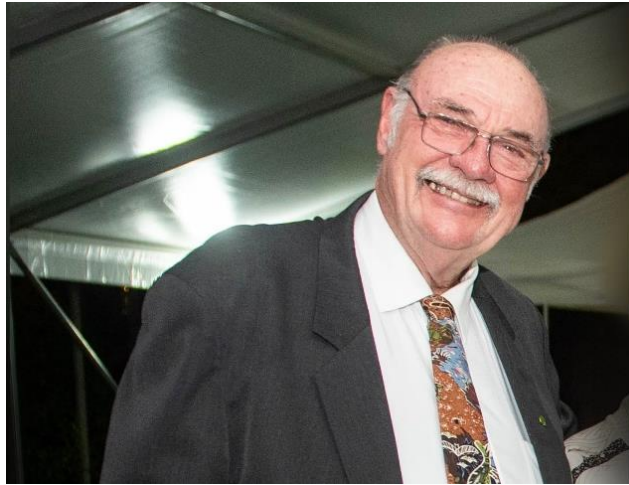
Indeed, at the reception for former ambassador Miller, more than 120 Australians with links to the Japan-Australia relationship gathered together, and the Residence resonated to the sound of cheers and revelry.

### **4. Ceremonies to continue**

In Spring of this year, former Prime Minister of Australia the Hon. Julia Gillard was awarded the Grand Cordon of the Order of the Rising Sun, while former Japan-Australia Parliamentary Friendship Group Chair the Hon. Warren Entsch MP was awarded the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star. The joy at which both of these recipients received notification from myself of their selection made me both happy and left a deep impression on me.



Former Prime Minister the Hon. Julia Gillard visit to Minami Sanriku, April 2011



Former Japan-Australia Parliamentary Friendship Group Chair the Hon. Warren Entsch MP

Meanwhile preparations continue for conveyance ceremonies, taking into consideration the awardees circumstances and when receptions should be held. They are one of the important milestones in Japan-Australia relations. So I want to celebrate them to the fullest extent possible.

YAMAGAMI Shingo