

# Matsuri Japan Festival in Chatswood Speech

Saturday 10 September, 1:00 PM

Mayor of Willoughby, Cr Tanya Taylor

Board President of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce in Sydney, Mr SUMIDA Yoshihiro

Board Director of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce in Sydney, and President of the Japanese Society of Sydney, Mr INOUE Daisuke

President of Japan Club of Sydney, Ms Hisae Costello

Ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon.

- Let me first start by expressing my sincere condolences on the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.
- As someone who enjoyed the luxury of conversing with her at the Buckingham Palace about ten years ago, I agree with so many others that Her Majesty was such an outstanding figure with robust intellectual curiosity and a great sense of humour and wit.
- Her contributions are enormous. She will be greatly missed. May she rest in peace.
- It gives me great pleasure to be back in Chatswood again for this year's Matsuri Japan Festival.
- It is also very nice to be in the presence of so many families with young children.
- It reminds me that these children will grow up to be the future of our Japan-Australia relationship, and I am heartened to see that even from a young age they have such great opportunities to experience Japanese culture in Australia.
- As you can see, this Matsuri Japan Festival is an event of considerable size, and is by far the largest event of Japanaroo 2022.
- Japanaroo itself is the biggest collection of Japan-related events in the southern hemisphere.
- We are very lucky in Australia, and here in Sydney, to have such a large Japanese community who are able to put on events of such scale and diversity.
- Did you know that there are over 93,000 Japanese people living in Australia?
- This is the third largest overseas Japanese community in the world.
- And around one third of those people live here in Sydney.
- You should be proud that Sydney manages to attract more Japanese people than even Paris and Honolulu!
- Because of this, ANA (All Nippon Airways), continued to run 5 flights a week between Sydney and Haneda even at the height of the pandemic.

- And because of this, we have a community that is not only full of diversity but also home to some incredibly talented people.
- Therefore, events like this, which bring our community together, give us the opportunity to showcase our work, generate new ideas, and build stronger connections.
- Speaking of connections, I hope to see more Japanese tourists returning to Sydney.
- I expect that, alongside the Opera House, Harbour Bridge and Taronga Zoo, Japanaroo can become a great attraction for tourists too.
- And I know all the Aussies in the audience right now only have one question on their minds – ‘when can we travel to Japan?’
- Well, I have good news!
- As of two days ago, the requirement for a pre-flight PCR test has been lifted for boosted travellers, the daily cap on overseas entrants increased to 50,000, and visitors no longer need to be accompanied by a guide.
- So although it is not situation normal just yet, Japan is making progress to let more tourists in.
- I am hoping that, by the end of the year, Australians will once again be able to carve up powder snow, bathe in hot springs and perhaps enjoy a walk through a Japanese garden without having to avoid magpies.
- But today, you are very lucky to have the chance to experience Japan right here!
- You can not only glimpse traditional culture through the tea ceremony and flower arranging, but also taste some of the yummy food and drink that Japan has to offer.
- Speaking of this, my stomach is telling me that it’s time to stop talking and start eating.
- So finally, I wish you all the best for today’s Matsuri Japan Festival, and for the many other events comprising this year’s Japanaroo.
- Thank you.