

**Message from HE YAMAGAMI Shingo, Ambassador of Japan to Australia**  
**On the occasion of the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the opening of the 'Shoyoen' Sister City Garden,**  
**celebrating the relationship between Dubbo, New South Wales, and Minokamo,**  
**Gifu Prefecture**

19 November 2022

Cr Mathew Dickerson, Mayor of Dubbo Regional Council,  
Cr Shibli Chowdhury, Chairman of Dubbo Sister City Advisory Committee  
Mr FURUKAWA Kazuo, Head of Delegation, and Superintendent of Education, City of  
Minokamo  
Mr WATANABE Takao, Chair of Councillors, City of Minokamo  
Mr ITAZU Yoshiki, President of the Minokamo International Exchange Association (MIEA)

Firstly, my thoughts go out to the many residents of Dubbo who were affected by last month's floods. I pray that the region may recover swiftly from this disaster.

I would also like to convey my heartfelt congratulations on the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the opening of the 'Shoyoen' Sister City Garden, which has become a symbol of the relationship between Minokamo and Dubbo.

The Japan-Australia relationship is broadening and deepening far beyond the traditional areas of trade and investment, to encompass issues such as security cooperation. The visit to Australia by Prime Minister KISHIDA last month, and the Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation issued by both our leaders, demonstrates that our countries' Special Strategic Partnership has now reached a new level.

Official visits by our leaders are certainly a catalyst for the further development of our bilateral ties. At the same time, our shared fundamental values such as democracy and the rule of law, and our shared strategic interests constitute important commonalities between us. In addition to this, I believe that continued people-to-people exchange at the grassroots level lays solid groundwork for mutual understanding and respect, which in turn becomes the strong foundation for our Japan-Australia relationship.

I express my profound admiration to the cities of Minokamo and Dubbo, which have continued to deepen their exchange for more than 30 years since 1989, and in doing so have constructed a valuable pillar of the Japan-Australia relationship. I am also impressed by the hard work of both cities to manage and maintain 'Shoyoen', gifted by Minokamo 20 years ago. In 2022, this garden continues to be a delightful symbol of the sister city

relationship, as well as a place of relaxation for Dubbo's residents young and old.

It is truly unfortunate that I cannot travel to Dubbo on this occasion and realise my dream of visiting this beautiful town. It is my sincere wish to one day see 'Shoyoen' for myself, and reflect on the history of the relationship between these two cities as I admire the rock garden and tea house.

It is my hope that the exchange cultivated over so many years grows further still as a result of this significant milestone, and that the relationship between Minokamo and Dubbo – and Japan and Australia – can reach new heights.

YAMAGAMI Shingo  
Ambassador of Japan to Australia