

## **Japanese Foreign Minister's Commendations**

On Thursday, 22 January 2009, a Foreign Minister's Commendation Ceremony will take place at the official residence of Ambassador Kojima where, on behalf of the Foreign Minister of Japan, he will confer official awards on two distinguished Japanese nationals and one community organisation in Australia to acknowledge their contributions to the promotion of mutual understanding and friendship between Japan and Australia.

The Foreign Minister's Commendations recognise people who, at the national level, have rendered distinguished service for the promotion of friendly relations with foreign countries and the fostering of international cooperation. In 2008 two individuals and two organisations in Australia received such commendations. Two Japanese nationals and one community organisation will receive their commendations on Thursday, 22 January.

### **Commendation Recipients**

**1. Mrs Teruko Blair (Essayist)**

Mrs Blair came to Australia in 1953 and since then has, by sharing her experiences as a victim of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima with children at schools all over Australia, continually called for world peace. In her essays she has also shared her experiences with her fellow Japanese as a Japanese national who came to Australia shortly after the end of the Second World War. These essays have made a valuable contribution to mutual understanding between Australia and Japan.

**2. Mrs Hiroe Swen**

Mrs Swen is renowned in Australia as a leading Japanese ceramist and has taught Australians the beauty of Japanese ceramics. Her work is exhibited at the National Museum of Australia in Canberra and at other galleries. Throughout her life she has greatly contributed to the introduction and spread of Japanese culture in Australia.

**3. Canberra Japan Club (CJC)**

The CJC was established in 1997. Since then it has greatly strengthened the bonds linking Japanese nationals resident in Canberra. In addition, the CJC regularly holds and supports numerous social activities and lectures. The CJC recently established a new "support network" to provide care for elderly Japanese in Canberra and, by doing so, has considerably enhanced their welfare.

The commendation ceremony will be held at the official residence of Ambassador Kojima at 3:00pm on Thursday, 22 January 2009.

The media is most welcome to attend and the Embassy would be grateful if they would arrive by 2:45 pm.

Prior registration is requested.

### **Media Inquiries:**

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