



# Reflecting on the Australia-Japan Year of Exchange

A message from the Embassy of Japan in Australia

It is very fitting that Nichigo Press have chosen to launch *jstyle* this year. As many readers will be aware, 2006 is the Australia-Japan Year of Exchange. In July 2003, Prime Minister Koizumi and Prime Minister Howard agreed to designate the year 2006 as the year of exchange to promote friendship and deepen mutual understanding and cooperation between our two countries.

The year of exchange marks the 30th anniversary of the signing of the Basic Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between Japan and Australia, the 110th anniversary of the establishment of the first Japanese consulate in Australia in Townsville, Queensland and the 30th anniversary of the

establishment of the Australia-Japan Foundation. Accordingly, this is a very significant year in the history of our bilateral relations.

As well as a chance to celebrate and commemorate, the year of exchange is intended to be a forward-looking year; an opportunity to refocus on the importance of our strong bilateral ties, to strengthen existing relations and to build new bridges of friendship and cooperation.

Highlights of the year have included the official opening ceremony in Sydney in January, a wadaiko (Japanese traditional drum) national tour by Mr Eitetsu Hayashi which commenced in Townsville in February and the Australia-Japan Historical Photo Exhibition which was opened in June with Prime Minister Howard in attendance. The very successful opera performance "Princess from the Moon" was also held in Canberra on June 16, thirty years to the very day of the signing of the treaty.

Other major events which drew large and appreciative audiences included the Festivals of Japan in Sydney, the Japan Pavilion at the Perth Royal Show and memorial concerts by Orchestra Ensemble Kanazawa in Melbourne - a tribute to the late Maestro Hiroyuki Iwaki.

Japanese businesses have been very positive in supporting year of exchange events by providing financial assistance. Without their contributions, the aforementioned Historical Photo Exhibition would not have been possible. Their assistance also contributed to the success of other events such as "Wonderbus Japan" and "Learn and Teach - Japan". Wonderbus Japan, organized by the Japan Foundation in Sydney, toured cities and towns in Australia, presenting a variety of events and activities showcasing Japanese culture. The Learn and Teach - Japan program, with the assistance of the Japan Foundation, sent 48 Australian teachers of Japanese language to Japan to

undertake a two-week study course designed to improve participants' language proficiency and cultural knowledge.

It is wonderful to see the extent to which the year of exchange is being embraced and supported by local communities. In fact, a total of 446 officially endorsed events will have taken place throughout Australia when the year of exchange concludes in December. Part of the funds raised by Japanese businesses has also been disbursed to support so-called "grass-root projects". A total of 74 grass-root projects have received financial support under this scheme.

We can confidently say that the Australia-Japan Year of Exchange has been a great success and has achieved many of its aims and goals.

## Events 2006



### Partners in a New Vision: Australia and Japan Across Time

This photo exhibition profiling the Australia-Japan relationship was opened in Canberra in June by Prime Minister Howard and the Japanese Ambassador to Australia Mr Hideaki Ueda. It then toured to Sydney, Melbourne, Perth and Broome.



### TSUGARU - Soul and Beat of Japan

Tsugaru shamisen virtuoso Michihiro Sato and fellow performers were an August highlight, holding a series of concerts in Sydney, Canberra and Brisbane.



### Noh: 600 year old Theatre Tradition

The highly sophisticated noh theatre tradition was introduced to Sydney audiences by a cast of performers which included nine intangible cultural treasures.



### Perth Royal Show: Japan Pavilion

The Japan Pavilion showcased a range of high-tech goods including the ASIMO robot as well as a series of cultural performances, regional products and food stalls.



### Nature's Rhythm: Eitetsu Hayashi Taiko Concerts

Eitetsu Hayashi, TaikoZ, shakuhachi master Riley Lee and didgeridoo player Matthew Doyle collaborated in early 2006 to take their spectacular music to Sydney, Canberra, Townsville, Melbourne and Perth.



### Opera "Princess from the Moon"

An epoch-making collaboration between Australian and Japanese musical talent. More than 200 were involved in this Western-style opera performance of "Kaguyahime" in June in Canberra.



### Japan Australia Forum

A series of thought-provoking seminars, arranged by Macquarie University and the Japan Foundation, examining Japan-Australia regional co-operation.



### Japan Week - Brisbane

A celebration of traditional and contemporary Japanese culture in August. Music, martial arts and dancing were a just few of the events held at venues throughout Brisbane's CBD.



### Learn and Teach - Japan: Australian Teachers in Japan

48 Australian teachers of Japanese language were selected from primary and high schools around Australia to take part in a two-week study tour of Japan in early July.



### The Way of Tea with Urasenke

Urasenke Grand Master, Dr Genshitsu Sen, gave a lecture to an audience of 300 on the principles of the tea ceremony at the National Gallery of Australia in Canberra in September.



### A Tribute to Hiroyuki Iwaki

Orchestra Ensemble Kanazawa performed several concerts in Melbourne and Geelong to pay tribute to Maestro Iwaki, Melbourne Symphony's first Conductor Laureate, who passed away in June 2006.



### Cairns Japan Festival

This two-week festival in May featured cultural exhibitions such as Wonderbus Japan, Koto Concert, Japanese film nights, tea ceremonies and lawn bowls culminating in a Japanese themed market day at Tanks Art Centre.



### Edo Craftsmen Demonstration

In September members of the Edo Traditional Craftsmen Association held displays and demonstrations of Tokyo crafts practised since the Edo Period in Sydney, Canberra and Perth.



### Summer Festival & Festivals of Japan

The Summer Festival in February and Festivals of Japan in October brought the fun of matsuri to Darling Harbour in Sydney with dancers, taiko groups and other performers from Japan and Australia.



### Bunraku: Japanese Puppetry

The UNESCO-honoured form of traditional puppetry was enjoyed by more than 1000 visitors in three performances held in Melbourne and Ballarat in August with the cooperation of Osaka City.



### Japan and Friends' Day: Gold Coast

Held in September, this event was full of opportunities to experience Japan and other countries' cultures, helping to develop intercultural awareness.