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パースエクスプレスの読者の皆様、新年あけましておめでとうございます。

一昨年 4 月にパースに着任しましてから、この地で迎える 2 回目の新年となりました。

昨年 1 年を振り返りますと、3 月には、東日本大震災追悼・復興レセプションを主催し、被災地支援にご尽力頂いた皆様に多数出席頂き、皆様のご支援に対する感謝の気持ちを伝えると共に、西豪州関係者からも、心からのお悔やみと、今後も東北の復興を支援したいとの多くの暖かい言葉を頂戴しました。また、7 月には東北写真展、東北食・酒文化紹介事業、11 月には KIZUNA 強化プロジェクトで東北にてボランティア活動をする高校生・大学生等に対する出発前説明会等を通じて、出来るだけ多くの方に東北への理解を深めて頂くことに努めて参りました。

また、百年を超える交流の歴史がある西豪州と日本との間は、政治、経済、文化を含め、様々な分野で更に関係が深まっています。

政府要人の交流では、松下経済産業省副大臣の来訪、ヘイムズ州副首相兼保健・観光大臣、ウッドアムズ州下院議長及びビショップ豪保守連合副党首兼影の外務・貿易大臣の訪日がありました。姉妹都市交流では、世田谷区・パンバリー市姉妹都市交流 20 周年記念式典行事等が開催された他、姉妹都市を通じた盛んな交流が行われました。私自身も 1 月にパースェルトン市、3 月にアルパニー市を、10 月にはパンバリー市を訪問し、市長や姉妹都市関係者の皆様に日頃の交流支援に対し感謝の気持ちを直接伝えることが出来ました。経済面では、昨年はブルート LNG の日本への出荷が開始され、また、銀行を含む日本企業の新規進出や大型 LNG プロジェクトへの参加もあり、今年は経済面でも益々交流が盛んになるものと期待しております。一方、文化面を見てみますと、州総督邸でのワールド・フード・フェスティバル参加、和食文化紹介行事、アニメ・日本映画上映会、キャラクター・写真展示会、学校訪問、学校文化祭、

日本語スピーチコンテスト等に積極的に取り組み、また、学術面でも、国際問題研究所金田研究員による安全保障政策に関する講演会や意見交換会を開催し、各方面での交流促進に努めて参りました。在留邦人の皆様へのサービス・支援強化の一環として昨年は 2 月に専門家を招いてメンタルヘルス研修会を開催しましたが、今年も何らかの形で当地で活躍される皆様への側面支援が出来ればと考えております。

年頭にあたり、今年も日本人会、日本クラブ、虹の会、日本人学校の他、豪日協会、JETAA、日本語教育・姉妹都市関係者等とご一緒に協力しながら、日本と西豪州のあらゆる面での交流の益々の活性化を図りたいとの気持ちを新たにしているところです。

最後に、本年が皆様にとりまして良い年となりますよう心からお祈りしまして、私からの新年の挨拶とさせていただきます。

Let me begin by wishing all the readers of *The Perth Express* a Happy New Year.

This is my second time to welcome in the New Year since arriving in Perth in April 2011.

In March last year we hosted the Memorial Ceremony and One Year Anniversary of the Great East Japan Earthquake. We invited many people who kindly made donations or provided other support or assistance to the devastated areas, to convey our sincere gratitude. At that time, Government Representatives, and the people of Western Australia expressed to us their deepest sympathies while also promising their continued support for the recovery of the Tohoku region. Through the year, we have worked to promote a deeper understanding of the Tohoku region to as many people as possible by holding various events. These included the Tohoku Photo Exhibition and the Taste of Tohoku evening held in July to promote Tohoku cuisine and sake. We also hosted the KIZUNA Project Pre-Departure Orientation in November which was held for high school and university students participating on the Kizuna Project, prior to their departure for the Tohoku region to aid in volunteer activities.

The relationship between Western Australia and Japan, with its history stretching back more than 100 years, continues to deepen in political, economic, and cultural areas, amongst others.

In the arena of political exchange, then State Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry, Mr. Matsushita, paid an official visit last year. The Western Australian Deputy Premier and Minister for Health and Tourism, Mr. Hames,

the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Western Australia, Mr. Woodhams, and the Deputy Leader of the Federal Opposition and Shadow Minister for the portfolios of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Ms. Bishop, all made official visits to Japan.

In the area of sister city exchange, the Bunbury-Setagaya Sister City Relationship held its 20th Anniversary celebration in 2012, just one example of the vibrant exchange taking place through our sister city relationships. I myself visited Busselton in January, Albany in March, and Bunbury in October, where I was able to convey my appreciation to the mayors and people working on the sister city relationships directly, for their constant efforts to support these exchanges.

On the economic front, last year saw the first shipment to Japan from the Pluto LNG Project, as well as the new branch office openings and participation in large scale LNG Projects by Japanese businesses and banks, and I have high expectations that we are going to see the economic exchange between our countries flourish more than ever.

Meanwhile, we have been working positively to promote cultural exchange through various activities such as our involvement in the World of Food Festival at Government House, Japanese Cuisine Promotional events, the Japanese Anime and Japanese Film Festivals, the Kingdom of Characters and Photo Exhibitions, school visits, school festivals, and Japanese Language Speech Contests. The lecture tour on security policies given by The Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIIA) Adjunct Research Fellow, Former Vice Admiral Kaneda, was also an opportunity for us to further academic exchange.

As part of our efforts to improve our support services to the Japanese community here in Perth, we invited an expert to our mental health workshop in February. Over the coming year I would like to continue this kind of support to the Japanese community.

Going into the New Year, I have a renewed desire to further energize all levels of exchange between Japan and Western Australia. In doing so, we will continue to work together as we have over the past year with all those involved in the Japanese Society, the Japan Club, Support Net Nijinokai, The Japanese School in Perth, The Australia Japan Society, JETAA, Japanese Language Teachers and the sister city relationships throughout Western Australia.

I will conclude my New Year's greeting by wishing you a safe, joyous and prosperous 2013.