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在パース日本国総領事

The Perth Express 読者の皆様、あけましておめでとうございます。在パース日本国総領事として、一言新年のご挨拶を申し上げます。

昨年は、西豪州と我が国にとって非常に大きな出来事がありました。この誌面を借り、まずは簡単に紹介させていただきます。

第一に、7月の安倍総理大臣の西豪州訪問があります。40年ぶりの我が国総理大臣による西豪州訪問は、政治及び経済面で大きな評価を受けました。

第二に、11月のANZAC船団出航百周年記念行事に、日本から護衛艦「きりさめ」と、中根外務政務官一行が参加し、豪側の大歓迎を受けたことがあげられます。

三番目に、2月にパース市で初めて開催された「日本祭り」があげられます。このイベントは、当地日本人社会のみならず、西豪州の人々から大きな反響があり、本年3月の「第二回日本祭り」の開催に向け、現在、在留邦人関係団体により準備が進められています。

また、昨年は西豪州においては、行方不明となったマレーシア航空機のインド洋における日豪の捜索協力がありました。

姉妹都市関係でも、鹿児島市とパース市が40周年、また、足立区とベルモント市が30周年の佳節を迎えました。

我が国の岸田外務大臣は、右功績に対しパース市、ベルモント市関係者に対し表彰を行いました。また、日本国総領事館も、姉妹都市関係促進の功績により、ベルモント市から表彰されました。

さらに草の根レベルでは、当地豪日協会が昨年創立40周年を迎え、祝賀行事が催されました。

このように、昨年は、豪州において、日本はこれまで以上に脚光を浴び、西豪州との関係が益々強固になるなど、実り多き年でありました。

今年は、このようなモメンタムを維持・強化することが大事になります。具体的には、日豪EPA発効、日豪首脳会議、日豪防衛協力等、更なる日豪関係強化のための、重要なイベントが検討されています。当館としましては、西豪州において、日本と西豪州の人々との親善・友好関係の強化に取り組んでいきたいと思っております。

明治中期、日豪貿易関係の黎明期において、豪州産羊毛は日本の主要輸入品でした。奇しくも今年の干支は未（ひつじ）で、羊は穏やかな動物で、多産と平和の象徴とされています。今年の干支にちなみ、日豪関係が平和でかつ実り多い年となるよう祈念し、私の挨拶とします。

Firstly, I'd like to wish *The Perth Express* readers a Happy New Year, before saying a few words of greeting for the New Year on behalf of the Consulate-General of Japan in Perth.

Last year was an incredibly important year for Western Australia and Japan, and I would like to take this opportunity to give you a brief explanation of the important events of 2014.

In July Prime Minister Abe became the first Japanese Prime Minister to visit Western Australia in 40 years. This visit was very well received on both a political and economic level.

In November, the Japanese government sent the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force vessel "Kirisame" to participate in the 100 Year ANZAC Commemorative event in Albany. Mr. Nakane, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, and Mr. Tokuchi, Vice-Minister for International Affairs, Ministry of Defense, received a warm welcome from the Australian Government as they travelled to Albany from Japan to join our participation in this event.

The first Japan Festival in Perth was held in February last year in the city centre. This event was received enthusiastically not only by the Japanese community, but also by the wider community here in Western Australia. Preparations are now well underway by the Japan Festival Committee for the second

Japan Festival in Perth to be held this coming March.

In 2014, Japan also worked closely with the Australian authorities in the search and recovery efforts for the missing Malaysian Airlines flight MH370.

It was also a year of special significance for two of our active sister city relationships in Western Australia. Last year marked the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the Perth-Kagoshima Sister City relationship, and the 30th anniversary of the Belmont-Adachi Sister City relationship. In special recognition of the efforts of these cities, the City of Perth and the City of Belmont were awarded the Foreign Minister of Japan's Commendation for 2014, by Foreign Minister Kishida. The Consulate-General of Japan also received the Opportunity Award from the Mayor of Belmont for supporting the sister city relationship between Belmont and Adachi City. Further grassroots-level celebrations in 2014 also included the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the Australia-Japan Society.

In this way Japan enjoyed being in the limelight in Western Australia more than ever in 2014. It was a productive year in which Japan's relationship with Western Australia was strengthened and deepened.

This year it will be important to maintain and increase the momentum of 2014. Specifically, there are a number of things on the cards, all aiming towards strengthening the Japan-Australia relationship, such as the Japan-Australia Economic Partnership Agreement coming into effect, Japan-Australia heads of state summit, and bilateral defense cooperation. The Consulate-General of Japan will also continue to endeavour to better the friendly relationship that we already enjoy with the great people of Western Australia through consulate-related events through 2015.

In the early stages of the Japan-Australia relationship around the middle of the Meiji Period (late 1800s), Australian wool was the top import product in Japan. Coincidentally, this year is the year of the sheep in the Japanese zodiac. Sheep evoke a feeling of warmth, fertility and peace. I look forward to an even more fruitful and peaceful year in the Japan-Australia relationship in 2015.