

2018 AUSTRALIA - JAPAN SPRING GALA DINNER

Members and guests enjoyed a delightful night out at the 2018 Spring Gala Dinner held at the Melbourne Crown Towers River Room on the evening of September 14.



Ambassador Sumio Kusaka addressing guests at the Gala Dinner

Once again the event was a prestigious social occasion for the Melbourne community, celebrating the achievements and friendships fostered by the rich and growing relationship between Australia and Japan in Victoria.

The event was jointly hosted by Australia Japan Society of Victoria, the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the Japanese Society of Melbourne.

Over 200 guests attended the Gala this year, bringing together senior representatives and community leaders from the business sector, the arts and cultural organizations, educational institutions, government, sport and the wider community.

Special guests included the Japanese Ambassador to Australia, Mr Sumio Kusaka, the Consul General of Japan to Melbourne, Mr Kazuyoshi Matsunaga, and the President of the Legislative Assembly in Victoria, the Hon Bruce Atkinson.

We were also privileged to have the company of Mr Keisuke Honda, who recently joined the Melbourne Victory Football Club for the next stage of his outstanding career as an international football star. Honda-san has represented Japan in several international tournaments over many years, most recently in the 2018 World Cup in Russia, and has played for marquee First Division league teams in Japan and Europe.



Keisuke Honda of Melbourne Victory with Ambassador Kusaka and the Hon Bruce Atkinson, President of the Legislative Council of Victoria

The guest speaker for the Gala Dinner was the celebrated engineer and advocate of the Australia-Japan relationship, Mr Mat Bowtell. Mat captured the attention – and the hearts – of every guest at the event with his amazing story of how he has applied his learnings as a Toyota executive and engineer to the design of low-cost robotic prosthetic limbs. His spirit of giving and sheer joy in his work and desire to contribute to the community was inspirational and instructive.



Special Guest Speaker Mat Bowtell

The event was once again a resounding success thanks to dedicated attention and professional conduct of the organising team led by Robyn Heraud and Deborah Vega. Many guests expressed their appreciation, and were already looking forward to next year's Gala...

Of course the event is also made possible through the generous support of our Member sponsors. In particular, Gold Sponsor: Bega Cheese Ltd; and Silver Sponsors – Mitsubishi, Mitsui, Toyota, Ernst & Young, KPMG, and Deloitte.

In addition, lucky guests received prizes from:

- Japan Airlines (2 return-flight tickets to Japan)
- Crown Towers (Food and Beverage Voucher)
- Peninsula Hot Springs (dine and bath voucher)
- Mizuno Golf
- Japanese Quality Whisky Society (Sake and Whisky Gift packs)
- Saputo Dairy Australia (Gift Hamper)

The AJSV and co-host organisations convey our sincere thanks to everyone that made this auspicious and thoroughly enjoyable evening possible. We all look forward to the next one!

*photo credit: Tallzeebaa