

Good morning.

Thank you for inviting me to today's Kodomo no Hi Japan Festival in Adelaide. My name is SHIMADA Junji. I have started my official duties in Melbourne since the end of January. This is my fourth visit to Adelaide and each time I come here, I get to know wonderful people so I hope to come back again and again.

Now first and foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the organizer, the Japan Australia Friendship Association, as well as many volunteers, supporters, and sponsors, for their continued dedication and effort to run Kodomo no Hi Japan Festival in Adelaide since 1995. Japan and Australia enjoy a good relationship, and this kind of cultural event helps strengthen such a good relationship further.

Kodomo no Hi, or Children's Day in English, is on the 5 May every year, and we celebrate children's happiness, their health and growth. The streamer decorations used on Children's Day are in the shape of carps, which come from a Chinese legend where a carp swam upstream and became a dragon as it ascended to the sky, signifying strength and success. Many children have experienced tough times due to the global pandemic while every level of government here is working hard to manage the crisis. Despite going through these hard times, I want to tell every child – including all the children here today – about the importance of finding their own goals and dreams and working hard, unafraid of challenges and setbacks just like the carps. I hope today's event will cheer up many children and give all participants a good opportunity to get to know the Japanese culture.

When borders between Japan and Australia open again, I encourage you all to visit Japan and experience all the food, culture, and wonderful sceneries there. Today, there is a local Japanese government stall set up by the Japan Local Government Centre from Sydney, showing these local Japanese attractions so don't forget to visit the booth and have a chat! In the meantime, I hope you make the most out of today to experience Japan in Adelaide.

Once again, I would like to sincerely thank and congratulate everyone involved in today's festival for making this happen.

Thank you very much for your attention.