

Good morning.

Thank you for having me here today. My name is SHIMADA Junji and I am the Consul-General of Japan in Melbourne. Before I begin, I would like to thank St Paul's Cathedral for hosting the Hiroshima Peace Day service every year.

As many people would already know, the first atomic bomb was dropped over Hiroshima on the 6th of August 1945, and the second one over Nagasaki three days later.

Today, I would like to extend my sincere condolences and sympathy to everyone who was affected from the aftereffects – those who passed away, survivors, as well as their friends and families. More than 210,000 people died across Hiroshima and Nagasaki either straight after or within five months of the bombings. Today, only just over 120,000 atomic bomb survivors are still alive, and their average age is 84 years old.

76 years have now passed after the bombings. As the atomic bomb survivors are ageing year by year, it is becoming increasingly more important to pass on the realities of the devastation caused by nuclear weapons to people across generations and borders. Japan is the only country to have ever experienced atomic bombings, and I hope that it will be the last country to go through such tragedy as we continue to pass down the message of peace and harmony to the global citizens of the world.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought us unprecedented and ongoing challenges. Against all odds, Japan has welcomed the world for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, which are about to finish while the Paralympic Games will follow. The concept of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic torch relay was 'Hope Lights Our Way' as it travelled across Japan to showcase the recovery of the Tohoku region after the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake. In doing so, the Olympic flame represented another layer of hope to uplift the spirits of people all over the world, and became a light at the end of the tunnel during the pandemic. Tokyo 2020 is a symbol of the enduring unity of global citizens, lighting our way to hope, dreams, and courage into the future.

I feel that these messages of hope, dreams, and courage, are very much relevant to today's service as we remember the tragedy of the atomic bombings, and as we continue to pass down our message of eternal peace to the generations to come.

Athletes all over the world have travelled to Japan to take part in Tokyo 2020, but amongst these athletes, the Australian women's softball team was the first group of Olympic athletes to arrive in Japan. Moreover, they played against Japan in the opening game in Fukushima two days before

the Opening Ceremony. The game has shown how strong and important the Japan-Australia relationship is, and without the presence, achievements, and cooperation of Australia during these few weeks, the Tokyo 2020 Olympics would not have been as successful. I would like to thank Australia for all their support, and I also wish Brisbane all the best as they host the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2032.

Once again, thank you for organising the Hiroshima Peace Day service.

ありがとうございました。