

Good morning everyone.

I am pleased to be speaking at the Melbourne Japanese Summer Festival today. My name is SHIMADA Junji and I am the Consul-General of Japan in Melbourne.

The very first Melbourne Japanese Summer Festival was held in 2010, and this is the second year where the festival is taking place online. In Japan and other cultures in Asia, a 12-year cycle represents one zodiac cycle, each year represented by a different animal. In Japanese, this cycle is known as 干支 or the 十二支 and this year is the year of the tiger. I hope that this year, we can all stand up to upcoming uncertainties fearlessly overcome the challenges just like a tiger. I'm very much looking forward to seeing what this year holds, and hopefully, we can have the festival in-person in 2023!

Although the festival is held online this year, the excitement of the summer festival and the festive spirit is still very much present. Today, we have many interactive events and demonstrations which you can enjoy from the comfort of your own home.

The theme of this year's Summer Festival is 'Get Healthy, Be Happy!'. There is a saying in Japanese called 笑う門には福来たる, which means happiness will naturally come to homes filled with laughter. I hope that today's festival will provide a bit of entertainment and happiness during this ongoing pandemic, and that everyone will enjoy the festival today.

Lastly, I would like to thank all the summer festival organising committee of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Melbourne, as well as the Multicultural Affairs of the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing for the grant.

Thank you for listening. ありがとうございます。