

## **Japanese Cruiser *Ibuki*, A Symbol of Japan-Australia Cooperation in relation to ANZAC**

On 25 April, ANZAC Day, I attended the ANZAC Day Service organised by the Returned & Services League Victorian Branch (RSL Victoria). On 25 April 1915, the Australia and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) attempted to land on the Gallipoli Peninsula in Turkey and suffered heavy casualties of more than 8,000 deaths over the course of 8 months in the battlefield. In Australia, Services are held on this day to remember the sacrifices and honour the dedicated service and achievements of these soldiers. Today, ANZAC Day also serves to commemorate all Australians who died in Australian military operations since then, including World War II, the Korean War, and other UN peacekeeping operations.

This year's ANZAC Day Service was again held at the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne and was attended by the Governor and Premier of Victoria. When I arrived at the venue, Mr. Dean Lee, CEO of the Shrine of Remembrance and a close friend of mine, greeted me with a smile.



He has always given me a warm welcome ever since I first visited the Shrine of Remembrance shortly after I assumed my position in Melbourne as the Consul-General three years ago. He spoke gratefully of the Japanese cruiser *Ibuki*, which symbolises the Japan-Australia cooperation in relation to ANZAC. At that time, the Japanese cruiser *Ibuki* accompanied and guarded the ANZAC first convoy from Australia to Egypt as one of the escort ships. During that period, Japan was allied with Australia, a Commonwealth country of the British Empire under the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. Four ships including *Ibuki*, the English warship *Weymouth*, and two Australian warships *Melbourne* and *Sydney* were in formation to guard as many as 40 troopships. The illustration (*Ibuki* is on the top left corner) is on display at the Galleries of Remembrance inside the Shrine of Remembrance. *Ibuki*'s mission was completed on 25 November 1914, and the Gallipoli Campaign began five months later.

Apart from the unfortunate period during World War II, this means that the Japan-Australia relationship has been one of allies and comrades for many years. I am confident that the Japan-Australia relationship will continue to strengthen as the best partner in Asia sharing common values.

