

Russell Duff Invested in the Japanese Order of the Rising Sun for Contributions to Relations Between Japan and New Zealand

**Media Release from the Embassy of Japan, Wellington, New Zealand
26 August, 2011**



Mr. Russell Gordon Duff of Wanaka, New Zealand, was invested with the prestigious Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Rays decoration of Japan on Friday, 19 August. Mr Duff was recognised for his contributions to the promotion of mutual understanding and friendly relations between Japan and New Zealand.

The Order was presented to Mr Duff on behalf of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan by H.E. Mr Hideto Mitamura, Ambassador of Japan to New Zealand, at a reception held at the Embassy of Japan on Friday afternoon.

Mr. Duff originally developed an interest in Japan over 30 years ago when he worked to host Japanese tour groups to the Otago region. He has since had a strong involvement in promoting Japan as a tourist destination for New Zealanders, and has assisted with receiving inbound tour groups from Japan. This contact with Japan through tourism was the major motivation for Mr. Duff in beginning Japanese language lessons.

In 1986 Mr. Duff initiated the Dunedin – Otaru Sister City Society to establish a direct “people to people” link between the citizens of Dunedin and Otaru, Japan, and served as president of the society for twenty years until 2006. Under the stewardship of Mr. Duff the Society has been the main link between the two cities, and between citizens of Otago and Japan in a wider sense.

Since the founding of the Sister City Society Mr. Duff has made numerous visits to Japan, most recently in July 2010 to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the signing of the sister city relationship. During this time he has also assisted with hosting many civic delegations from Otaru and Japan.

Mr. Duff and the Sister City Society have actively supported the teaching of the Japanese language in New Zealand schools, and each year since 1995 they have organised a Japanese Language Competition for students from local high

schools. Mr. Duff was also instrumental in organising Japan Week celebrations in Dunedin, featuring city-wide demonstrations of Japanese arts and culture.

Further information about the Order and the award ceremony is available from the Embassy of Japan in Wellington.

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Information about the Order of the Rising Sun:
<http://www8.cao.go.jp/english/decoration/kyoku.html>

Information about the Dunedin-Otaru Sister City Relationship:
<http://www.dunedin.govt.nz/your-council/sister-cities/otaru-japan>



Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Rays decoration.



Mr. Duff is presented with the decoration by H.E. Mr Hideto Mitamura, Ambassador of Japan to New Zealand, on behalf of the Emperor of Japan.



Mr. Duff celebrates with family after the ceremony.