

Speech for the 2015 お帰りなさい JET Reception
by Ambassador Takata
18:05, Friday 6 November 2015,
Ambassador's Residence, Khandallah

Kia Ora, Good evening Ladies and Gentlemen and お帰りなさい to New Zealand for the returnees.

Thank you very much for coming this evening. Tonight, I am very pleased to see JETs who have returned from Japan to Wellington after completing their contracts in August 2015 and welcome them back here to my Residence.

The JET Programme is one of the most important exchange programmes between Japan and New Zealand. In total, over 3,000 people from New Zealand have participated in the programme which will celebrate its 30th anniversary next year. The JET Programme aims to promote internationalisation in Japan's local communities by helping to improve foreign language education and developing international exchange at the grassroots level. The JET participants that we welcome back tonight have spent between one and four years on the Programme.

During their time in Japan, they have not only taught English in schools, but will also have worked constructively as "Cultural Ambassadors", acting as bridges between Japan and New Zealand to promote mutual understanding. The JET Programme offers you the chance not only to immerse yourself in Japanese culture, but also to gain a deeper understanding about what it means to be a Kiwi. By learning about the strengths and weaknesses of both countries, you play an important role in enhancing the relationship between our two countries in the future.

Now that you have returned from your time on The JET Programme, we hope that you will be active in your local JET Alumni Association chapter and its activities to promote a broader and deeper understanding between Japan and New Zealand. The Wellington chapter of the JET Alumni Association is involved in many Japan related community events and tonight a number of their members are able to join us so I hope that you will take the opportunity to hear about their upcoming events to stay connected with Japan and talk with them about their experiences coming home.

The Embassy of Japan supports the Wellington JET Alumni Association with their activities, organises a number of its own events and promotes other Japan-related events around the region. You can find information about these on the JICC.NZ Facebook Page and I sincerely hope that you are able to attend some of these. As you will know, there are some very exciting events planned in Japan in 2019 and 2020 so it is a very exciting time to stay connected with what is going on in Japan, whether it is through sporting, educational or cultural fields.

Last, but not least, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you who have taken part in the JET programme and returned to continue to contribute to strengthening ties between Japan and New Zealand. Applications for the 2016 JET Programme are already open so if you know any good candidates we sincerely hope that you will encourage them to apply for this amazing opportunity.

Welcome back to Wellington and thank you again for your efforts while on the JET Programme.

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