

Speech by Charge d'Affaires, Mr. Kazuo Nakai
At FAREWELL RECEPTION FOR THE
2016 JET PROGRAMME PARTICIPANTS
The Residence of the Ambassador of Japan
Friday 29 July 2016
6.00 - 8.00pm

Good evening,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you here, on behalf of Ambassador Takata, who is regrettably away on mission, to farewell the 37 new JET Programme participants departing from Wellington to Japan.

First of all, I wish to congratulate the participants this year for your success in the selection for the JET programme. The final orientation of the JET programme in Wellington was just held today and you are leaving very soon. I presume you are now full of anticipation and some anxiety, but I am sure that you will have an enjoyable and useful time in Japan and come back to New Zealand with full of fond memories of Japan.

It is thirty years ago, 1987, when the JET Programme started to promote internationalisation in Japan's local communities by introducing foreign teaching assistants to their language education, and by developing international exchanges at the

grassroots level. This year is the commemoration of its 30th anniversary.

New Zealand has taken part in the JET programme since its beginning, and I am happy to see here Mr Mark TePunga, who was a member of the Kiwi JET team in the foundation year. Since then, the JET programme has indeed been one of the most important and successful exchange programmes between us, and I am happy to inform you that as many as 3,000 young New Zealanders in total have participated in this programme. Comparing to the population of New Zealand, this is a remarkable figure.

In this commemorative year, there are 86 Kiwi participants, including 37 here, leaving for Japan from New Zealand. You will be Assistant Language Teachers and help the English language education in many part of Japan. As the Japanese foreign language education is fundamentally reorganized and its focus is changed from translation to communication, you are coming to Japan at a right time, since this change would make the role of ALT a more exciting one.

When you are dispatched to your destination cities or towns, after the Tokyo orientation, you will face another challenge to

start your entirely new life in utterly different situations. But the Japanese staff welcoming you are usually very helpful and ready to work with you. You will be regarded as a “Cultural and Goodwill Ambassadors,” too. You can bridge the peoples of Japan and New Zealand by introducing your culture , language, tradition there and, back to New Zealand, Japan’s one to your folks back in New Zealand. Through this you can play an important role in enhancing the relationship between our two countries in the future.

At the same time, from my experience, I can tell you that living in a foreign country often gives you a chance to reflect on your own self and on your country. You may gain a deeper understanding about what it means to be a Kiwi. Spending your young years in Japan, would give you such a precious opportunity.

Upon return from Japan, I advise you to join in your local JET Alumni Association chapter, in order to maintain contact with Japan and also with the others in this room with you here today. The Wellington chapter of the JET Alumni Association is very active and involved in many Japan-related community events. I thank the members of the JET Alumni Association of Wellington for their continued hard work.

Before concluding my short remark, I would like to take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation to all the people who have contributed to the success of the JET Programme in New Zealand over the last three decades.

I wish the new JETs all the best for your time in Japan.

(End)