

**Speech by Ambassador of Japan HE Mr Toshihisa Takata for the  
Re-Opening of the Featherston Heritage Museum  
4PM Saturday, 25 February 2017**

**Your Worship Viv Napier, Mayor of the South Wairarapa District  
Mr Phil Dittmer, President of the Featherston Heritage Museum  
Complex Society**

**Mr Laurie Clarke, Producer of the “Heritage Rescue” Program and  
Owner of the Top Shelf Productions**

**Distinguished guests**

**Ladies and gentlemen:**

Kia Ora. I am indeed very grateful to be with you today for the re-opening of this Featherston Heritage Museum. In particular, I acknowledge the presence of Ms Michiko Iwasa, a descendant of a Japanese prisoner who was at Featherston, who travelled far from Japan just to be with us at this important occasion.

Though I have had heard about this museum in the early days of my arrival here in New Zealand as Ambassador of Japan, this is my first time to visit this place which I now consider as another landmark of the continuing cordial yet robust relationship between Japan and New Zealand.

A museum is a repository of artefacts that tells us about our history to remind us on what is at stake at present, so that we can build a promising future. Hence, as we can see around us in this museum, the carved and painted artworks of the Japanese prisoners will remind us of the tragic incident that took place 74 years go. Lest we forget the Featherston Incident and the bloody outcome of war, we may not be able to fully understand one another—our cultural uniqueness and differences—and be able to attain enduring peace and friendship that we are all aspiring for.

Before concluding this brief remark, I would like to commend the noble works of Mr Clarke and his company staff in spearheading the make-over of this museum, and of the Featherston residents, and the officers and members of the Featherston Heritage Museum Complex Society in doing voluntary work while this museum was undergoing renovation. Without you all, today’s re-opening would not have been possible.

Let us all continue working together to further strengthen and deepen the cordial ties between our two countries and peoples in the coming years. Thank you.