

**Russell Duff Awarded Japanese Order of the  
Rising Sun Decoration for  
Contributions to Relations Between Japan and New Zealand**

**Media Release from the Embassy of Japan, Wellington, New Zealand  
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Mr. Russell Gordon Duff of Wanaka, New Zealand, has been awarded the prestigious Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Rays decoration of Japan for his contributions to the promotion of mutual understanding and friendly relations between Japan and New Zealand.

The Order will be presented on behalf of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan by H.E. Mr Hideto Mitamura, Ambassador of Japan to New Zealand, at a reception scheduled for August.

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 30<sup>th</sup> 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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Contact: David Heffernan, Japan Information and Cultural Centre, Embassy of Japan: (04) 495-8332, [japan5@ej.org.nz](mailto:japan5@ej.org.nz)

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>