

The 80th Commemoration of the Featherston Incident

The 80th Commemoration of the Featherston Incident was held on 25th February 2023. The incident happened on this day in 1943, where a total of 49 people lost their lives in a clash between Japanese and New Zealand soldiers at the Featherston Camp. The acting Ambassador of Japan Mr Tatsushi Nishioka attended the event and laid wreaths. In his address, Mr Nishioka said, “the Memorial Garden no longer symbolises the tragedy that occurred 80 years ago; but instead serves as a reminder of the progress towards reconciliation and appreciation that both Japanese and New Zealand people have made together.”

The event was attended by the Honourable Kieran McAnulty, Member of Parliament for Wairarapa and Minister for Emergency Management, Local Government, Racing, and Rural Communities; His Worship Martin Connelly, Mayor of South Wairarapa District; Mr Peter Jackson, President of Featherston Memorial RSA, along with other distinguished guests and many people from local communities. Also in attendance were representatives from Juken New Zealand Ltd, a Japanese-affiliated company which for many years has made efforts in promoting reconciliation and exchange with the local community, including by building the beautiful cherry blossom tree-lined “Sakura Garden” in the memorial garden. “Chor-Farmer”, a Japanese choir group which has contributed to Japan-New Zealand exchanges for reconciliation by attending the commemoration in the past, was not able to attend this year’s event, but sent a message which was read during the ceremony. Japanese singers Na-Na-Mi also attended, performing a moving rendition of “Furusato (Hometown)” which received a huge round of applause from those in attendance.



Photo with attendees including Australian High Commissioner Her Excellency Harinder Sidhu, South Wairarapa District Mayor His Worship Martin Connelly, Chief of Defense Force Air Marshal Kevin Short, Featherston Memorial RSA Mr Peter Jackson



Speaking with Hon Kieran McAnulty, Member of Parliament for Wairarapa and Minister for Emergency Management, Local Government, Racing, and Rural Communities



Performance of “Furusato (Hometown)” by Na-Na-Mi



Address by Mr Tatsushi Nishioka, Acting Ambassador of Japan



Wreath laying for the Japanese victims



Wreath laying for the New Zealand victim



Wreath laying at the camp memorial