

Embassy of Japan Press Release 29 April 2024

The Conferral of the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star upon Mr Ian Kennedy

The Government of Japan has announced today, 29th of April 2024, the recipients of the 2024 Spring Conferment of Decorations on Foreign Nationals. Among those rewarded is Mr Ian Kennedy, former Ambassador of New Zealand to Japan, Chairman of the New Zealand Committee of the Japan New Zealand Business Council, and Honorary Chairman of the “Support-our-Kids” programme. Mr Kennedy is to be bestowed the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star, in recognition of his outstanding contributions toward strengthening bilateral relations and promoting friendship between Japan and New Zealand.

A fluent speaker of Japanese, Mr Kennedy had two previous postings to Japan and had written a book on Japanese/New Zealand relations for the Institute of Policy Studies (Victoria University of Wellington) before he was appointed as New Zealand’s Ambassador to Japan from July 2007 to July 2012. During his term of office, the two countries experienced major disasters in the same year – the Canterbury Earthquake in February 2011, and the Great East Japan Earthquake in March 2011. Mr Kennedy provided invaluable assistance to Japan and Japanese citizens on many levels during this time and helped to forge stronger links between Japan and New Zealand, including founding the “Support-our-Kids” programme in 2011 to support children affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake.

Mr Kennedy became Chair of the New Zealand Committee of the Japan New Zealand Business Council in January 2013, and has greatly contributed to the expansion of the business relationship between Japan and New Zealand. His ongoing work to promote linkages between the two countries at a corporate and personal level has been invaluable in the development and strengthening of bilateral relations.