

Embassy of Japan in New Zealand

2 October 2024

The Investiture Ceremony for Mr Ian Kennedy

On 2 October 2024, the investiture ceremony to celebrate the conferral of the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star by His Majesty the Emperor of Japan to 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, was held. This prestigious award has been bestowed upon him in recognition of his outstanding contributions toward strengthening bilateral relations and promoting friendship between Japan and New Zealand.

During his diplomatic career, he was posted three times to Japan, including as Ambassador to Japan from 2007 to 2012. As Ambassador, Mr Kennedy devoted his time to strengthening and deepening ties in various fields from political and economic to culture and sports, and at all levels. In the wake of the Christchurch earthquake and the Great East Japan earthquake in 2011, he played an important role in facilitating the dispatch of Urban Search and Rescue teams of Japan and New Zealand in the wake of the Christchurch earthquake and the Great East Japan earthquake.

Furthermore, Mr Kennedy co-founded the “Support our Kids” project, and proposed to launch a homestay programme to New Zealand for children affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake. He continues to be actively engaged as the honorary chairman of the project, contributing to fostering the invaluable people-to-people ties between Japanese and Kiwis.

In the realm of business, Mr Kennedy is the longest serving Chairman of the New Zealand Committee of the Japan New Zealand Business Council. As chairman, he continues to facilitate business opportunities and strengthen trade and economic ties between New Zealand and Japan.

At the ceremony, Ambassador OSAWA delivered his congratulatory address, highlighting Mr Kennedy’s achievements, and presented him with the decoration.

Upon receiving the decoration, Mr Kennedy expressed his gratitude to his family and friends and the Government of Japan, and shared his wide-ranging and inspiring experiences in nurturing the Japan-New Zealand relationship.

Mr John Hart, Chairman of the New Zealand Open Golf Championship and former Head Coach of the All Blacks, shared his congratulatory address for Mr Kennedy, introducing his contributions and achievements in strengthening New Zealand's ties to Japan, especially through golf and rugby.

The ceremony was attended by his family, friends, and colleagues from various fields to celebrate in Mr Kennedy's honour.

We once again express our heartfelt congratulations and respect, and look forward to continuing our cooperation to further strengthen the bond between Japan and New Zealand.

Related press release: [The Conferral of the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star upon Mr Ian Kennedy \[29 April 2024\]](#)



Mr Ian Kennedy, Mrs Setsuko Kennedy and Ambassador Osawa



Mr and Mrs Kennedy, Mr and Mrs Hart and Ambassador Osawa



Family Photo